

CHAPTER 1

THE RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

'The mind is a powerful force. It can enslave us or empower us. It can plunge us into the depths of misery or take you to heights of ecstasy. Learn to use it wisely.'

– David Cuschieri, author

The one thing I always try to help people understand is that there's a recipe for everything. Wealth, weight loss, success, a cake . . . everything! If you think the great success stories and entrepreneurial billionaires of our age were all heirs and rich kids who were given lucky breaks by the dozen, then think again. Some of them had very little; some of them had absolutely nothing at all, but here's the thing. None of them waited until they had everything or until 'the time was right'. They simply made the best of what they had, and now as a result they have the best of everything. The secrets of their success lie in their attitude and self-belief, not money or circumstances. They set their sights on what they wanted, followed the recipe, and simply didn't give up.

There's a misconception out there that you need to have a full plan in place before you can take action, but in my experience all you really have to do is take one step forward. Just one.

When I talk about this at my personal development seminars, I always liken the journey to walking a spiral staircase. It's only as you progress

further that the steps start to unfold. Clichéd? Perhaps, but it's true. You are never going to see 10 steps ahead but you will always see the next one, so take it regardless of how small it may be. I genuinely believe this is what deters people from taking the big leap into entrepreneurship. It is human nature to want to assume full control and protect yourself from oncoming dangers, so naturally some people are going to feel uncomfortable with only being able to see one step ahead at any given time. Don't let this discomfort deter you.

In 2014, I was running a gym in the west of Ireland, and even though we were considered small fish in the fitness industry, myself and a number of others still managed to bring the world's biggest team to an adventure race in Dublin and raise €165,000 in the process. It all started off as an idea, a crazy idea in fact, and one I put out there with no clue as to how we would go about achieving it. We just set the intention and made it public. After we took that first step, things started to happen and take shape. If we had worried about the end result before we had even begun, it would never have happened. If we had allowed ourselves to be deterred by the natural discomfort that comes with embarking on such a big ambition, we would still be sitting around making plans in an attempt to cover every conceivable thing that could go wrong. Instead we decided on a goal, put it out there, and took the first step to get us started.

Similarly, on a recent trip to Nepal I met with a man who wanted to build a hospital for children with cancer. His own son had battled the disease, and to access the necessary treatment, they'd had to travel back and forth to India. He wanted to build a hospital in Nepal so other people wouldn't have to travel, but felt completely overwhelmed. He kept looking at the massive scale of the project rather than the first step, and consequently felt unsure of where to begin. I told him his first step would be to phone the hospital in India and speak to a doctor or a consultant there about his plans. Doing this would then lead him to his next step. I genuinely have no doubt he will get there in the end, but it all has to start with that first step, otherwise it will never happen at all.

I firmly stand by the motto I introduced you to in the introduction, 'when you dream more creatively, and more importantly when you act on it, you start to discover a whole new perspective of how great life could be'.

Some people never even get as far as the 'dream big' stage. Those that do very often don't take the necessary steps forward. Then there are those that have convinced themselves they *can't* move forward because of circumstances. If you fall into this category, then here's what you need to realize. It doesn't matter how down-on-your-luck you are right now, you're in a position to transform your life if you are willing to follow those who have done so before you.

The highest achievers in every industry have at some point taken their biggest adversity or their lowest low point and used it as fuel to turn their lives around. No one succeeds without hitting the proverbial wall, and I guarantee you that almost everyone on the Sunday Times rich list has seen rock bottom at least once. The one thing that differentiated them from the majority, however, was their reaction to the situation. You cannot discount the impact of that factor in their subsequent success.

My own key low point – the one that subsequently led to me starting a fitness business – occurred on Christmas Eve, 2011. After being let go from a commercial gym, I launched a business as a personal trainer offering one-to-one sessions, but I really struggled to make ends meet. I borrowed money for the rent, and even took on a second job of working in a clothes shops to try to keep myself financially afloat. Meanwhile on social media, I was portraying an image that in no way reflected the real situation. I was just too proud and too stubborn to admit that things weren't going that well for me.

Eventually, however, I had to admit defeat and move home. I was so strapped for cash, I had to borrow the bus fare from my dad. What hurt me most of all was the fact that I couldn't afford to even buy my mum a gift for her birthday. Instead all I could do was give her a card with the promise

that I would take her to dinner once things picked up for me. That was my rock bottom, undoubtedly.

In the months that followed, my sense of worthlessness caused me to sink into a depression. I had banked on Dublin being a success, and when that didn't happen, I was at a complete loss over what to do next. I felt like I was back at square one. I got myself a part-time job in Fat Freddy's Pizza Restaurant in Galway City. On my days off, I would walk up and down Silver Strand Beach for hours on end just trying to come up with some break-through business idea or revelation. At the time, I was playing the blame game, pointing the finger at everyone and everything apart from myself. I blamed the cheap rates offered by commercial gyms, the impact of the recession, and everything in between.

During one of my beach walks, back in March/April of 2012, it occurred to me that there were plenty of trainers out there making a perfectly good living from the fitness industry in spite of the recession and the rates offered by the fitness chains. Yes, the country was in a bad recession at the time and money was certainly tight for everyone, but I figured if other guys were making money from the fitness business then there must be a way. Following this realization, I decided to contact a few personal trainers in the UK. These were guys I had been following on social media and who looked like they were doing really well in business, so I asked them if they could give me some advice on how I could get started. My way clearly wasn't working so it made sense to speak to those who were doing well.

I received a reply from a trainer in Cardiff called Mark Tregilgas who at the time was enjoying great success with his fitness camp. In his response, he gave me the encouragement I needed to start again in the form of a few tips to help me on my way. I took on board everything he said and sat down to create a plan. For a long time I told myself that I would start the fitness class on my local beach in Barna *but only when* 20 people signed up. Eventually I just decided to set a date and regardless of whether two people signed up or 200, I would train them as best as I possibly could.

Once the date was set, I had to get the word out there and advertise. As I didn't have a budget – shoestring or otherwise – both newspaper and radio ads were out of the question, so I figured the next best thing would be flyers. I went into Galway City and ordered a print run of 5,000. They were still hot off the printing press when I dropped them all over the city, leaving them anywhere I thought my target audience would see them.

Five people turned up at my very first session on that day in May 2012. Most trainers would have packed it in after that but for me it was a starting point. By the second month, I was training 20 people, and by the third, I was up to 100. I felt completely renewed; my sense of ambition and purpose were both back in full force. In hindsight, I can honestly say that my low point made me a better trainer. Having experienced such a hard time on a personal level made me realize that everyone was struggling with something. It made me more determined to make my fitness class a place where people could escape their daily stresses and forget about whatever was bothering them. Overall, my strategy was simple – I would try to make my class the best part of their day.

Those early days of the business were far from easy. I didn't have a car so instead I would cycle 30 minutes from my workplace in the city to the beach in Barna where I would hold my class. On a fine day, cycling that coast road out to Barna is idyllic, but in the pouring rain, it's probably the fastest route to pneumonia! Sometimes I would make this journey three or four times a day. Later, as the demand for classes grew, I would end up cycling all around the city to four different locations where the classes were taking place. Yes, it was difficult, but it wasn't about comfort or convenience, it was about progress, and I was willing to do whatever it took to make my business even just 1% better each day.

When I wasn't teaching the classes, I was writing articles, recording podcasts, and trying to grow my social media pages.

This only happened after I realized that the way to become successful in business was to add value to what I was offering, something I will cover

later in the book. This is the only way anyone can become outrageously successful in business. During the very early days, however, I was doing the opposite. I was trying to make the money *before* I gave the value. I was asking people to buy my products and pay for my services before I had proved my worth. I had the attitude that if someone wasn't paying me then I wouldn't give away my knowledge or skills. I see now that it should have been the other way around. I should have been giving away the good quality content for free in order to show people what I was capable of. I have shared my own story so many times that my friends and family could probably do a good job reciting it word for word themselves, but I don't tell it for me. It's not about me anymore. I have already lived that part of my life. My hope is that the story will help inspire others.

The thing you need to know about me is that I grew up on a diet of personal development books. My dad's book shelves were filled with the teachings of the great self-improvement gurus and masters of popular psychology. Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich* was one of the first books I ever read, followed by Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends & Influence People*. Those two books had such a profound impact on me. I used to rave about them at school until one day a friend of mine said to me, 'Well if they're that good, why read so many of them? Should you not read just one and be able to see results from that?'

He was right. The reason I never saw results was because I was reading the material but not applying it. After I hit my low point I returned to my dad's book shelf and started reading again, only this time, I applied action. Within the 12 months that followed my first fitness class on the beach, I had opened a fitness studio in Barna and signed my first book deal. Television work was plentiful, and my online following was over 100,000. My business was thriving and going from strength to strength; I was constantly on the go. The demand for my services was phenomenal, which is why it probably came as a big surprise to many when, in 2015, I made the decision to sell the gym. Don't get me wrong, I'm still very much in the fitness business, I just don't run the gym any more. I will explain in the next chapter what influenced my decision to sell but I can say with my

hand on my heart that it was the best thing I ever did. Following the sale, I started implementing certain rituals – all of which are outlined in this book – and they have improved my life and career so much.

This year so far, I have travelled around America, Europe, Africa, Nepal, and Dubai. A huge ambition of mine was also realized when I took to the stage to present a TEDx talk. Without a doubt, however, the number one highlight of my year – and definitely one of the greatest highlights of my life – was meeting one of my idols, Richard Branson, at his home on Necker Island.

I was part of a mastermind group of 25 people that had the amazing opportunity to travel to Necker and hang out with Branson. ‘Surreal’ doesn’t even come close to how it felt.

Funnily enough, the weekend prior to the trip, I watched Branson doing an interview on *The Late Late Show*. I have to say Branson came across exactly as you would expect. The man you see on television is the man you meet in person. There’s no bullshit with him. He’s real and has never made any apology for it. The day we met him, he seemed a little bit dejected. He later explained that his business baby, Virgin Airlines, had been sold for around a billion dollars the day before we arrived. He had been against the sale, but as he only owned 20% of the company, there was nothing he could do to stop the sale from going ahead. He even said at one point that it was the ‘worst billion dollar cheque’ he had received.

During the Q&A, he willingly answered a barrage of questions, while also speaking a great deal about his space travel ambitions. The big thing I took from Necker was the huge scope of possibility that’s open to us all. When you travel to an inspiring environment like Necker, especially in the company of individuals who each have an Olympian level of ambition, you’re presented with a whole new realm of thinking. It broadens your perspective of what’s possible in life and really motivates you to achieve it.

I love the quote, *'Small minds discuss people, average minds discuss events, great minds discuss ideas.'* Our whole trip was spent discussing ideas. There were 25 people on that trip and every single person was doing something amazing with their life. They were all working towards their goals. The people you surround yourself with really do have an impact on how you think and while I have always been aware of that fact, this trip 100% re-enforced it even more. Even just being in the company of someone like Richard Branson, whose thinking has no limitations, rubs off and you leave there feeling fired up and bursting with ideas.

I learned a lot from the brief time I spent on Necker, but one thing stands out. Regardless of your current circumstances, it pays to think big.

Business and life lessons from a billionaire

- When it comes to networking or developing your team, forget the stiff business meetings. Look at ways in which you can make things fun. When we were on the island, Branson threw a fancy dress party for the group and even arrived in full costume too. He makes a point of incorporating fun into everything he does, and this has no doubt contributed to the success of his business.
- I speak more about this later in the book when I talk about the benefits of mastermind groups, but if you want to succeed, then the best way in which to do so is to surround yourself with others who are equally as passionate about success as you are.
- Possibilities really are endless. From big dreams come big ideas and from those come big prospects. You just need to think BIG!
- Nice guys exist in business. You don't have to play Mr Nasty to get to the top. Richard Branson is testament to this.

Don't confuse risk-taking with recklessness. It pays to take risks, to go with your gut, but risk-taking in business should also have a strong element of calculation behind it.

Upgrading My Life: Jac Keady (client)

When I met Pat, I was a stay-at-home mum and my redundancy money had run out. I faced the prospect of returning to a boring 9–5 job and leaving my longed-for baby in someone else's care. I genuinely believed my life was mapped out for me and I had to settle for an average life with a fortnight's holiday once a year to keep me going.

Pat inspired me to believe that anything is possible, so based on my passion for cooking, I started my own Paleo food company. The sense of achievement seeing your products on supermarket shelves is immense and I will forever be grateful to Pat for teaching me to realize anything is possible and the only limitations we have are in our head. I only wish more people could discover the potential that lies dormant inside them and not waiting until they're richer, stronger or slimmer to be happy, but instead, choose to be happy right now.

