

Chapter 1

THIIIIIS MUCH EXCITED



What's it to be? Same old shit, or crazy new shit?

Welcome to the crazy new variety, in which Chapter 1 is introduced by a 5-year-old and we grapple with the concept of 'normal' and 'shine o'clock'.

Then it's adults only. We go all 50 Shades, with an explanation about why there's less sex in the city. We check out Andy's unremarkable breasts and his super-keen sense of smell before sloshing around in Thailand.

Then there's this book, that book, bad books and a very good book (with a towel) which explains what SHINE is all about. Kind of.

And if giving you less to think about isn't enough, we throw in what we're calling a 'Bilbo Bagginsism' before challenging you with the ultimate question: 'are you a wild salmon or stickleback kind of person?'

After toasting your good self we turn to births, marriages and deaths and invite you to hang around at your own funeral. Even in ghostly form you have choices – you could be death-eatery (dark and foreboding), poltergeisty (knocking on doors and shifting the vases) or Casper-like (floaty and friendly). We favour the latter. In a bizarre chapter ending, we offer up the ultimate challenge – to light up your own funeral.

Shine baby, shine!

Shine o'clock

Gav will never forget his son's first day at school, which was, bizarrely, a Friday. It was a two-hour taster visit and then he'd start his first full day the following week. Fair dos.

'You'll turn out ordinary if you're not careful.'

Ann Brashares

I woke up on the *Monday* of that week to discover Kian stood beside me at 6am dressed in full school uniform. I reminded him that his first day was, in fact, Friday. 'I know,' he replied firmly, 'I'm practising.'

He also practised Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, standing at the foot of my bed, ship-shape and inspection ready at 6am. He forgot on the actual Friday because he was exhausted by his unbroken run of early mornings, but that's not the point.

I woke him on Friday and he leaped out of bed, threw his uniform on and came sprinting into our room. Ali and I smiled weary, early-morning-parenting smiles. I told Kian that I'd never seen him this excited before in his entire life.

He agreed wholeheartedly: 'That's because I've never been this excited in my entire life.' There was a brief pause before he delivered the best bit: 'And I've been alive for five years!' His eyes grew wider and he rose to his tiptoes in glee. 'In fact, Dad, I'll show you how excited I am. I am *THIIIIIS MUCH* EXCITED!'

Please picture a five-year-old with his arms stretched so wide his hands are almost clasped behind his back, shoulder blades touching. If you're struggling, imagine an angler who'd caught a

very big fish but was also prone to gross exaggeration, and you're in the right ball park.

You can probably remember being five. Pretty much everything's exciting at that age, so to be beyond 'normal' excitement and to have ventured into '*THIIIIIS much* excited' – we're in 'unmitigated joy' territory.

That morning, my wife and I had a wonderful discussion about how, in that moment, there were thousands of young kids all waking up feeling the same – buzzing, pumped and ready to go. Raring to throw themselves into the next step of life's adventure.

We continued to talk about how amazing it is that some people remain like that throughout life. Every single springy step of the journey – the infectious energy, the buzz, the SHINE. And then we had a really weird discussion about how some people never feel like that again. Their wee piece of magic dwindles, it fizzles and vanishes. It's like your rice krispies that you poured milk on and forgot. An hour later, their snap, crackle and pop is just a mushy mess.

Could it be that some people peak at five?

There is, of course, a downside to taking the next step in your adventure. Fear. Worry. Stress. Anxiety. You are excited and yet it's tinged with what might go wrong. It might not work. You know the oft-trotted mantra of 'failure is not an option' is bullshit. Failure is an actual thing. You know because you've experienced it.

But when you're four or five – even though you're a little scared – you're *THIIIIIS much* excited.

BRING. IT. ON!

So, what about you? Did you wake up this morning feeling *THIIIIIS* much excited? Or are you the angler that caught the stickleback of joy?

How often do you wake up on a Monday morning pumped, buzzing and raring to go? Are you waking up every single day energized, happy, driven and frothing with passion? We're not talking about some days or most days, we mean EVERY SINGLE DAY!

If your answer is 'No' then there's a word for people like you: *normal*.

It's absolutely normal. It's normal *not* to wake up every day genuinely pumped full of energy, buzzing, raring to go.

In work it's normal too. It's normal for an organization NOT to have all its people waking up every morning fit to burst with excitement at the prospect of going to work and banging out world-class customer service. If you skip into work 'frothing with passion', someone's going to be making you a doctor's appointment.

Think about this for a moment.

It's normal. You're normal.

It is now the norm NOT to have people waking up energized, buzzing and raring to go to work. To go do the things they have chosen to do, every single day.

I'm going to say it once more.

It's normal. And it doesn't sit well with me. So here are a couple of rhetorical to get your juices flowing.

Firstly, *what good is having a belly if there's no fire in it?*

And secondly, *do you want 'normal'?*

I'm willing to put money on it that every single person reading this book absolutely categorically does NOT want normal.

I'm willing to wager that you are, in fact, looking for, working for, hoping for, striving for, dreaming about something absolutely extraordinary. Something exciting, engaging, purposeful, colourful – even a little bit scary. Something that makes a difference.

Something that makes you feel *THIIIIIS much* excited.



Can you imagine what would happen if you woke up every single day with the same fire in your belly for the day ahead that you had when you were five?

'Great minds think alike, but are usually a bit mad.'

Hannibal, 'A-Team'

It would be extraordinary.
Abnormal even.

But can you imagine what you'd achieve? And how you'd feel? And the impact you'd have on the normal?

It's a mix of frightening and enlightening, but in the most beautiful way you could ever imagine.

Moreover, it's a mindset. A choice. It costs nothing.

So raise your glass and let's propose a toast:

'To the abnormal. To the happiness outliers. To those who dare. To those who are *THIIIIIS much* excited.

To YOU.

It's time to shine.'

Less sex in the city?

So, why don't we shine? If we all started out like Kian and life was *THIIIIIS much* exciting, where did it all go wrong? Why and when did life

'Some birds aren't meant to be caged. Their feathers are just too bright.'

Arnold Bennett, 'Shawshank Redemption'

become a bit of a drag? Who or what extinguished the passion and pizzazz?

We suspect the modern world has a lot to answer for.

Humans are like an analogue receiver in a digital world. We have a multitude of TV channels and a dazzling array of social media, yet our attention is limited. Therefore, the only information that snags our attention is the truly exceptional 99.99th percentile. All day, every day, we're flooded with the truly extraordinary or excruciatingly mundane.

The internet sets clickbait traps, tempting you in because, come on, who doesn't want to know what their favourite soap star from the 1980s looks like now? You won't believe it, right? So you spend 20 minutes clodhopping through a maze of clickbait trash, accidentally clicking an advert or two on your way through the minefield, and the end result is, well, not quite as truly amazing as the headline said. *She looks kind of the same but a bit older.*

Meanwhile, 20 minutes of your life have ebbed away and you feel the need to go and have a shower to scrub away the stench of gullibility.

The rest of the internet is the best of the best and the worst of the worst: cutest kittens, funniest jokes, biggest breasts. And our own lives seem a bit dull by comparison. My breasts are nothing to write home about, I can't tell a joke and, worse still, my cat is not clickworthy.

In an overcrowded marketplace there are two cool tricks guaranteed to lure readers. Firstly, choose a cool title (see above)

and second, chuck in a couple of quickies that will pique your readers' interest ...

Did you know that men with a poor sense of smell have small willies? That's one of those niche facts that is just plain stunning. Chaps, not only is it true but it's something you'll remember and maybe mention next time you're in the pub with your mates. Chapesses, it's something you might mention to your other half when he's got a stuffy nose.

Secondly, and totally unrelated, I've just been reading an article by Ragnar Beer (Gottingen University) suggesting that the less sex you have, the more work you seek. Roll that one around in your head just for a moment. A rubbish sex life is associated with longer working hours?

Then allow yourself a furtive glance around the office. If Beer's correct, those who consistently stay late aren't getting any! Have a wry chuckle to yourself ...

... and then the penny suddenly drops. *You're the one working stupid hours* and goddamit, Beer's spot on!

Beer's line of thinking is that if you're sexually deprived you need an outlet for your frustration, and one such outlet is more time in the office. I can see that this might be true, that those who work silly hours get less sex, but I'm not convinced about the causal direction. Do you work longer hours *because* there's no sex at home, or is there less sex at home *because* you work long hours? (For the record, we're both married to teachers, so sex is out of the question on a school night anyway.)

Putting the sex thing to one side, there's a deadly serious point about the long working hours culture that we've allowed

ourselves to adopt. It's not just detrimental to your love life, but also to your productivity, health, longevity and happiness. Workaholism is like an internal time bomb, destroying relationships from the inside.

'Don't seek happiness. It's like an orgasm: if you over-think it, it goes away.'

Tim Minchin

We're not arguing against the need for long hours. Sometimes. And in small bursts. The problem is that it's become 'always' and 'the norm'. If you think that sneaking off at 4pm is 'half a day', you're part of the problem.

Human beings are built to withstand stress. Indeed, stress is good for us. In small bursts, that is. The idea is that life trundles along, then something out of the ordinary happens, which, because of its novelty, causes us some anxiety. Our body/mind responds appropriately and we get over that particular hurdle, after which we return to 'normal'. We're the same as before but now we have a bit of extra learning. So the pattern we're built for is normal normal normal normal *stress* normal normal normal normal *stress* ...

The modern world has conspired against us and the pattern is far less of the normal and much more of the out of the ordinary. Thus, the pattern is stress stress stress stress *normal* stress stress stress ...

Stress is indeed the new black. There is far less downtime and our minds and bodies are living in a perpetual state of anxiety. There's a gradual build-up of the stress hormone cortisol. Back in the day, our active lifestyles helped clear

cortisol out of the body. Nowadays, our sedentary existence allows it to build up. So, while stress in short bursts is good for you, our inability to rid our bodies of it causes chronic symptoms. It's not a feeling of permanent awfulness, more a background shrill of being hassled, drained, prickly or on edge.

That's the best-case scenario! It's easy to accelerate to anxiety, panic attacks and prolonged sadness. Sadly, 57 million anti-depressant prescriptions per year (in England alone) tell us that we've reached an unprecedented number of people who need meds to cope.

There aren't any laughs in that folks.

I'd like to write more but, got to dash, I can smell that someone's left a tap on next door. Gav, can you take over for a bit?

'That book'

My first book. I'm *THIIIIIS* much excited!

Isn't it fantastic how patiently a book will wait to be read?

And isn't SHINE a fabulous title? It has some wonderful connotations. As a verb, 'to shine' can mean to emit bright light or to be conspicuously competent. As a noun, 'a shine' is to have a sheen or lustre. Used in this context, it's nicely positioned at the sunnier end of 'rain or shine'.

It's also a liking or fancy, as in the phrase 'to take a shine to'.

All good. All desirable.

We've described how 'this book' came into being. But we don't want SHINE to be known as 'this book' – we'd much prefer it to be acknowledged as *'that book'*.

'That book changed my life.'

'That book made me wet myself.'

'That book was amazing.'

'That book revolutionized my thinking.'

'That book was like rocket fuel.'

'That book made me spend more time with my children.'

'That book made me re-evaluate my life.'

'That book shook my world.'

And yes, we appreciate there will be readers who say, *'That book was a totally over-hyped bag of shite.'*

Our aim is for more of the former but, hey, pleasing all of the people all of the time leads to our worst-case scenario, anodyne mediocrity.

In the same way that maths destroyed my love of numbers and science extinguished my love of cutting amphibians into small pieces, English destroyed my love of reading. Struggling through *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and making copious notes in the margins to highlight the sections that were *supposed* to be funny, that was a chore. I really enjoyed *Animal Farm*, a nice, easy read about some animals who organized

'Boredom is the biggest disease in the world, darling.'

Freddie Mercury

themselves, and then BOOM, Mr Ely tells me it's not about pigs, sheep and horses at all. I'm like, 'Sir, the version that I read deffo was.'

My eyelids grew heavy as he regaled it as a tale of communism, capitalism and human greed.

Someone, somewhere has deemed the classics to be classic. Hence we're force-fed *Pride and Prejudice* and dictated to that *Of Mice and Men* is a must read. Ditto *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I get that *Mockingbird* might be a super read, but I gave up after Chapter 1 because it was a bag of shite.

In the art world, Da Vinci's 'Mona Lisa' is '*that painting*'. Priceless. It's the enigmatic smile apparently. And the guy with one ear. I forget his name. You know? The one who was crap at painting sunflowers? He's deemed to be a genius.

I've read plenty of decent books but '*that book*', for me, is *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Douglas Adams' laugh-out-loud masterpiece – the book that restored my love of reading and, indeed, inspired me to have a go at writing. In 'THGtG' (as literally nobody is calling it), a person who can stay in control of virtually any situation is somebody who is said to know where his or her towel is, Adams' genius logic being that a towel has immense psychological value. If you pick up an intergalactic hitchhiker who has their towel with them, you will automatically assume that they are also in possession of a flannel, toothbrush, soap, tin of biscuits, flask, compass, map, gnat spray, wet-weather gear and so on. The towel gives you faith.

To bastardize a classic Kipling (poem, not a cake), if you can be in possession of your towel, when everyone around you has lost theirs, you are clearly someone to be reckoned with.

Think of SHINE as your intergalactic towel. Yes, the modern world is full-on crazy bonkers but when people see you carrying SHINE they will give you a second look, an admiring one.

'*That book!*' You are definitely someone to be reckoned with.

It ain't over 'til the fat man sings

And onto a story. SHINE is packed with them. Some might be funny, some quirky, some might even seem obscure. None are silly. Not even the silly ones.

Thailand – land of sunshine, beaches, sex tourism, lady boys and lazy racist stereotypes that we promised not to do. Oh, and more temples than you can shake a stick at (no, we're not sure what that means either, so we Googled it and guess what, even the internet doesn't know about the stick-shaking thing).

In one such temple, there's a 10-foot solid gold Buddha that attracts tourists with its shimmering glory. Next to it is a two-foot lump of clay that attracts nobody. Yet the exhibits are linked, with their story going back thousands of years ...

True story. The original gold statue was housed in an ancient temple. The monks heard of a plot to raid the temple and loot it of its treasure, so they covered the gold Buddha with a thick cladding of clay, hoping the thieves would think it worthless.

It worked! Kind of. The thieves made off with a hoard of valuables but left the Buddha statue behind. Excellent! Along with a bloodbath of slaughtered monks. *Bummer.*

Then, in Indiana Jones times, a team of archaeologists cut a swathe through the jungle and came across the derelict and

overgrown temple. They found the clay Buddha and thought it would look pretty cool in their museum, so they built a contraption, hoisted it onto their shoulders and struggled through the jungle. Remember, it was solid gold, so the men struggled. One of them collapsed in the heat and the statue fell, cracking the clay ever so slightly. That night, as they rested, the tropical rain lashed down and the next day, the team awoke to a glint of gold. The torrential rain had washed away some of the clay, revealing the 24-carat truth.

And we can't help thinking that's a nice way to anchor our first chapter. The bleedin' obvious point being that we're all a bit like that Buddha. No, no, not literally pot-bellied and cross-legged, but *metaphorically* – as in, we accumulate layers. We learn the rules of life. Work hard, be a decent friend, have a social life, get noticed at work, earn more cash, don't swear in front of the kids ...

Layer upon layer is added until our shine gets diminished. Look here, loyal reader, we're not alchemists. We don't need to be. There's gold inside folks, but the outside can become a bit heavy and dull. We want to chip away at the crusty stuff so you can tackle life in all your golden glory.

Chipping away is a crucial concept. Most books are 'additive', giving you theories, principles and concepts to remember and apply. In the past you might, for example, have had to learn and remember seven habits, five levels, ten commandments, eight laws or twelve principles. These are the layers in the Buddha story. You can accumulate a lot of shit.

We love you. You've gone to the trouble of buying our book so, as a big fat thank you, we will treat you to some 'subtractive

psychology'. Less is more. Let's help take some shit off you. We want to give you *less* to think about, *less* to do and take things *off* your mind. Possibly, heaven forbid, take yourself and life *less* seriously.

Ask yourself, all those years of 'doing more' – those seven habits, five levels, ten commandments, eight laws and twelve principles. Has it worked? Have you found happiness? Or clarity? Or is life just full-on exhausting?

All your worldly problems may seem complicated. But what if they're not? What if they can all be solved with some insight, wrapped in a fluffy down-feathered duvet of simplicity?

Wouldn't that make a nice change?

We all have this great inner psychological inertia. This is because our minds are essentially accumulations of habits. We all have physical habits, like brushing our teeth or flossing the cat. But we also have mental habits – biases and stereotypes we regularly fall back upon. These are worn and weathered explanations for the world's difficulties, assumptions that get us out of a psychological pickle. We rely on these mental habits just as we rely on physical habits – they sort and rearrange the world for us without us having to expend any conscious effort.

'Fate rarely calls upon us at the moment of our choosing.'

Optimus Prime, Leader of the Autobots

By the time we're old enough to enter the workplace, we have developed into emotional, walking, talking, lumbering habit

machines. We've developed a sense of who we are and what we're good and bad at. Most functioning adults also have a canny knack of being able to imagine how others perceive us, which gives rise to a whole load of issues around self-consciousness and embarrassment. In short, we all end up with an identity. If you want to change 'who you are' in the truest personal development sense of 'leaning into being your best self', then it's worth analogizing that life's not a nippy speedboat zipping about on a millpond sea – you're carrying a lifetime of emotional and psychological cargo and hauling it across the vast oceans of your unconscious.

We want to provide you with some quick wins, but a lot of personal change takes time, courage and practice, so please expect a lot of sloshing around.

Casper and the vol-au-vents

The human brain is capable, and generally very good at, making maps of time. That means we can remember the past, compare it to the present and imagine the future. The upside of this ability is that we can reflect and learn in a proactive way, we can design systems to deal with our environment, we can anticipate changing seasons and be ready for them, we can make plans for the future. The downside is that we can be haunted by our past or paralysed by a fearful future. We can end up dreading change. Other animals don't have this thinking capacity.

I can't prove that last sentence, it's just a hunch. I am not an ant-eater so don't actually know what goes on in its mind. Ant-eaters may, in fact, be merrily reminiscing about the good old days when ants were in plentiful supply, back in the summer of 1974.

And after a hearty ant meal they might dream of moving onto pastures new, where the ants are bigger and the days warmer. But it's unlikely. They're more likely to have their noses in small holes, extending their sticky tongues until their brain sends a primitive signal saying their bellies are full of ants. Then they'll sleep, shit and start again.

Excuse the clunky metaphor, but you and I know people who are living the ant-eater life.

Of course, there's a host of valid reasons that we fall into work/eat/shit/sleep/repeat mode. There's a snappy Bilbo Baggins' quote – 'I feel thin, sort of stretched, like butter scraped over too much bread' – that we think reveals a profound truth of the modern era. 'Busyness' is a contemporary disease that it's difficult to shake off.

Have you noticed the new default response to, 'Hi there, how you doin'?' is, 'Oh, you know, keeping busy.'

'So much time, and so little to do! Strike that, reverse it.'

Willy Wonka

And there are levels of busy. I've heard people say they are crazily busy or, more correctly, stupidly busy. Life has become a bit like the wonderful German word, *Schilderwald*: a street with so many road signs that you become lost.

I doubt anyone really wants to live a harried and stressed life crammed with busyness. Bursts of busy, for sure. But full-on, relentless, jam-packed, bonkers busy? Is it *really* better than the opposite? Is exhausted and dead on your feet better than refreshed with a spring in your step?

How did we get here, rushing along the platform of busyness central?

It's something we collectively force one another to do. It's copying. It's interesting

to dare ask yourself: what are you busy doing? If you're busy doing back-to-back shifts at the paediatric intensive care unit, then our metaphorical caps are doffed. But if you're busy sitting in traffic, back-to-back meetings and scrolling your smartphone, our caps remain undoffed and our eyebrows raised in a head-teachery glare.

'This morning I went to a meeting of my premature ejaculators' support group. But it turns out that it's tomorrow.'

Gary Delaney

It might be that you've become addicted to busyness and dread the alternative – unadulterated peace and quiet. Time with yourself. Think about it, if your diary is crammed with so much stuff that stopping for a wee at the motorway services causes your day to fall out of kilter, then that's a nod to how busy and important you must be. If you're in such demand at so many meetings that you're consistently arriving harried and just a little bit late then, crikey, you must have significance. If you're struggling to attend your children's Christmas play because of work commitments then, goodness me, your job must be important. If you've got to set the alarm for 5.30am to catch the early train to London then, holy cow, that must be a crucial meeting. If you slump through your front door, say a cursory 'Hi' to your family before dashing upstairs to log onto your emails, boy are you important. If you sit in bed, next to your wonderful partner, scrolling through Twitter, then you must have so many followers ...

Jeez. How important are you? All these people need you!

The question we've not quite been daring enough to ask is: what if all this busyness stuff is a ruse? What if we're just papering over the cracks of meaninglessness?

In the Baggins quote, most individuals and organizations complain of not having enough butter – *it's not fair, we need more resources, more time and more staff to get the job done.*

It's unfair! One nob of butter can't possibly cover the whole loaf.

But what if we came at it from a different angle? What would happen if, instead of always seeking more butter, we found the discipline to cover less bread? This might sound harsh, but in the interests of genuinely challenging your thinking, what if spreading our butter too thin is a form of hiding? It helps us to be busy because it makes it unlikely we will have an impact.

The refreshing reality is that we're not going to give you any more stuff to do. *Phew!* You will be delighted to know that we're on your side – we reckon you're already doing more than your fair share. Your life is full-on. Your workplace head count has been butchered to the point that you're doing the work of three people. You are ruthlessly efficient to the point that you've adopted the email Russian Doll system, whereby your little yellow folders have little yellow folders inside them.

We think that modernity has converted too many of us from 'human beings' into 'human doings', where your burgeoning to-do list has become so overwhelming that you might have forgotten who you are. So, in a refreshing deviation from the norm, we are not going to give you anything to do, but we are going to challenge who you're *being*. If you let that sink in for a

moment, you will realize it's a 'yikes' moment. Because this doesn't merely challenge your working hours, but your home life too.

If you come on our workshops, you'll hear us banging on about the average lifespan of 4000 weeks. Is that a big number? It's interesting that if you announce it to a bunch of primary schoolchildren they'll leap around the hall in delight, whereas an adult audience will absorb the same data with a raised eyebrow and a look of mild panic. *Really? Is that true? It's not a very big number. I've used a few!*

'The trouble is,
you think you
have time.'

Buddha

The simple truth is not only simple and true, but deadly so. And it's this, something that I cottoned onto a couple of years ago: *everywhere I go, I'm there* (told you it was deadly simple).

What I mean is that for the entirety of my lifetime, I'm stuck with me for the entire 4000-week gig. I can run as fast as I like, but there's not a single second of escape from me.

And you're stuck with you.

So, if I'm stuck with myself for 4000 weeks, I may as well be stuck with a version of me that I'm proud of. A me that shines. A version of myself with something about him: energy, vigour, zest, happiness, positivity, confidence and passion. Rather than the rather worn-out, insipid version of me that I hung around with for my first 35 years.

The dirty little truth is that if I want to be the awesome version of me, I need to 'do less' and 'be more'. In a spooky twist of

the universe, by being more of yourself at your best, you will accidentally get more done. Moreover, you will have bags more energy to devote to things outside of work. Indeed, you might even have stumbled on one of the secrets of happiness, namely that if there's a revolution to be started, it has to start inside your head first.

The outside-in nature of thought has fooled us into thinking that 'I am me' in this body in this time called 'life'. Therefore I'd better climb as high as the corporate ladder will take me, score as many points and accumulate as much stuff as I can before I die. These trappings of 'success' and 'materialism' are sadly mistaken for signs of accomplishment on the 4000-week journey. You have succeeded so long as you get promoted and have loads of stuff.

Yet we don't often see a tombstone with 'Here lies Brenda. She was a senior manager and, boy, did she have loads of stuff'. Invariably the engravings are more about your qualities and what your life meant to those left behind. This works on a family level and on a work level.

So, in order to focus your mind, let's skip ahead to the end of your 4000 weeks. Cutting to the chase, there's going to be a bit of a do. With some sandwiches. Yes folks, church is a great place for the 'hatch' and 'match' parts of life, but the 'dispatch' bit can be more gruelling. Your family and friends will gather, with a pervading sense of sobriety, to talk about you. Indeed, you will be the sole topic of conversation for the entire day.

We're hoping they will be proud of what you've done, but that's not going to be what they talk about. They will be reminiscing about who you've been. Hence, the kind of person you are becomes crucial.

So here are two killer questions. We project you to that fateful day, to the moment you've been dispatched and the party moves to the sandwiches and cup of tea bit – you're allowed to be there in spirit. And if you hover, Casper-like, near the vol-au-vents and listen in, what kind of conversations would you like people to be having? What kind of memories do you want them to be recalling?

Herein lies your true power. If you shine during your 4000 weeks, you will not only enjoy a radiant life, you will also enable others to shine and stand a pretty good chance of lighting up your own funeral.