

# Journey One

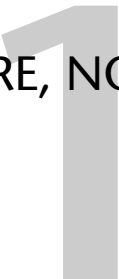
*Coaching from a Different  
Perspective – Yours*

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# *Journey One – Coaching from a Different Perspective – Yours*

## YOU, HERE, NOW



When you were young, you believed in yourself, you were confident and happy. Those feelings have not been lost, they have not disappeared; they are simply buried within you, and whether you unleash them *is your choice, and yours alone.*

Often, when I speak at conferences, I am introduced with the ‘strip-tease’ music. Every time I have to react as if it is the first time – like the Mars salesperson who hears the ‘Look, it’s the man from Mars’ a dozen times a day.

They do this because they think I am the ‘naked’ leader, or coach.

And I am not.

They are.

You are.

Please be in no doubt, once and for always. Everything I write about is in the public domain. Everything I write about you already know, deep down. And everything I write about is obvious. All I have done is stripped away any jargon, mystery or hype.

Because, as I have said many times before, and will say many more times in this book, it is not only your birthright to be successful, by your own definition, it is your birthright to know how to be successful, at any time, and anywhere.

I read the books that you haven’t the time to, I gather the material so that you don’t have to. All I do is present it in a very simple way.

Which I have to, as it is the only way I understand.

The Naked Coach is about you:

All of you – the you at home, the you at work, the you that leads you, and the you that follows you around. The you that already knows, deep down, what you want and need to do in your life, in your teams, in your organization.

And what's more, I don't even mind if you believe me on this one. In fact, I would prefer if you don't believe in me at all. I want to know if you believe in you.

So, my first question: if not you, then who?

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If not you, then who?

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### *Are you in ownership of your life?*

Simple test to see if you are in ownership of your life – to do right now. Think about someone in your family, or in your team at work. Someone whom you talk about a lot, when they are not there. Next time you are with them, perhaps just the two of you, tell them what you think, to their face. Be pleasant, be respectful, be professional. However, it is time to stop speaking *about* that person, and speak *to* that person.

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This is a key moment in your journey of self-coaching – you can either do something about it, or simply read on. All you have to ask yourself, indeed the ultimate question of self-coaching, is –

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Does what I am thinking/feeling/doing serve me or others, or not?

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If you are not in ownership of your life, who is?

We all want to be popular, well liked. However, do you take it one stage too far – do you need it? If you do, if other people or outside events dictate how you feel about yourself, you are not in ownership. Someone else is.

You must be in ownership of your life, if you are going to coach yourself.

You must be in ownership of your life, if you are going to coach others.

And, most fundamentally, you must be in ownership of your life, if you are going to make your future, your choice.

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**What do you think? Your Future – By Chance or ... Your Future – Your Choice?**

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Decide which you believe, right now. If you decided 'Chance', read on. If you decided 'Choice', do not read the next paragraph; go to the one beginning with '*Choice*'.

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### *Chance*

Congratulations – you are absolutely right, always have been and always will be. And each and every day, this thing we call 'life' will conspire to support your belief – if you believe that such moments are out of your control and only come along now and then, that is what will happen, because it will become self-fulfilling.

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OK, so you read that paragraph, anyway.

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### *Choice*

Congratulations – you are absolutely right, always have been and always will be. And each and every day, this thing we call 'life' will conspire to support your belief – if you believe that such moments are within your control and come along whenever you choose, that is what will happen, because it will become self-fulfilling.

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So, if you believe you need to wait for such moments to come along, then wait. When and if they do, please rejoin the book then. And, if

you believe the second, what you read and what you do next will have a transformational impact on your life.

I love those words ‘a transformational impact’. ‘Transformational’ is something way beyond ‘Change’. If you freeze water, it becomes ice. Yet, when melting it reverts to water. These are changes. Temporary shifts in state. If you burn a stick of wood, it becomes ashes. It can never become wood again. This is transformation. When a caterpillar – a slow, creeping, wormlike creature – undergoes metamorphosis, it emerges as a delicate and beautiful butterfly capable of flight. This is transformation. A permanent shift in state. And I suppose the biggest transformation of them all was the big bang, the transformation into the known universe.

I use transformation as a description of the result of what you do.

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Only you can make that choice.

Only you can make that transformation.

Your life – your choice.

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The power of this book is yours – it is you, decided by, and only by you. This book is not about what you read, rather what you do with what you read. I believe there is one reason above all others that many, many books do not inspire people to take action – because most fall into one fundamental trap: *they assume the power of any communication is with the communicator*. And it is not.

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The power, and effectiveness, of any and all communication is with the receiver – you – and the action that you take as a result.

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Please don’t get me wrong. That decision and action may not be to travel to the moon. It may be simply to do nothing and relax, or to tell someone you love them, and mean it. Or to receive love provided by someone close to you.

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Love plays a massive part in preparing people for a leadership role. I’ve been helping my fiancée (Claire), who is about to take on a leadership role at work, to build upon

her confidence. I could teach her all of the numerous techniques I've learned over the years. However, I found the most effective way was simply to show love and trust in her. Even when I thought she might stray off track, I let her; and I made sure that I was there if she fell.

*Tony Knill*

What is a 'huge' decision for some may be 'small' for others. It is *your* decision, *your* life, *your* adventure. So this is your book, not mine. Because being a Naked Coach is about being you – it is about coming home to be who you already are. It is about finding success, by finding yourself.

Being successful, by being you.

In a world that so wants us to be like everyone else – as thin as ... , as successful as ... , as ...

Imagine that everything you have ever done, all that you have ever known, and each thought you have ever had, comes down to this very moment. As you read this. Because it does, and to every moment that you live.

How powerful is that?

And how powerful are you?

Transformation, by being yourself. How cool is that? Having a transformational impact – on your own life – by simply being yourself.

In your life I expect you have heard the following phrases:

'You are good'

'You are bad'

'You are a great ... '

'You are not so good at ... '

And so the list goes on.

The words and opinions you heard and took on board as truths from the day you were born right up to this very moment as you read this.

I now offer you a different perspective:

You are

You are here, and now:

Wherever you have come from

Whoever you have met

Whatever you have done

And in that is a miracle so powerful and a truth so deep, that whatever you are thinking right now, as you simply realize that you *are*, perhaps you are filled with joy, energy and hope.

Think about what made you: the timing, synchronicity (coincidence?), and delicate biological tuning – the whole process of making you – is perhaps the finest example of sub-conscious self-coaching ever. An ovum needed to be regularly released each month from your mother's ovary, a process that could only proceed if a complicated cascade of hormonal events took place without interference. This egg then needed to be able to move freely along an unblocked Fallopian tube where it could be fertilized by a sperm and then reach the womb. The sperm had to be healthy, mobile and numerous, although only one ultimately penetrated the egg and formed an embryo with it. Think about that leading sperm, full of a desire for life – do you think it ever thought to itself, 'I don't feel like doing this today' or 'I think I'll give up now'?

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The many processes that must occur at precisely the right moment for the creation of you, were, and are, astounding.

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And the miracle continues: the lining of the womb had to be receptive to this embryo so that it could embed itself within it and begin to produce the hormones necessary to maintain the pregnancy thereafter.

Any one of these sensitive and essential components of fertility could easily be upset by a number of unfavourable factors that would have resulted in you not being here, and who you are, today.

If what people say about you is important to you, as it is to many, your birth-day was a critical day for you. Everyone rejoiced. Everyone. They asked you your weight without adding the word 'diet'. They looked at you and made 'gaga' noises without fear of their own embarrassment. And they loved you without condition. *Without condition*. And you so loved in return.

Love conceived you, love made you in the warmth of your mummy, and you were loved on the day that you were born.

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'It comes like the waves in the ocean,' my mother told me.  
'Powerful, strong and rhythmic. Unceasing. Wave after



wave.' She was right. In labour with my son, my first child, he and I are carried over crest and trough, and we let go, freeing ourselves to be swept into birth. I feel and see my body writhing, snakelike and sensual as the waves come, one following the other. My body responds, knowing what to do. I let go. 'You can't fight the waves. Just let them carry you.' I hold her words in my mind, and, for one long holy moment, surrender myself to the magic, as I have never done before.

*Deirdre Pulgram Arthen*

Just four weeks after conception, your heartbeat could be detected! Your teeth buds appeared at 45 days after conception! Nine weeks after conception, your fingerprints, footprints and palm creases could be seen by ultrasound! On the day that you were born, you were 'perfect', and you still are, and always will be. Why do so many of us try to change perfection? And, more importantly, why do we so rarely accept perfection in ourselves?

A little girl walked to and from school daily. Though the weather that morning was questionable and clouds were forming, she made her daily trek to the elementary school. As the afternoon progressed, the winds whipped up, along with thunder and lightning. The mother of the little girl felt concerned that her daughter would be frightened as she walked home from school and she herself feared that the electrical storm might harm her child.

Full of concern, the mother quickly got into her car and drove along the route to her child's school. As she did so, she saw her little girl walking along, but at each flash of lightning, the child would stop, look up and smile. Another and another were to follow quickly and with each, the little girl would look at the streak of light and smile. When the mother's car drove up beside the child, she lowered the window and called to her, 'What are you doing? Why do you keep stopping?' The child answered, 'I am trying to look pretty. God keeps taking my picture.'

*Paul Dinsmore*

If you think that being born with a disability makes you or someone else imperfect, that is only your point of view, or choice. Being born blind, or deaf, or whatever, does not make you imperfect, unless you decide that it does. Andrea Bocelli was born blind ('No moments in my life have gone by without being filled with passion for music.'), as was Fanny Crosby (she wrote more than 8000 songs). Dummy Hoy, born deaf, was an outstanding player in Major League Baseball in the US. If you are dyslexic, you have a far greater statistical chance of being a millionaire. And so the list goes on.

It is for us to pray not for tasks equal to our powers,  
but for powers equal to our tasks,  
to go forward with a great desire forever beating at the  
door of our hearts  
as we travel toward our distant goal.

*Helen Keller*  
*Deaf and blind author, activist, and lecturer*

Our only real disabilities are the disabling choices we make.

On those days when you are feeling a bit down, or you feel like not giving or being your best, think about that moment when you emerged into the world. Did your mother say to herself on the day that you were born, 'I don't feel like giving birth today, so I don't think I'll bother'?

Someone said to me at a conference, 'I am a born cynic.'

'Trust me,' I told him, 'you're not. If you were a born cynic, you would never have come out of your mother in the first place.'

'And,' I added, 'you have only decided that recently.'

Please, show me a cynical child.

As the birth of my first baby is nearly here (two months to go!), I wondered to myself what are the questions that might help him or her in life, so I decided to write this; maybe one day it will help my 'little nipper' ...

Dear Little Nip,

In times of crisis, we empower, we have a go and we forget the word 'can't'. We seem to go beyond any boundaries or limitations we once thought we had.

Take time to wonder at the possibilities you might create for yourself every day.

At times we will think that we are 'right' and everyone else is 'wrong' and will go to great lengths to prove it. Friendships break down, families fall out and we even go to war to show that we are right and others are wrong ... but at what cost? Idealism and getting the 'right answer' can be a great motivator and drive us forward; it can also get in your way and stop you from achieving anything at all.

So my little baby – use these questions to help you as they have helped me to create the wonderful life and opportunity we are creating together:

Limits – what limits?!

Am I just trying to be 'right' or could I be creating new amazing possibilities for others and myself instead?

Am I making the most of 'now'?

We only have now!

Lots of love

Mum xx

*Fleur Wilkinson – Re-Innovate Ltd*

*Fleur works with a number of organizations, helping them to create business benefits through coaching and innovation cultures.*



And then we have the other extreme – how you will be remembered after you die.

Tell me, have you ever been to a funeral where someone said, 'He could have done much better in this area' or 'She was not good at that'? Or read in the local paper that a person who has just died was a 'pain in the community who will not be missed'?

### *Transformation, by being yourself*

I once shared this idea at a conference and the delegates and I had a thirty-minute debate on whether it was possible, whether it was logical and whether it was the correct use of English to say that one could transform by being oneself. Surely the term 'to transform' means to

become something else? Frankly, fascinating though the discussion may be, it is irrelevant.

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You have little time on this earth – as it says in *The Shawshank Redemption* – it is time to get busy living, or get busy dying.

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We have talked and debated, and read and re-read enough, thank you very much. It is now time for action – to actually go out and take that first step towards your dream, your outcome, your result. And when you do that, and you succeed, if you want to call that success, or transformation, or a pair of curtains, I really don't mind. And you don't need to, either.

We spend so much time talking action and not enough taking action. We chat and discuss and analyse what we should or should not do – we even have business events and round-table dinners to do this. And we all get together and put forward our points of view and experiences, and we hear others' points of view and experiences.

And then what? At worst, we make sure our point of view prevails – which is absolutely pointless as no-one else will do anything about it unless they have chosen to. At best we are inspired. To do what?

There is no point in being inspired unless we actually do something with it. Inspiration is an energy that is just waiting to be used – and if it isn't, then it will simply run out. Like one of those helium balloons; release it at maximum energy and off it goes, on its journey. Left in a house, it slowly deflates and gets lower each day until it lies crumpled on the floor. These discussions and events and training courses are pretty much like that.

Up until now you either agree with me, or you don't. If you agree, please put this book down now and go do something.

I will say that again. You either agree with me, or you don't. If you agree, please put this book down now and go do something. Mark the book where you are and rejoin me later.

OK – you are not yet convinced, or you have taken that first step. Either way, that little voice in your head has started chatting away – and that little voice is most likely telling you to stop, to be careful, not to take a risk, not to make a mistake ... Indeed, it is filling your mind with more reasons for inaction or why not to take the second

step. And because it is your inner voice, and people tend to like to agree with themselves (otherwise madness quickly ensues), this voice is now sounding like the voice of reason.

It is actually the Voice of Excuse. And it specializes in four main excuses above all others – and they are:

- If you do that you, could lose everything – protect what you have
- If success was this simple, everyone would be doing it – you need to be convinced
- You need more information, more data and knowledge before you agree to make your first move
- You do not know what you want to do, or where you want to be

Four reasons for inaction, from the Voice of Excuse ...

### *Excuse One: If you do that you could lose everything – protect what you have*

I call this the fifty word excuse – and it goes something like this:

At an entrepreneurial seminar, a fellow delegate said to the speaker after the event, ‘I wish I could do what you do,’ to which the speaker replied, ‘Why don’t you, then?’ And then the words came out – one on top of the other:

*‘I’d love to and I couldn’t because I have a well paid job and a lovely family and I’d lose my career and my family and our house and be divorced and I’d be alone and then I’d be on the street and then I’d be desperate and have nothing to live for.’*

It’s always around fifty words, depending on how ‘low’ the low point – I call it the ‘I’d be’ paragraph of destruction – fifteen seconds from dream to despair while standing on the same spot. What wonderful games the mind can play.

I was working at Allianz-Cornhill in Guildford, when one day I decided to resign and leave a well paid job, to pursue my dream of writing and spreading the word on leadership. I had no promise of work, and no guarantee of income. It was the bravest, most exciting

and most stupid thing I have ever done, and if I had my time over, I would have found a different way of making my dream happen.

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A high-performing employee in our company was in a dilemma – part of him wanted to quit and ride a Harley across the American Midwest, the other part wanted to make a success of his new role – a very challenging one. We arranged for him to spend time with an external coach, and the coach worked with him over a few months to help him clarify his priorities in the new job, recognize what success looked like and contextualize the role in relation to his personal career development. He discovered for himself that he only wanted to ‘quit’ because in many ways that was the easier option. The result? A happy, at-ease employee who is once again performing to his potential and relishing the fresh challenges and opportunities that the role brings. Oh, and he will soon be taking an extended holiday to ride that bike ...

*John Botia*

*HR Director – Scottish & Newcastle UK*

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The idea that to pursue your dream means giving up everything that is dear to you is nonsense.

And that is the very last thing I would recommend you do, because:

- Success does not necessarily mean leaving your present company – indeed, it may be to stay and grow and find fulfilment.
- Success does not necessarily mean anything to do with work or your career.
- Success is yours – it is yours to own and no-one else has any right to tell you that your success is wrong, providing that you do not hurt, or damage, someone else.

If you have a dream, you have the power to achieve that dream. I truly believe that, and I am the last person to recommend that you give up what you have to pursue what you want. There are so many other ways.

*Excuse Two: If success was this simple, everyone would be doing it – you need to be convinced*

Success is indeed very simple, for anything in your life. Indeed, there is a simple formula that guarantees it:

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Know what you want to do, or where you want to be  
 Know where you are now  
 Know what you have to do, to get to where you want to go,  
 or where you want to be  
 And  
 Do it!

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Simple, but that doesn't make it easy.

Not easy, because we have 'learned' (by being told over and over and over) that success is tough, and achieving it requires this qualification or that experience. And yet, when you think about everything you have done in the last 24 hours that you would call 'success' (achieving the result that you hoped for), you will find you followed this formula to the letter. Whether it was motivating your team, closing a sale with a customer, eating lunch, or simply going to the loo, you followed it.

You always have, you always do, and you always will.

So, everyone is doing it – including you. All I am asking you to do is to apply what you already know, and what you already do, to some of the bigger things in your life. Simple, yet not easy.

Because then we might have to face up to the possibility that we can be more, that we can achieve our wildest dreams, that we can take that first step. And that makes us excited, and uncomfortable.

Fine, that is what this book is here to help you with, so get over excuse number two now – success is a formula, it is simple and it is available to you, right now.

*Excuse Three: You need more information, more data and knowledge before you agree to make your first move*

In which case put down this book now and go and lie down. You need it – you have learned so many facts about success, you have heard so many ideas about achieving your dreams, you have found

so many people who are happy to give you their advice on turning your personal life into an adventure. And yet now, you feel you want some more.

OK – this book will provide you with specific ways to achieve success. I simply ask of you one thing – be aware of the skills, talent and knowledge that you already have.

Yes, this book is full of tips and actions and ‘How-To’s. However, I am no longer going to pander to your false belief that before you take that first step, you need more. You decide you are going to take that first step and I will help you take it.

Whatever you want in life, you have massive power and potential to make it happen, to bring it closer – and

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there is no point having such huge potential, if you do nothing with it.

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I had to find a breakthrough with a member of my team – I knew he was planning an extension to his home, and asked how this was going. He gave me a catalogue of reasons why this had not progressed. After he finished his long list there was silence. I let the silence happen, and it was he who broke it, to say there was ‘no reason, really’. Perhaps two of the most powerful tools we have in business coaching – silence, and relating what we discuss to other areas of our lives. Both seem to work, every time.

*Keith Newman*

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### *A question from a conference in Cape Town*

‘David, is what you have shared with us today, this idea that we have everything we need to be anything we want already within us, provable, in hard scientific, logical, analytical terms?’

I thought for a moment and then answered: ‘No.’

Everyone at the conference reacted differently. What I said next came simply from my heart, and was something like this:



‘Why do we always put so much importance on things having to be measured, or proved, or analysed? Why do we have to think through ideas and choices in our own heads before we go out and do something, or before we take ownership, or we awaken to the possibility we have incredible talent, just as we are. Surely, for whatever we think in life, we can always find so-called evidence that we are right or wrong? I am not sure any one course of action can be a catch-all solution or way forward for everyone, because we are all different, with different challenges and dreams, and on different journeys. I am sure – I am absolutely certain – that all of this thinking and avoiding decisions and action until we have proved what we are about to do will work, is one of the main excuses we use for not achieving our destinies, or from taking our organizations forward.

‘What about how we feel about an idea, about a choice, about anything? Have we as a society become so embedded in the importance of knowledge that we have forgotten the power of our own instincts, our own hearts? We are so obsessed with the word, with the graph, with the statistic. I believe it is time to go with the heart, with the gut, with our feelings.’

And of course, as with anything, we can always quote sources that support what we say, in this case the brilliant *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell.

And we rarely quote sources that disagree with what we say, in this case the brilliant *The Devil’s Chaplain* by Richard Dawkins.

Read these if you choose – or next time you have a decision to make. Listen with your head, and go with your heart.



### *Excuse Four: You do not know what you want to do, or where you want to be*

AHA!!! The BIG ONE.

When we release that potential, even if we think about the release of that potential, our heart leaps. And then we think about that new power we would have, and that world of uncertainty, and just as quickly, our heart sinks.

Exciting as ‘Transformation’ is, it also brings with it huge fear.

I was opening a two-day leadership event and started with the words ‘Welcome to an experience that will have a transformational impact on you, on those whose lives you touch, on your communities, your teams and your organization, if you so choose’.

One person said that they had a ‘problem’ with that – and with anything that made such a big, positive claim. Indeed, hearing those words put him off the event, and made him decide that the event would have no such impact. I apologized, and said:

‘OK. If it helps you more, welcome to an experience that will have no impact whatsoever on you, on those whose lives you touch, on your communities, your teams and your organization, if you so choose.’

Because, although so many of us are looking, waiting, hoping for that magic moment, that master key, that secret revealed, that will bring us what we seek – peace of mind, freedom, and ultimate happiness – we greatly fear the unknown.

And so we convince ourselves that transformation cannot be within our control, almost that we would rather be uncomfortable with what we know than move into the unknown. And to support this view, we look at other people – after all, if it was this simple, more people would be happy, and fulfilled, and the world would be a better place.

And so we conform – we become much like everyone else and keep our true self and dreams and ambitions to ourselves.

Until that very moment when we decide ‘That’s it, enough, I am now going to do something – for myself, for someone else, for my team, for my company, for my world. I am going to stand up and be counted’.

That moment is now, if you so choose.

To know that this really is one of those special, almost unique moments where we can take a big decision in our lives. When we feel in control, rather than being controlled. When you are ready for something big to happen. And as you read these words and think about that possibility, perhaps your heart is beating slightly louder with excitement, your body is buzzing with energy, and your whole being is ready, in anticipation.

All of our lives come down to such moments. And, by deciding that this is such a moment, we give ourselves a power to make a

decision, to take an action, as opposed to simply waiting for such moments to come along (I find it fascinating that so many people, teams and organizations do such waiting).

For this book is your book, it is your life, and if you are brave enough, if you dare to make that decision, I promise you that you will not be alone. And more so, that you will never, ever regret it.

So, you are ready to take ownership of your life, to look at the choices before you on something that is important. And to make a decision.

How do you do that?

You simply do it – you make a decision on the ‘What’.

And you make it in a moment, with a single blink of your eyes, in a heartbeat. Wherever you are, on a train, at home, wherever. Whenever you are, whatever age. And, whoever you are, woman or man, ‘tall’ or ‘short’, ‘ill’ or ‘well’ etc., etc.

Right now, in this moment, make a decision. And as you do, and you read these words, perhaps feelings of great warmth, and hope, and joy begin to flood all over you.

Record this moment – the unique moment in your life – the time, the place and, if you wish, the decision:

The premise is simple:

Your future is your choice, always.

You, me, everyone can always choose what we do, how we ACT.

And:

Whilst we may not be able to control other people, events around us and in the world, and things that happen to us, we can always control how we REACT.

So, your future is your choice, and no-one else's.

I can almost hear your objections as I write this. Objections you are raising because the idea that our future is under our own control is one of the most frightening we can ever take on board. Because, when we take it on board, we have to stop making excuses, stop giving reasons for us not being the best we already are, and we can convince anyone of this, especially ourselves.

By coaching ourselves, and others, to be the very best that we, and they, already are, and always have been.

Ask yourself this question: is there anyone on this planet, any team on this earth, any organization in the world that has achieved what you want to achieve, from a poorer, more disadvantaged starting point than you?

If the answer is yes, then your not achieving your goals/dreams/vision is your choice, and your reasoning for not doing so is an excuse. And I promise you, the answer is YES.

Now go and live.

Now go and coach.

### *A journey to meet your future self*

Find somewhere to sit where you are comfortable and will not be disturbed. Perhaps you can put on some relaxing music or sounds of nature.

Sit up straight; put your hands in your lap or on your knees. Relax your shoulders. Let your whole body relax. Feel you are just using your bones to keep you upright and soften your muscles. Take six full, deep breaths, making the exhalation of each slightly longer each time. With each breath out, feel any tension in your body releasing.

You are going on a journey to meet your future self. The self you will be in five years' time. You are going to meet the one person who knows the right decisions for you to take, to grow more relaxed and more fulfilled and to bring more energy and enthusiasm into your life.

Imagine you are standing at the beginning of a path that leads to a beach. Perhaps the path is one you are familiar with or maybe it is a new path just for this journey. It's just a path.

Pretend you are looking around you as you start walking towards the beach. What kind of path are you walking on? Is it rough and gravelly? Is it smooth tarmac? Is it soft and sandy? What are your feet feeling as they move along the path towards the beach?

It's a beautiful day! Feel the gentle heat of the sun on your face as you walk towards the beach. There is a light wind. It is bringing the smell of the sea to you and the mixture of the heat of the sun and the gentle breeze helps you feel peaceful and relaxed, and a little excited, because today you have an appointment to meet your future self on the beach.

Look around you. Are you passing through fields? Is there a wall beside the path, or a fence, or is it just open ground? You are moving down the path towards the beach and now you feel shingle beneath your feet. You have reached the beach. Stand on the shingle for a moment and breathe in the smell of the sea. Feel the heat of the sun and the kiss of the wind on your face.

Now you are moving down the shingle beach towards the sea. Imagine the stones moving and sliding beneath your feet as you walk down the slope towards the dry sand, which leads you to the wet sand and to the sea. Feel the surface under your feet change as you step from the shingle to the dry sand. Smell the salt of the sea. Perhaps you can feel the moisture in the wind.

You are now stepping on to the wet sand. Feel the change in texture and now, just out of the reach of the breaking surf, turn right and walk beside the sea in the wet sand. Up ahead you can see a fire burning on the shingle. It is the place where you have arranged to meet your future self.

As you walk on the wet sand towards the fire, the wind carries the smell of the fire to you, the smell of wood smoke

mixing with the smell of the sea. Now turn away from the sea, towards the fire, and sit down beside it, close enough to feel its gentle heat. You may be feeling excited. After all you are about to meet the one person who can tell you the right decisions to make to reach your highest potential.

As you sit there beside the fire, you become aware of someone in the distance walking towards you on the wet sand by the sea, coming from the opposite direction that you came from. As the person gets closer you start to recognize the face and the features. It is you in five years' time. You look much more relaxed than now, much healthier, and there is a confidence in your movement. Your future self grins as it approaches the fire, so pleased to see you.

Greet your future self, maybe with a hug, maybe with a kiss. Whatever feels right. Now, sit down together.

As you sit there ask your future self the questions that you would like answered.

What did you do to become so healthy?

Why do you feel much more relaxed?

What was it that made you so confident and fulfilled?

What happened in the last five years that changed so much?

Ask any of the questions in your heart and listen carefully as your future self gives you the answers. Take as long as you like ...

... Soon it will be time for your future self to leave, but before it goes it wants to give you a gift to remind you of your meeting. Hold out your hand and receive the gift given to you by your future self ...

... Now it is time for your future self to leave. Stand up and say goodbye. Maybe you give a last hug. Then you watch as your future self turns away and follows the wet footsteps in the sand, back to where it came from. Watch until it disappears from your view.

Now it is your time to leave. Imagine yourself walking back towards the sea and turning left to follow your old footsteps in the wet sand. Smell the sea. Feel the heat of the sun and the gentle wind on your face as you walk back down the beach. You have now reached the point where you came down to the sea,

so turn left and walk across the dry sand to the shingle on your way back to the path that brought you to the beach. Feel the surface beneath your feet change as you move from the shingle to the path and walk along the path until you reach the place where you began your walk.

Now it is time to return to this time and this place. Feel your body where it touches the chair. Gently stretch your body and, when you are ready, open your eyes.

Know that, whenever you want to, you can make another appointment and go to meet your future self. Have a delicious day.

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