

DON'T
STOP THE WORLD
I WANT TO
STAY ON!



Richard T Smith
THE MAGIC ENTREPRENEUR

Dedication

In 1976, Tavares recorded a song titled 'Heaven Must Be Missing an Angel.' I disagree with that as heaven is missing two angels, I know, because I have both of them. One is my long-suffering wife Christine. She has put up with my antics for all these years, from tying ripe tomatoes to her under-ripe tomato plant, to fastening a fake robin to the washing line and trying not to laugh when she put her finger to her lips to tell me to be quiet in case I scared it away. I shudder to think what my life would have been like had I not met Chris. She is not just my wife, she is my best friend who I love so very much and I am guilty of not telling her as often as I should do.

The other angel is our daughter Becky, who is the very life source that runs through our veins. She has enriched our lives beyond comprehension.

This book is dedicated to them.

The journey has to be better than the destination

I was asked why I had not written a book about magic as that seemed the right thing for the world record holder for the longest magic show to do. After thinking for a while, I replied that to explain *I would have to tell a story.*

It's a western story...

About two retired Texas Rangers, Augustus 'Gus' McRae played by Robert Duvall and Woodrow Call (the men always called him Captain) played by Tommy Lee Jones. Both are content to live out their remaining years in the tiny Texas town of Lonesome Dove.

That is until their old friend Jake...

Played by Robert Urich, comes to town and tells them about the incredible opportunities for cattle ranching in Montana. Encouraged by this, Call convinces Gus and many other townspeople to go on a perilous cattle drive to Montana.

Respect for the captain is second to none...

He is a man of principle. A promise is not worth anything until it is delivered and if he makes a promise, you can bet your life he will see it through.

Not only that...

When he makes a decision, he never goes back on it and so they start out for Montana. As they begin to encounter problems, the drive takes on an epic scale, ultimately becoming what could well be called the central event in the lives of all involved.

Gus has another agenda...

His former sweetheart now lives in Nebraska and he hopes for a second chance with her.

As the story unfolds...

You fall in love with the characters. You laugh and cry at different stages of the trail. Robert Urichs' character Jake was once a fellow Texas Ranger with the captain and Gus. He becomes involved with a bad crowd of horse thieves who are captured by the captain. The men are lined up to be hanged from a tree, one by one and all the time Jake knows the captain is not going to back down.

Eventually, it's his turn...

And all the men are silent; after all, he was once their friend.

Suddenly, Jake who has always respected the captain, kicks his horse and hangs himself.

Turning his cold, unforgiving eyes towards Gus, the captain says 'we have a herd of cattle to look after.'

One hundred miles from Montana, Gus is out scouting for Indians when an arrow is shot into his leg. He manages to hold out and gets back. Lying on the bed, he hears the doctor telling the captain that gangrene has set in and that if his leg is not amputated, then he will die.

Gus grabs his gun...

Threatening to 'blow off' the head of anyone who goes near his leg.

Trying to reason with him, the captain tells him that he is going to die if he does not listen to sense, adding that he only ever uses the leg to kick hog anyway. Gus argues that he likes kicking hog and demands to know how he is going to do it with only one leg.

As Gus's health deteriorates, he asks the captain to see that his money goes to certain people. The captain agrees and as we know, his word is his bond. Gus then asks him for one more favour, adding that he wants to be buried in Lonesome Dove.

The captain points out that Lonesome Dove is two thousand miles away and tries to persuade him to be buried in Montana, adding persuasively, or

so he hopes, that it is a beautiful place and that he could be buried under a tree so he would be in the shade.

You don't see it do you Woodrow?...

Gus persists pointing out that it is for the captains' benefit. He asks him what he plans to do when he gets to Montana, suggesting that he will just wither and die of old age, whereas by agreeing to Gus' request, he would go on a whole new adventure.

When Gus dies, the captain makes an arrangement with the undertaker to embalm him. As the winter is setting in, the captain plans to pick him up when he returns in the spring. He has only a hundred miles to go to complete the journey.

The word spreads...

Across the country, that there is a man who will travel two thousand miles to bury his friend.

Along the way, he has to cope with all kinds of problems, from crossing rapids to stopping buzzards from trying to eat his friend. As he arrives in Indian country, they line up and let him pass; such is the respect they have for a man who is true to his word. Tired, his clothes ragged and dirty, the captain places the last stone on Gus' grave, finally putting his friend to rest and telling him that from then on, he is going to be careful what he promises.

With a new horse and clean clothes, the captain takes one more ride through the town of Lonesome Dove, stopping to recall old memories. Just then, a young reporter runs over to him and asks if he is Captain Woodrow Call, going on to say that he has heard he took on the Comanches, took a herd of cattle two thousand miles to Montana and set up a settlement and that he is said to be a man of vision.

At this point the captain is taken back in time to see the whole journey unfold once more, from Jake being hanged and Gus dying and the long journey back. For the first time, you feel his emotion as his eyes begin to well up. He replies something to the effect of - 'A man of Vision you say? ***One hell of a vision.***' It was one hell of a journey.

Life isn't about the destination...

Because we all end up at the same destination. It is called the grave. It is the journey that matters. You never hear of someone comparing the funeral of Gandhi with that of Mother Teresa or Winston Churchills' funeral with John F Kennedys. We do not talk about their destinations, we talk about their journeys.

It is better to travel well than to arrive.

Buddha

That's why I chose...

To write my story rather than a book about magic. I want to go on the journey again. I want to learn from the good decisions I have made in my life and also from the bad ones – and trust me, there have been many. And as I look back, I know I have done things that I am not proud of, but I do not want to be a coward and only tell you about the good stuff. Sometimes you have got to take it on the chin.

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love* (1963)



So now I'm starting mine all over again...

And you are welcome to join me if you choose to, you never know, you just might enjoy the ride. ***Oh, and by the way, if Father Kenny reads this book... it is also my confession!***

Everyone wants to be appreciated. So if you appreciate someone, don't keep it a secret.

Mary Kay Ash

True Friends

In the words of the song 'Five Fingers' from one of life's true gentlemen - Charlie Landsborough:

Long ago my father placed his hand upon my head.

As he laid each finger down he smiled at me and said,

Someday son when you're a man you will understand,

You'll only count your true friends on the fingers of one hand.

Five fingers you can count upon,

*Five fingers and **you** are one.*

Throughout the book...

You will see Charlie's words depicting some of my true friends (after 58 years ***I am lucky to be on my second hand***) and if you are one of them and you are not in this book, do not worry, you are in my heart.

I have many friends and know many people and they are fine people.

However...

True friends are different; they are the ones you can count on in your darkest hour. Those prepared to go that extra mile for you and who look beyond your faults.

They expect nothing...

From you and you expect nothing from them. They are those to who you look for advice and not criticism and where grievances are kept only on the surface. You stand by each other and honesty is paramount.

I have included many quotes, fables and words of songs to highlight certain points throughout my life and hopefully they will help you too... so, here it goes...

The dawn of my time: 7th April 1953

I have always had an entrepreneurial streak...

I even negotiated myself into the world seven weeks earlier than expected, right into the arms of a police sergeant who doubled up as my midwife.

We were squatting in an empty pub. Houses were thin, or should I say flat, on the ground as the Second World War was not long over. I slept in a wardrobe drawer, which doubled up as a cot. It was what people did in those days. Can you imagine suggesting that today? It would be Social Services at the ready.



We lived at No. 29, the house on the right next to me grandmas

We eventually...

Moved into 29 Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool 8, or Toxteth as it's known. Our house was owned by my grandma who lived next door in number 27.

Growing up...

In the south end of Liverpool was an adventure in itself. We were just up the road from the docks; two big parks on our doorstep, Sefton Park and Princes Park. On the way to the park, we would knock on the door of a house and ask for a bottle of water and if we were lucky, they would put some orange in it. There was also a cathedral with a massive cemetery behind it and we would dare each other to walk through it at night.

The prestigious Rialto Theatre...

Was located on the corner of Upper Parliament Street and Berkeley Street. It comprised of a cinema, a ballroom and a host of youth clubs, all competing for top position, whether in football, boxing, table tennis or snooker. You could also take your records and play them and they had little coffee bars selling soft drinks and sweets. These youth clubs were the hub of the community. It is where the kids learnt manners and self-respect. Bullies were soon sorted out; there was a 'cut one and we all bleed' attitude. People looked out for each other.

My grandma owned a grocers' store...

On the corner of Blair Street and Stanhope Street. When it was closed, locals used to knock at my grandmas door to buy essentials such as milk, bread, tea and sugar.

Although it was...

My grandmothers' shop, it was known as 'Beattie's' as my Mam ran it. As a child, I remember sitting on the counter watching people come in with jugs to buy milk straight from the milk churns. There were ladles of different sizes - a half pint and a pint. Sometimes they would say, 'Beattie, can I have some of the cream from the top of the churn?' The

cream would have built up in the churn while the milk was swishing about during transportation.

The shop stayed open until after midnight...

To accommodate people working nights in Brough's drum factory facing the shop. Nevertheless, our Mam was always up early the next morning getting us ready for school.

At the time, there were three of us, Jimmy, then me, then Susan. She was a twin but our John died when he was five months old.

We would go to the Rialto picture house...

On Saturdays It cost sixpence to get in but we had to earn it first. We started by working in the shop, stacking the shelves in the morning after Macintosh's had delivered the sweets and the Full Swing wagon had delivered the lemonade. Full Swing was a brand of lemonade in those days. The bottle caps were attached to the bottle just like the Grolsch beer bottles are today. Hansen's delivered the milk and Scots delivered the bread. After receiving a shilling in pay, we were off to the pictures; sixpence to get in – or a tanner as we called it in those days – and sixpence for sweets.



My Mum Beattie

The sweet shops...

Used to have a ha'penny tray, a penny tray, a thripenny tray and a sixpenny tray.

There lies the dilemma...

Do I get 12 sweets from the ha'penny tray, or six from the penny tray, or two good sweets from the Thripenny tray, or one great sweet from the sixpenny tray, or maybe six from the ha'penny and one good one from the Thripenny tray? The combinations were never ending, but it did not make any difference which combination you went for, you always wished you had chosen a different one.

Quality over quantity**At the time...**

I was going to St Patrick's School, where you learnt two things; religion and boxing. You were either on your knees or on your back. They were very strict on discipline. If you stepped out of line, you either got the cane or the strap and if you went home and told your parents, you would have been given the cane or the strap again, but harder. But you know what? It did not do us any harm. As a matter of fact, it taught us how to be streetwise. The kids today have their parents fighting their battles for them and because they have not been taught how to stand on their own two feet, they do not seem to be able to handle problems as well as we did.



Me as a child - don't I look cute

The biggest devastation...

Of my life happened when I was eight years of age. Our Mam died of meningitis. She went out of the house and we never saw her again, not even at her funeral. We were told that our Mam had gone to a wonderful place known as 'Heaven', which confused us into thinking she must not have loved us; after all, she had left us to go to this fantastic place called 'Heaven'.

How could she be so selfish...?

We were kids and did not understand and it was not explained to us that she had no choice. Although we understand now as grownups, as children it was traumatic for us.

When I think back...

To when my Mam was alive, I think she was taken for granted. I remember going to town with her on Saturdays. She would take a big hold-all bag for carrying the meat from St John's Market; not just the meat for us, but also for my grandma, grandad and my Aunty Trish (*short for Patricia*). Later she would work in the shop and she would still manage to be up early the following morning to take care of us. You would not work a mule that hard.



Me and our Jimmy at Aunty Margaret's wedding - we look like two Winker Watson's from the Dandy comic

I often wonder...

Why my dad allowed it, or, for that matter, why my grandma and grandad let her work that hard; after all, it was their shop.

Profits are better than wages

Jim Rohn

My Aunty Trish...

Had a breakdown after witnessing a friend of hers being blown up at a munitions factory, where she had been working during the war. Aunty Trish had stayed at home after that, never getting married and turning to religion. She committed her life to the Catholic Church, going to mass every day.

Her only fear...

Was of not receiving the last rites before she died, which nearly happened. I phoned the priest from St. Vincent's Church where she had, for most of her life, looked after the altar; she cleaned the brass and supplied the flowers out of her own pocket. Much to my dismay, I was told that the priest 'wasn't feeling well' and that he 'couldn't come.'

Luckily...

The priest from the Metropolitan Cathedral was in the hospital and came right away to give her the last rites. Ironically, she asked me to take the brass vases back to the church in case someone broke into her home and stole them.

She had three wishes:

To be buried with our mam.

To have an oak coffin.

To rest in the church the night before the funeral.

It was the third...

Wish that was to be the problem. ‘We don’t allow anyone to stay in the church overnight’ said the priest.

‘Why is that?’ I asked.

‘For security reasons,’ was his reply.

‘So loyalty counts for nothing!’ I told him... ‘The doors to the church are locked, although it’s not as if she is going to steal anything. Long before you came to this church, and since your arrival, she has waited on this church, hand and foot, not forgetting to ask me to bring bails of straw and hay for the Christmas crib every year, and not asking the church for a penny over the last few decades.’ At this point, he must have seen the disgust in my face.

‘In Patricia’s case,’ he decided, ‘we will make an exception.’

He went on to say...

How sorry he was that he was not well enough to have given her the last rites.

‘You wasn’t well? You weren’t as ill as my Aunty!’

‘Do you know...

The difference between you Father and my Aunty Trish? It is that had it been the other way around, she would have walked over hot coals for you, and you, being a priest, should have known how important it was to my aunty to receive the last rites. Tell me this: if I had failed to get another priest, would you have had her soul on your conscience?’

When I gave him the brass vases he said ‘Patricia had St. Vincent’s medals as well.’

‘You mean the ones she bought out of her pension and sold door-to-door, just to give you all the profits? I would rather slam a hammer on every one of them than hand them over to you.’

I eventually gave them to another St. Vincent’s church long after I had cooled down.

After the funeral...

We took Aunty Margaret back to Aunty Trish’s flat, only to find it had been broken into. The television and an anointing set, which was used when anyone had the last rites at home, had been stolen. The thief did not know what it was and a few days later, he made the mistake of asking an old lady if she wanted to buy it. The lady knew it was an anointing set and also knew my Aunty Trish and had heard of the break in, so she gave me a call.

He turned out...

To be a man of about fifty at the time. I made him carry the television right down Park Lane and back up the other side, stopping at every shop and pub on the way, while I told everyone that this was the scum who had robbed a dead person. They all said he was not going to be served in any of their places again. He said the television was heavy and I reminded him it was not heavy when he was stealing it.

We eventually arrived at St. Patrick’s Church in the next parish. I told him to dump the television in a waste skip and then I threw a brick through the screen.

‘If you had asked me...

I would have given you the television for nothing. As it is, you have done the lowest thing possible and robbed a family already going through grief after the loss of a dear one and added to their pain,’ I told him.

I think he would rather have had a hiding than been hawked around the neighbourhood, as he then had to move out of the area.

Little did he know...

The television didn't even work! Aunty Trish had asked me to see if I could fix it while she was in hospital.

Mules are for packing**So that now leaves...**

Our dad and three kids – and no one parent family allowance books like today to fall back on. He was no angel. He had his good points and his bad points and there have been times in my life when I have frowned upon my dad for some of the things he has done. I have to ask myself the question though, 'could I honestly, hand on heart, say that I have been a better dad to my daughter Becky than he was to us, given the circumstances in which he found himself at the time?'



Mary

We had to leave...

29 Upper Parliament Street as my dad and grandma did not see eye to eye, so we went to stay at 59 Canning Street, where the Higgins family lived. My dad had met a young, red-headed Irish girl by the name of Mary O'Brien, who was related to the Higgins family and eventually they got married. The service took place at St. Philip Neri Church in Catharine Street. The reception was in a house in Gambier Terrace. I remember seeing people in there scraping wax from candles and walking it into the floor to protect it.

It wasn't long...

Before there were two more additions to the family, Eddie and Clair. We spent some time living in Norwich where my dad's brother Uncle Peter and sister Aunty Maureen lived. Aunty Maureens' real name was Mary Anne, but they used to call her Maureen in Ireland and it stuck. Norwich is where our Clair was born. We lived facing Norwich City Football Ground and at one stage, our Jimmy and I were ball boys for them.

Our cousins are all girls...

Colleen, Jean and Joanna. We were and still are, more like brothers and sisters than cousins, and it has not changed to this day. It would not matter if we had not spoken for a few months, we would just talk as if we had spoken the previous day.

They all have great families...

What else can you expect when they have Aunty Maureen, a strong Irish lady, for a mother? Their husbands and children are good people.

I remember the day...

We started at St. John's School and found out that no cane or strap was used. I can honestly say it was one of the happiest periods of my life – which is why I am ashamed to tell you about something I did.

My dad hawked us off to the local priest and said his sons wanted to be altar boys. I asked myself when did this happen?! 'Okay,' the priest had

said. ‘I’ll start them off carrying the candles until they learn Latin.’ As I was walking down the aisle during my first mass, the altar boy in front was a bit of a snob and looked down his nose at me, so I tilted my candle forward so the hot wax ran down the back of his neck, only to watch him do the best body bopping I have ever seen in my life. I think I still hold the record to this day, for being the altar boy with the shortest period of service.

The schools were different...

From the ones in Liverpool. They were more relaxed and there was a certain calmness about them, whereas in Liverpool, the schools seemed to be rather strict on discipline, a certain ‘Dickensian’ air about them. In Norwich, strict discipline was an option; in Liverpool it was an obligation. Looking back, I think I benefited from both types of schooling.

We eventually...

Returned to Liverpool, but it did not stop us from keeping in touch with each other. In fact, I used to talk to my Uncle Peter nearly every week or so, until he passed away.

Rude awakening

We lived in a flat in Canning Street. The landlord was a man named Pope. At the time, we were so poor we had to borrow rubbish for the bin, so we lived on our wits.

One day, the landlord came up to the flat with a gun and started shouting ‘I want the rent.’ My dad looked him straight in the eyes and reminded him that the ‘night before he’d been shown hospitality in our home,’ and had been ‘my dad’s rum’ (not aware it was over-proof) and that my dad had paid the two pounds rent with a five pound note and was still waiting for the three pounds change.

‘Pack the bags kids, we’re leaving!’ my dad shouted, ‘I am not staying in the house of a dishonourable man.’

At that point, the landlord started to talk my dad out of leaving and apologised for his oversight, giving my dad his three pounds change, not

realising that my dad had not given him five pounds to begin with. The over-proof rum had clouded his memory.

If you're going to take a man's money from him, at least have the courtesy to leave him with a smile on his face.

Richard T Smith

My dad, not wanting to push his luck, moved on to another flat where children were not allowed. The landlord did not live in the same building, so my dad told him he had no children. For a couple of months, we had to sneak in the back way and when the landlord came for the rent, we had to hide our clothes and stay in the bedroom, keeping quiet until he had gone.

Next stop, Falkner Square, still in the south end of Liverpool and we attended St. Vincent's school. Most of the teachers were nuns. One afternoon, when the whole school went to church, I was at the back of the line and I sneaked off thinking no-one would miss me. I had a lot of fun playing bows and arrows with some canes that had been supporting flowers in someones garden. The next morning, I was called into Sister Mary Cuthbert, the headmistresses' office. A strict disciplinarian, she was very tall with a high pitched voice.

'I believe you collect canes,' she said, looking at me over her glasses.

'No, sister,' I replied.

'Yes you do,' she bellowed.

At this point I knew she had found out about me taking the canes.

'And as you are a collector of canes, I've got a special one just for you.'

She brought, from behind her back, a super-sized cane and began to thrash the living daylight out of me.

They used to question you about Sunday Mass and ask what colour the priest had been wearing to see if you had attended. I remember asking an altar boy – who looked like Winker Watson out of the Dandy comic, his

hair Brylcreemed and parted down the middle – what colour the priest was wearing as I had not checked it out on Sunday.

‘Green,’ he told me.

Next day Sister Mary Benedict asked me what colour the priest was wearing. ‘Green, Sister.’

‘Wrong,’ she answered.

Winker Watson, an altar boy I might add, had lied to me... yet another caning.

One day, all the kids ran out of school because of a rumour that there were leprechauns in Liverpool. This not only gave the teachers a hard time, but also the dwarf from Billy Smart’s circus, who was shouting, ‘I’m not a feekin’ leprechaun.’

We lived around the corner from the Rialto Theatre and one night I sneaked out of the flat and went outside of the theatre. I looked up to the balcony to see the men dressed in evening suits and the women in their beautiful gowns and thought ‘One day I’ll be up there.’

I never did get to dance on the balcony like those men and women, but I did get to see a film that made a huge impression on me. The star of the film became one of the most impersonated entertainers of the day, alongside legends like Tommy Cooper, Ken Dodd, Morecambe and Wise and many more. He made me laugh, made me want to cry and made me want to entertain people when I grew up. The film was called ‘*A Stitch in Time*’ and starred the legend of comedy Norman Wisdom. He never swore and there was no vulgarity. How times have changed. One of my most memorable nights was when I performed at Norman’s 88th birthday party.



Sir Norman Wisdoms' 88th Birthday Party



To Ritchie... Sir Norman Wisdom

We left Falkner Square and went to live in Prestwood Road, Dovecot in Knotty Ash where Ken Dodd was, and still is, the squire of all he surveys. It was funny telling my friends down in the south end of Liverpool that there really was a Knotty Ash. They would ask me about Ken Dodds 'Jam Butty Mines' and the 'Treacle Wells' and also about his 'Diddy Men.'

I have since come to know Ken Dodd as a very generous man and I am not talking about money; it is something more valuable than that, he offers his time. You see, in life, you can always get more money, but you cannot get more time and that is what Ken offers. He has helped vast numbers of people, too many to mention and there will be many, many more that I have not heard about.

The Joker

As a child, I was either doing things that made money or playing practical jokes. I made a ghost train in the entry of our house and charged a penny to walk through it. I also made my own stagecoach out of an old pram, once again charging a penny for kids to be pushed around the block in it. When Gerry Marsden from the group Gerry and the Pacemakers was filming *Ferry Cross the Mersey*, one of the scenes was shot in the graveyard at the back of the Anglican Cathedral and I was an extra for the day. I was interested in acting. My Aunty Trish paid one guinea a lesson for me to go to drama lessons in Rodney Street.

The studio was facing St. Andrew's Church and in the church cemetery, there was a large pyramid. I often wondered why that pyramid was there. Little did I know it would come back to *haunt me in years to come*. But more about that later.

My aunty bought me a professional makeup artists' kit. When I was in one of my mischievous moods, I rolled up a sleeve, blackened my hand and arm and went over the road to a neighbours' house, whose door, like everybody's in those days, was always open. I knocked and put my hand round the door. The neighbour, who was lying on the couch, shouted 'Come in Paul', as Paul was the only black child in our road. I knocked again. This time the neighbour, becoming agitated, shouted 'Are you coming in or what, Paul?' This time my blackened hand and arm came

round the door and threw an egg towards him. I ran away as fast as I could, rolling my sleeve down and putting my hand in my pocket as I ran, then turning to walk casually back towards the neighbours' house. The neighbour had come out, screaming 'I will kill him if I get my hands on him'.

'Who are you talking about?' I asked.

'That little git from around the corner, Paul.'

'Why, What for?' I asked.

'He's just thrown an egg.'

'How do you know it was him?' I asked.

'Because I saw his hand as he threw it and he is the only black kid around here so it's got to be him' yelled the neighbour, heading off in the direction of Paul's place.

Now Paul, if that neighbour gave you a hard time over the egg incident, maybe this will balance the books. This particular neighbour kept chickens and one morning, before I went to work in the market, I sneaked over, took the eggs from under his hens, went back to our house and boiled them until they were hard. Then I ran them under a cold tap, dried them and put them back under the hens. I saw him later that day and asked him how things were.

'Strange, very strange,' he told me. 'My hens have been laying boiled eggs.'

Having Irish blood in me and coming from farming stock, I told him:

'I know what it is; your hens are running a high temperature so they are boiling their own eggs. You need to take them to the vet and get them checked out. He will most probably give you something to put in their drinking water to bring the temperature down.'

Later, I saw him putting his hens into the back of his red three-wheeled robin reliant car to take them to the vet. It was not long before he came back and I asked him what the vet had said. He replied 'He called me a crackpot and told me to get out of his surgery.'

The Mags

When I was a child, I had a lisp and was constantly made fun of. I have since grown out of it, but at the time, it caused me to get into more fights than I care to mention.

When we moved to Dovecot, I felt like a fish out of water. I had been brought up in Toxteth, in the south end of Liverpool, where there was a certain rawness and compared with Toxteth, Dovecot at the time seemed to be more upper crust.

We attended St. Margaret Mary's – or the Mags as we used to call it. The difference being that in Toxteth the kids used wallpaper to back their books; in Dovecot they had their books ARTEXED. The Mags turned out some good footballers. Apart from yours truly, Snake Hips Smith, there was Tommy Tynan, who was signed as an apprentice for Liverpool FC by manager Bill Shankly after winning a talent contest run by the Liverpool Echo newspaper. He never made a first-team appearance for the Reds and was transferred to Sheffield Wednesday in 1976, where he spent two years and scored 31 goals. After just nine appearances for Lincoln City in 1978, Tynan moved on to Newport County, where he formed a dynamic striking partnership with John Aldridge, who later signed for Liverpool Football Club and went on to become a favourite with the fans.

There was also Joe Gallagher, who began his football career as a schoolboy with Liverpool Football Club, but when he left school at 15, he signed for Birmingham City Football Club. His sister Rosemary was in my class.

It was a good school. They had a system whereby on every 7th school day you could choose what subject you wanted to do that afternoon. No doubt, sport was high on the agenda for Tommy and Joe. A classmate of mine, Alan Harrison, chose cookery, so it was no surprise when I heard that he owned his own bakery. As for me, I alternated between woodwork and metalwork. No wonder I ended up using tools.

There were three levels of classes: *A*, *B* and *C*, the *A* level classes being the most academic; the *C*'s being the least academic and the *B*'s being in between, a little like upper class, middle class and lower class. So where was I? You guessed it! The *C*'s, where it was taken for granted we would

be working in a factory or on a building site or any other manual labouring job that was available.

Our daughter Becky is a teacher and a good one at that. If you do not believe me, just ask her pupils; after all, they are the ones that count, not the education department or the headmaster, it is her pupils who will carry all she has taught them for the rest of their lives. Wow! Isn't that a great gift?

The mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains, the superior teacher demonstrates, the great teacher inspires.

Arthur Ward

What is so amazing is that we are told that our school years are the most important years of our lives, yet after spending over a decade with our friends in what we are led to believe are the best years of our lives, what do we go and do? We go off and make new friends and forget about the friends we spent over a decade with. New friends. What was wrong with the old ones?

Upon leaving school, the *A*'s and the *B*'s went on to college. As for us *C*'s, we went straight to university – the University of Life and little did we know at the time that the University of Life has some of the greatest teachers on the planet.

Don't get me wrong, I think teachers do a great job teaching us English, Mathematics, Geography, Science, French, etc.

I could never get my head around being taught French when at the time; British people were going to Spain for their holidays. Would it not it have made more sense to learn Spanish instead of French? In many countries today, English is spoken or understood, unlike the situation 40 to 50 years ago.

Just an idea, why don't we teach a universal sign language in schools instead of a foreign language? Then everyone in the world would be able to talk to each other, whether they were from another country or had hearing and speech difficulties. After all, each and every one of us move

our hands when we speak, so we are half-way there already. Think how great it would be to be able to communicate with everybody... now doesn't that make sense?

Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learnt in school.

Albert Einstein

In life, advertisers are constantly encouraging us to get into debt, through taking loans out here and loans out there; but nobody ever teaches us how to make money. Like sheep, we just go along with the trend.

Many teachers get into debt by taking student loans in order to qualify. Wow! That's a great start, but what else can they do? After all, they have travelled the same road as their teachers and their pupils too will choose that road.

Economics is the name of the game

And that is why school teachers cannot teach our children about being financially secure. They can teach them how to get qualifications to go to university, but once there, they are educated into debt with their student loans. When they become qualified, they have to start to pay off their student loan, followed by the mortgage loan, the car loan etc. get the picture? It is the University of Life that truly teaches economics.

I find it fascinating that most people plan their vacations with better care than they plan their lives. Perhaps that is because escape is easier than change.

Jim Rohn

There were two brothers in our school; one went to university and became a teacher and the other became a ‘jack the lad’, a bit of a wheeler dealer; in other words ‘street smart’. One of them got into financial trouble and had to be bailed out by the other... guess which one?

I tell our Becky she can always better herself.

Whether people are in debt or worth a million, in a good job or a lousy one, it is *always* possible to do better.

The minute you stop improving, you stop growing. You have to ask yourself, what gets you up in the morning?

It's only when you leave school that your financial education starts.

Wall Street is the only place that people ride to in a Rolls Royce to get advice from those who take the subway.

Legendary Investor Warren Buffett

Baggy Trousers

Our Jimmy fancied the head girl in our school St. Margaret Mary's in Dovecot. She was blonde, with an hour-glass figure, with all the sand in the right places. One day he was walking along the road and he realised that she was walking behind him with her friends. He was wearing bell-bottom trousers, which were fashionable at the time. Just as he had gathered enough courage to ask her for a date, a strong wind blew his trousers, so he suddenly looked as if he was wearing two barrage balloons. Hearing the giggles from behind meant it was the end of asking for a date.

Another time, our Jimmy brought a girl back to the house – a big mistake I might add. She was a big girl; I mean, she could have mothered the whole of Merseyside. Anyway, me dad came in and so did his dry sense of humour.

‘Bleedin’ heck! I didn’t think I could concentrate on two things at the same time. Hope you’re taking precautions – they don’t call him the horse for nothing!’

‘Oh, and by the way.’ he said to our kid, ‘you didn’t empty the piss pot this morning (not that we had one); it was full to overflowing.’ Oops, another one gone.

Bucket of babies

If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door.

Milton Berle, Actor & Comedian

I left school when I was a couple of months shy of 15 years. You were allowed to in those days if you had a job to go to. My first job was working in the abattoir. It was a rude awakening. One minute at school, the next catching bellies in a trolley in a slaughter house; but I still had the entrepreneurial streak. After working in the piggery, I took over from a man who was retiring. He told me that one of the perks of the job was selling the wombs of the sows to a 60 year old Chinese man who used to serve them in his restaurant. He dressed like ‘Odd Job’ from the James Bond film *Goldfinger*: black trousers, white shirt, black waistcoat and he even had the same semi top hat that ‘Odd Job’ had in the film. The old man used to charge him half a crown for a ‘*bucket of babies*’ as he used to call them. The old Chinese man came to the cellar at about four o’clock every afternoon, after everyone had finished work, to collect them. The first time I had to sell the bucket of babies, I was a bit cocky and told him the price had doubled to 5 shillings. He was not pleased and refused to pay, so I threw the bucket of babies into the bin. As I walked upstairs, I thought that if he would eat the womb of a pig, he would not think twice about taking them out of the bin, so I went back. Sure enough, he had taken them out of the bin and put them on the table. He was not there, so I scooped the babies back into the bucket and stood over the open drain. All the drains in the abattoir had constant running water to stop them

blocking up, and on his return I threw the bucket of babies down the drain, reminding him that if he was not prepared to pay the increased price, the deal was off.

What I did not realise, was that he was holding the knife he used to trim the fat off the wombs of the pigs and he was angry, very angry. He ran towards me calling me the name of the thing you use to strum a guitar with (a plick). Although I was dressed in a boiler suit, leggings and Wellington boots, I still put on a turn of speed right along the corridor, like a cheetah on roller skates, straight into the lift. Now, this was no ordinary lift. It was designed to go slowly – I mean really slowly – to accommodate the transportation of sloppy materials. I got into the lift and closed the outer door and then the caged inner door. Through the small windows in the lift doors, I could see his Odd Job hat; no head, just the hat getting bigger and bigger as he got closer to the lift.

I must have hit the ground floor button about a dozen times in my panic to get away from him. At this point, I was turning into Dustin Hoffman in the movie *Rainman* and thinking ‘Oh, bad! This is bad!’ Just as he got to the lift it started moving upwards, but my relief was short-lived as I could hear his hobnailed boots running up the cast iron stairs and as the lift was going at a snails’ pace it was a forgone conclusion he was going to catch me. My fears were confirmed as I saw his boots through the gap at the bottom of the ground floor lift doors.

Now I know how a chicken feels upon being introduced to Colonel Sanders. As the lift stopped, he flung the doors open; he had that ‘*here’s Johnny*’ look in his eyes. Just then, the Lone Ranger arrived in the guise of Dennis Coyle the security guard, shouting ‘The public aren’t allowed in here after four o’clock’ as he escorted my little Chinese friend from the premises. On his way out, he looked back at me as if to say, ‘The security man has only delayed the inevitable. There’s always tomorrow.’

What about tomorrow? It was not as if I could avoid going down into the cellar. After all, it was my job to sort out the cellar. I was up all night worrying about the Chinese man. The next day I waited for him to arrive.

I had two buckets of babies! Thank God, we had had a lot of sows in for slaughter that day. When he arrived, I put my hand up to gesture ‘Hold on a minute’ and said ‘I was only joking yesterday. Where is your sense of humour? To show there are no hard feelings, you can have these two buckets on the house.’ He stared at me for what seemed like an eternity and then nodded in agreement.

Don’t Feed the Dog

The drovers in the abattoir had two sheepdogs that herded the sheep up into the pens to be slaughtered. This saved the drovers a lot of time and leg work. They only fed the dogs at certain times, otherwise they would lie down and sleep – no different from humans really. Anyhow, I was not aware of this and threw a load of meat into the holding pens where they were kept, so I unintentionally fed them at the wrong time. But I was soon to find out, as the drover came running in, clouted me on the head and called me for everything. It was only when I watched the drovers trying to get the sheep into the pens without the dogs that I realised why he had been so mad at me... and I swear I did not laugh.

Hic

Not long after, I left the abattoir to work at Guinnan’s beer bottling factory. I lasted two days. On the first day, I was put in the storage warehouse. After sampling many bottles of beer I got drunk and fell asleep, only to wake up when everybody had gone home and the place was locked up. Not wanting to set off the alarm system by opening any windows or doors and having the police think I was breaking in, I decided to sit tight until morning; tight being the appropriate word, as I continued to open more bottles of beer. Then I fell asleep again, only to be awoken by the manager. After a slurred explanation, in which he was not interested, I was fired. As I staggered off the premises, I told him to ‘stishhh the job up hiss harse,’ or words to that effect.

Pinky & Perky

Two men who worked in the meat market situated in the abattoir worked on a pork stall. They were known as Pinky and Perky after the two pig puppets on the television at the time. They were best man at each others' wedding, godparents to each others' children; in fact, they were more like brothers than friends. About eight years after I had left the abattoir, I recognised one of them sitting in a bar. He was a shadow of his former self. His face was gaunt and ashen, his eyes held nothing but sadness. He had always been a well-built man and accustomed to carrying the pigs, but now he was thin and frail. I went over to say hello, and sat down at his table. The conversation went like this:

‘How are things?’

‘Could be better.’

‘How’s your mate?’

‘I see you haven’t heard.’

‘Heard what?’

‘He’s dead, because of me.’

‘How come?’

‘We were out on a parachute practice with the TA (Territorial Army). I jumped out of the plane before him and on the way down I felt someone grab me. I pushed him off, only to suddenly realise that it was him. He was having a problem with his chute and had wanted to piggyback down with me.’

At this point he stopped to take a mouthful of beer and with his head bowed he continued.

‘The moment I pushed him off, I realised what I had done, but there was no going back; he was at the point of no return. My chest tightened as if I was having a heart attack as I watched my best friend whistle through (a term used when someone dies because of parachute trouble). If only I could turn the clock back.’

‘What happened after that?’

‘They said it was a reaction, that I didn’t have enough time to think about what I was going to do and put it down to an accident. Even his family said I wasn’t to blame, but I suppose they’re only trying to make me feel better.’

I said ‘Look, I don’t profess to have all the answers and I’m not really a church-going person, I do all my praying in private, but let me remind you of a story that you will know and when I’ve finished, you might see things differently.’

With that, I reminded him about what Jesus had said to Peter, one of his disciples. “... ***before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.***” (Matthew 26:30-35). Peter disagreed and was adamant that he would not.

I went on to dissect what I had told him.

‘So, let’s get this straight. He was one of twelve privileged people. He was a man who was ***forewarned*** that he was going to betray the Son of God. In his mind, that was never going to happen, especially now that he had had ample warning (The emphasis is on *warning*).’

‘And so it came to pass, even with ***advance warning***, that Peter denied knowing Jesus. Why did he deny knowing Jesus?’ I continued. ‘It’s because inside all of us we have a thing called self-preservation and at certain moments in our lives, self-preservation kicks in automatically.’

‘Why does the soldier that we expect to go forward and fight for his country end up paralysed with fear in the trenches, while the person we thought would cower ends up going over the top, with all guns blazing? You see, if the truth be known, no-one can honestly say what they would do in certain situations.’

‘So you see, my friend, it was you’re self-preservation that kicked in, over-riding your conscious mind and you had no control over your reactions. I dare say if your friend were here now, he would give you one hell of a rollicking. Besides, don’t you think that his family is hurting to see their dad’s best friend like this?’

‘You couldn’t help cutting his life short because you had no control over what happened, but you do have control over your life and you owe it to your friends’ memory to get it back on track. Drink never solves a problem, it just postpones it.’

‘It’s not as easy as you say’ he replied.

‘Easy? I never said it was going to be easy. It will take a lot of courage, but it’s important to realise it’s not about you; it’s about your family and his. They deserve better than this... don’t they?’

I never heard or saw him again after that night, but it got me thinking. If the shoe had been on the other foot, would I have been any different?

I could have danced all night

I remember when a heavyweight boxing knockout competition was being staged in London. I entered a friend of mine, but he pulled out with yellow jaundice of the back.

It was short notice and I did not want to let the event organisers down, so I took his place.

My brother Jimmy, his wife Ann and I drove up to London in a standard Vanguard, a car we bought for £85.

The weigh-in was in the legendary Thomas a Becket pub. At the time, I was a middleweight, so you can imagine the looks I got when I stepped on the scales.

‘You’re small,’ said the Boxing Board of Control steward.

‘You never see a diamond the size of a brick’ I replied. ‘It’s not the dog in the fight that counts; it’s the fight in the dog. I don’t care what breed of dog gets in the ring with me tonight because I’m a bull terrier. He might start it, but I’ll finish it, and when I finish it, it stays finished.’

Yes, I could talk a great fight in those days, too good for my own good. Little did I know, the guy I was to fight was standing behind me. He did not turn up for the fight and was replaced by Terry Mintus, who stood at 6 ft 7 inches, a cool 9 inches taller than me. My big mouth had talked me into fighting a bigger opponent.

The night was a grand affair. The Stylistics was performing, there were film stars, singers and comedians; you name it, they were there.

The matchmaker came into the dressing room and said ‘We are one fight short.’ Turning to our Jimmy he said ‘You are a big lad, fancy putting the gloves on?’

‘I haven’t got a license,’ our kid said.

‘Don’t worry about that. There are four Board of Control stewards here and we only need four for a quorum. I can get your license sanctioned tonight.’

‘What about the medical, I haven’t had a medical,’ our Jimmy replied.

‘Don’t worry. Dr Adrian Whiteson, the Boxing Board of Control doctor, is here tonight. He could do your medical.’

‘But then there’s the gum shield – I haven’t got one,’ Jimmy said, starting to get nervous.

‘Yes, that is a problem.’ After a short pause he said, ‘But not any longer, Denny Mancini has just walked in. He owns Lonsdale Sports down the road. He can get you the new type of gum shield that you put in hot water and mould to your mouth in minutes.’ Our Jimmy was now talking like Porky Pig from the Loony Tunes cartoons as he went on to point out that he had no shorts, boots or dressing gown.

‘Denny will get all that when he gets your gum shield.’

Our Jimmy said ‘which part of “I don't want to f@!king fight” don't you understand?’ At this point I was wetting myself.

‘You only have to take one shot’ said the organiser.

‘Yeah, and that's the one that will break my nose.’

I was standing in the ring waiting for my opponent, who was level with me when only on the middle step and about to climb into the ring. After the preliminaries, our first round got underway. The plan was to keep my head stuck to his chest, neutralising his long reach.

I swear he could have picked cigarette stumps off the floor without bending down. It worked for the first round and as I was sitting on the stool before the second round, I hoped my corner man Reg, who looked like a man of the world, a knowledgeable man, would give me a crumb of encouragement. I asked if he saw any ‘chinks’ in my opponent’s armour, only for him to reply, ‘I don't know, son. All I know is here he comes again,’ as he quickly dived out of the ring.

Seconds out, round two – something happened in this round that has never happened to me before, or since for that matter. I was knocked down, but was up before the ref counted two, not because I was brave, but because he hit me so hard that I bounced back up. Ding - end of round two, more encouragement from Reg:

‘You know what, son? I think he’s getting tired of hitting you.’

Ding - seconds out, round three – he won the round clearly, which is more than I could say for my vision. Ding - end of round three. As I sat on the stool, I could hear them shouting my name to the tune of the football chant, “buckets of blood”, “ buckets of blood”, “ buckets of blood”, “buckets of blood”, “ buckets of blood”, “ buckets of bloooooood”. Ding - seconds out, round four – he went on to win the fight on a cut decision: I got cut and he got the decision.

As I was the smallest on the bill, I was the darling of the crowd. People either gave me money or wanted to buy me a drink. The highlight of the evening for me was dancing with *Samantha Eggar*, who played the governess opposite Yul Brynner for the TV show *Anna and the King*. We

may have looked more like *Beauty and the Beast*; ***nevertheless, I could have danced all night... Sorry, that's the Sound of Music.***

I turned professional boxer at 17 and fought at three different weights: lightweight, middleweight and heavyweight. I decided I did not want to waste any of my money, so I bought a magic shop. I then decided that if I were going to sell magic, I would have to learn how to perform magic and I have been learning ever since.



My dad looking shady

If you ever bring the police to this door, make sure there's an ambulance behind them.

I suppose I get my crazy sense of humour from my dad. He was always a joker, but he was also firm with us. I remember one day, when I was 18 years old, I swore. Nothing venomous, the *F* word just slipped out.

'Don't you ever swear in this house again,' he warned.

I said, 'You do.'

He said, 'There is a difference. This is your home, this is my house.' Point well and truly taken.

He also warned me that if I ever brought the police to the door, there had better be an ambulance behind them.

So you can imagine how I felt when I was caught stealing a packet of Taxi chocolate biscuits from a shop called Scots. The manager must have seen the fear in my eyes when he said, 'I'm telling your dad.'

'Please don't tell him,' I pleaded.

'Ok, but you will have to work in the shop for one hour every Saturday morning for the next month.'

And that's what I did; sometimes having to duck as my dad passed the shop. When the manager asked me why I had stolen the biscuits, I told him it was a spur of the moment thing. He told me, 'It doesn't end there, you go on to bigger things and you only get away with it for so long before you're caught. Then it's a stint in jail; and let me tell you this: nothing is worth losing your freedom for.'

Thinking back to that day, I am glad I was caught.

Dig your own grave

My dad used to help out at Yew Tree Cemetery doing a bit of grave digging for which he received £1. It was in the days before they had mechanical diggers. He was not full time, he was only filling in. (Filling in! – I knew that gag would be wasted on you!) Anyway, one Saturday afternoon, there was a knock at the door. It was one of the workers from the cemetery.

‘Is your dad there?’ he asked.

‘He is, but he’s been drinking and is out for the count.’ Like most men at that time, they worked all week so Saturday was their time. ‘Why do you want him?’ I asked.

‘It’s just that we need him to dig a grave for a funeral first thing Monday morning.’

As he was walking away I said, ‘I’ll do it.’

‘Are you sure?’ he asked.

‘Yes, I do a lot of digging in my job anyway, putting gas pipes in the ground for the gas conversion.’

So I grabbed my dad’s spade, which was always sharp. ‘Look after your tools and they will look after you by making the job easier,’ he would always say.

At the cemetery I made one big mistake. I did not check at the lodge to see how many bodies were already buried there. The general rule is that you find out how many are already in the grave and that indicates the depth you need. So if you wanted to go down, let us say, four feet, you would dig to three and a half feet, carefully press the spade in until you touched the lid of the coffin, and then remove the rest of the soil until there were a few inches of soil above the last coffin.

I discovered this the hard way. I was doing just fine until I fell into the coffin; the lid had rotted away. Did my backside go boo or what? Eventually, after I had put my heart back in my chest, I rectified the problem in a dignified manner and went home. By this time my dad was awake and sitting in the chair. He had seen the spade in my hand and put two and two together. I threw the £1 to him and said, ‘You can dig your own graves in future.’

‘You didn’t check at the lodge, did you?’ he asked.

‘No, I didn’t,’ I replied.

In between laughing, he managed to say, ‘Don’t worry, Son, you’re not the first and you won’t be the last.’

The dognapper

One day my dad kidnapped the dog belonging to the manager of the Wheatsheaf Pub in Knotty Ash. He had been known as the major from his army days. He was exercising his boxer dog, which was also called Major, in Springfield Park opposite the pub. He always kept it in great shape and used to enter it into the Liverpool Show, which, at the time, was about two weeks away. My dad, who was hiding in the bushes, called the dog over to him, gave it some treats, then put its lead on and slipped out of the park bringing it back to our house. Now, I must point out that my dad was barred from the Wheatsheaf Pub for singing Irish rebel songs and setting the major up for some stunt or other. Later that day he made it his business to ‘accidentally on purpose’ bump into the major. ‘You look a bit down in the dumps, Major. What’s up?’ he asked.

‘The dog’s gone missing, Jimmy, and its two weeks to the Liverpool Show.’

‘Don’t talk to me about the Liverpool Show,’ me dad said, ‘our Ritchie brought a kitchen knife back from there and the wife stabbed me with it. Then he brought a shillelagh back from Ireland and the wife hit me with it. I told him if he brings anything else back, make sure it’s a feckin

sponge! Anyhow, I know we have our differences, but I'll keep my eyes open. I will even put the word around. I trust there is a reward for finding the dog? It gives people an incentive to look for it.'

'Yes, ten pounds to anyone who finds it.'

Back home ... 'Dad, what will I do with the fat off the chops?'

'Give it to the dog.'

'What about the left-over mashed potato?'

'Give it to the dog.'

We had the dog for just over a week. It went from being lean, mean and alert to a 'break into the house as long as you don't disturb me' mode. Eventually, he took the dog back to the major with only one week to go before the Liverpool Show. The major was over the moon to see the dog.

As my dad was walking out of the pub, the major said, 'He hasn't half put on weight.'

'Yeh,' replied my Dad, as he proceeded to leave rather sharply, putting the £10 note into his pocket, 'that's what seven days of eating crap has done for it.'

Double jeopardy

My dad was bald, and one day he walked into the Wheatsheaf Pub, dressed in a smart suit, wearing a wig and talking in a posh voice rather than his usual Irish brogue. Before the major got a chance to say, 'Get out, you're barred!' my dad asked, 'Has my brother Jimmy Smith, also known as Irish Jimmy, been in as I have been told he drinks in here?'

'I'll tell you what, you're the ringer of your brother,' said the major.

'Yes, we're twins,' my dad told him.

‘He used to drink in here till I barred him,’ the major explained.

‘Whatever for?’ my dad asked.

‘Don’t get me wrong,’ said the major, ‘I happen to like your brother, it’s just that he sings rebel songs and winds people up.’

‘I fully understand,’ my dad replied, ‘he has always been the black sheep of the family, it's just that I get the late boat back over to Ireland tonight and wanted to see him before I go.’

‘He is probably in one of the other pubs, the Nelson, the Knotty Ash or the Greyhound,’ the major said.

‘Oh, well, I’ll catch him next time.’

‘Will you have a drink before you go?’ the major asked.

‘That’s kind of you, make it a scotch. Your good health, sir,’ he said as he downed the drink. Then, tipping the wig as you would tip a hat, he bid him a goodnight – just to let the major know he had bought a drink for a man he had barred.

Who’s going to keep me on my toes now?

Once my dad ordered 10,000 common bricks to be delivered one afternoon to the pub, knowing the major would be out at the Cash and Carry picking up stock for the pub.

‘Yes, we’re building an extension on the back of the pub,’ he told the person from the London brick company. ‘Just have your driver tip the bricks in the courtyard at the back and send the invoice.’

To say the major was upset was an understatement. He reported my dad to the Eaton Road police station, but was told that without evidence they

couldn't do anything. The desk sergeant, however, who knew my dad, came over to the building site opposite the police station where my dad was working on the new houses being built there. Said Jimmy,

'You've been winding the major up again, haven't you?'

'I don't know what you're talking about,' Dad replied, with a glint of mischief in his eyes, but the sergeant knew he was guilty.

I had just started work in Dunlop's in Speke. One day the manager called me into his office to tell me he had bad news. At first I thought he was going to tell me that they had taken on too many and would have to let me go. Instead, he informed me that my dad had been killed at work. It felt as if someone had poured a bucket of ice-cold water over me.

He had been working nights. His job was to keep the water pump running to stop the pipes that carry the cables from leaking before they were made waterproof. He had gone into the cabin and closed his eyes for a short rest. Little did he know that there was a leak in the calor gas fire, so he was gassed while he slept.

Trust him to get gassed working for an electric cable company

On the day of our dad's funeral, my brother Jimmy and I went for a walk to clear our heads. Jimmy said, 'Well Rich, we'll all have to pull together now, become more of a tight-knit family, all for one and one for all, work hand-in-hand, if they cut one, we all bleed... Just then a big Rottweiler came charging towards us and our kid pulled me in front of him to shield him from the dog. What happened to the all for one and one for all? The bottom line was that our Jimmy was scared of anything bigger than a mouse in a fur coat.

When my dad was killed, the major asked '***Who's going to keep me on my toes now, Jimmy?***'

Fang, Gnasher or Lucks – the decision is yours

Like I said, our Jimmy was scared of anything bigger than a mouse in a fur coat. There was a time when he owned South Liverpool Football Club and needed a guard dog to roam the grounds at night to keep trespassers out.

I told him about a guard dog breeder who trained dogs for the police, and arranged to meet Jimmy at the kennels. I arrived on a motor bike and he arrived with a friend of ours, John Edwards, in John's Jaguar car. As we drove up the wide path to the office, we saw Dobermans chained to the walls on both sides of the path, and there was one almighty growl as we passed between them.

The owner came out to greet us, and John and I shook hands with her.

'What can I do for you?' she asked.

'It's not for us, it's for him,' I said, pointing to our Jimmy, still in the car. 'He needs a guard dog for South Liverpool Football Club to stop people from trespassing.'

She went over to the car, and after trying to liaise with him through closed windows, she lost her temper and said,

'Good God, man, get out of the car. You'll be alright, the dogs are chained up.'

I think he got out of the car because he was more scared of her than the dogs. She went on to show Jimmy a range of dogs of different ages and sizes.

'We have Fang, he is a 2 year-old and can take a man down and keep him there till the police arrive, or an ambulance if the assailant tries to escape.'

Our kid was reminding me of the song released by Procol Harum in 1967, 'A Whiter Shade of Pale'! She continued,

'Then there's Gnasher, he is a 1-year-old, not quite as fearsome as Fang, but can still take a man out of the game.'

By now, both me and John looked as if we had suntans with our Jimmy standing next to us because he was so white.

'Tell me more about how these dogs take a man down,' I asked; not that I was interested, but I couldn't pass up the opportunity to wind our kid up a bit more.

'And finally we have Lucks, he is 6 months old. He isn't up to the *taking a man down* stage just yet, but he is fully obedience trained.'

She handed the lead to Jimmy to try out. Our Jimmy nervously said 'sit', and the dog did, 'stay', once again it did as it was told.

'So which is it to be, Fang, Gnasher or Lucks?' she asked.

Which one did he pick? You guessed it, Lucks. While he was in the office, John and I decided to wind our kid up some more. As he came back out, I put on a shocked look and John shook his head from side to side.

'What's the matter?' Jimmy asked.

'What's the matter? I'll tell you what's the matter; that dog's just gone for me,' I said.

By now, John was nodding in agreement, at the same time trying not to laugh, but then both of us had to stop him going back into the office to get a refund. Jimmy asked if they sold lengths of chain to keep the dog on.

'Yes, how much do you want?'

'Err, about one hundred yards,' Jimmy said.

‘What? A hundred yards of chain? The dog will be walking around like Marley’s Ghost in *A Christmas Carol*,’ I said.

‘Even you couldn’t carry a hundred yards of chain,’ the dog trainer said. ‘I don’t know if I should have sold a dog to this man.’

‘Sorry, what I meant was feet – not yards.’ (He didn’t really!)

John put the dog on the back seat of the car. He put its lead through the back window and closed the electric windows, thus jamming the lead and keeping the 6-month-old beast in position on the back seat.

As we drove out of the compound, I rode alongside the car on my motorbike, at the same time, banging on the roof of the car, which really pissed the dog off so much that it was now on a par with Fang and Gnasher, all teeth showing. Our Jimmy was shouting at me through the closed front passenger window, ‘Would you mind awfully not doing that Richard, as the dog is getting a little upset.’

I indicated that I couldn’t hear him because of the noise the dog was making. So our Jimmy decided to open the window to tell me that my services were no longer required, or words to that effect. Unfortunately, he had pressed the wrong button and opened the back passenger window; the one holding the dog secure. Needless to say, another song came into my head, Meat Loaf’s ‘Bat out of Hell’.

So Lucks settled in at South Liverpool football Club and grew into a full – sized Doberman. He roamed around the ground when it was closed, but was kept on a 100ft chain when the players were training. One particular player used to tease the dog into running towards him, only to be yanked back as the dog got to within 3ft of the player. One morning, Joe Duvall who used to look after the dog, moved Luck’s peg forward 6ft, so when the player came along to do his usual ritual, this time the dog ended up on his chest. Needless to say, he didn’t do that again.

What happened to the dog in the end? Someone broke in and stole it.

(Some guard dog)

☯ **Moo Duk Kwan** ... means *School of Martial Virtue*

When I started Moo Duk Kwan, which is a Korean martial art, our American teacher used to say, ‘Just because you can fight doesn’t mean you have to; just knowing that you can is enough.’

Once, upon entering the classroom, we noticed a table set out with every conceivable weapon you could think of; hammers, knuckle dusters, knives, and so on. ‘Choose your weapons,’ he instructed. When we were in possession of a weapon, he smiled and thanked us for leaving the best weapon for him. This confused us, as the only thing left was a 6 inch piece of brush handle.

‘You look confused,’ he told us all, and went on to explain why this simple piece of brush handle was so lethal.

‘I can knock you clean out, I can break any bone in your body, I can maim you for life, I can take you out of action temporarily or permanently. In other words, I can kill you. You all look shocked,’ he said, and he was right. We went on to learn all the things we could do with this harmless-looking piece of wood while, at the same time, still being able to use our fingers, an advantage it had over many other weapons.

With power comes great responsibility; using Moo Duk Kwan over someone less skilled makes you a bully. This is not in keeping with the principles of Moo Duk Kwan and would not be welcome here.

I have found that particular teaching to be of great value to me over the years. When I was in the night club business, I always carried a piece of brush handle in my pocket. It had been sandpapered, varnished and had rabbits on it. When anyone asked me what it was, I always said it was one of my daughter’s toys. Nobody ever suspected anything.

Over the years there have been times when people have tried to take liberties with me. It may have been when I was carrying an injury, for example. I have let them have their moment of glory, and just basked in the knowledge that all liberty-takers come unstuck in the end.

Take a break see if you can crack the code...

Archimedes Palimpsest...

from the ingenious mind of **Archimedes** (287-212 BC), pre-eminent Greek physicist and inventor, who produced works on plane and solid geometry, mathematics and mechanics. His philosophy holds the **secret to success** in business and every-day life, about which some of the top philosophers and motivational speakers in the world today have written and taught in seminars and lecture halls around the world.

The Archimedes Palimpsest is a centuries old manuscript, purchased at Christies on the 29th October, 1998 for two million dollars by a collector who wished to remain anonymous. Containing Archimedes erased texts, it is considered, by many, to be the most important scientific manuscript ever sold at auction.

While I was travelling around Egypt, Jordan, Greece, Israel, Cyprus and Turkey, I asked a number of historians what they thought had been written on the missing pages. The majority said it is rumoured that some contain Archimedes' philosophy on life, and went on to tell me their considered opinions.

Below is the opinion of most of those whom I asked:

**YV GL YG TI ZBVJ PZ ZCBM
QLBRDGJQPALZMEJUQPMCL
QLBR QM RYU GEGV DLTU HY**

*The **secret is in code** that predates Leonardo da Vinci's time.*

£1,000 to the first person to crack the code

Could this be you?

The clues are in the book

OK, back to the book

Rumpole of the Bailey

One night I was on my scooter returning home from Liberty's nightclub, which I owned. There were lots of potholes in the road and I had to navigate round them as the wheels on the scooter were only small.

Next minute I saw 'ECILOP' in the rear view mirror, and the police flagged me down. 'Been drinking have we, sir?'

'You might have been, but I haven't,' I replied - *not a smart reply*.

'Why were you wavering all over the road?'

I explained that I had been avoiding the potholes as if I went into one of them I would have come off my bike.

'Where have you been?'

I told them that I had been working late in my club to clear some beer lines so it would save me the trouble of doing it the next day.

'So, let's get this straight. You own a nightclub, and you haven't had one drink all night, and you drive a scooter instead of a car?'

I explained that I drive a scooter because I can park it in the club yard without opening the big gates as it fits through the small hatch in the gates.

They asked me to take a breathalyser, which I passed. Then they asked me to go on the meter at the station, to which I agreed. I got into the police car while they put my bike in a police van. At the station I passed the meter test and was then asked to give a blood sample. I said I would agree to give a urine sample but not a blood sample. Aids had not long been recognised and I wasn't going to have needles put in me, not in a police station frequented by drug addicts. Although they said it would be under clinical conditions, I wasn't going to take the chance.

At the time, people were ignorant about aids and how it could be caught; maybe I was one of them.

‘That’s fine, sir, you can go now,’ the police officer said as he handed me the keys to my scooter, adding that I would be prosecuted for failing to give a blood sample.

Although I said I’d changed my mind and would give a blood sample, I was simply told it was too late.

My solicitor informed me that I was guilty of failing to give a blood sample and that the only thing I could rely on was leniency; and that his fee would be £150 – a lot of money at the time.

I told him that I would represent myself and save the £150.

A man who represents himself has a fool for a client.

Abraham Lincoln

In court, my hands on my lapels, I turned into *Rumpole of the Bailey*.

‘My lud, the police might be legally right, but let me put it to you; are they morally right? After all, I passed two tests before they asked me for a blood sample, and had I known that I was going to be prosecuted for failing to give the said blood sample, I would have bowed to their request; and furthermore, is it any wonder, my lud, if the public take the attitude ‘I wouldn’t urinate on a policeman if he was on fire’, my lud, with this type of behaviour, my lud?’

Result: Banned from driving for one year and £100 fine. I found out that later that day a certain footballer had been banned for 18 months and fined £250.

He should have asked me to represent him in court.

The drunken stork

One night I was in the Red House pub in Old Swan, Liverpool. At the time it was frequented by a large family who were basically thugs and bullies. The mother used to walk up to men and demand vodka. If they refused, she would shout for her sons, claiming she had just been insulted. Then there was trouble. So, to avoid a hiding, they would buy her a drink. It was while I was at the bar that the Grinch came over.

‘A vodka,’ she said.

‘No, I don’t drink vodka, make mine a scotch,’ I responded.

‘Not for you, for me!’ she screeched.

‘Listen,’ I said, ‘the only time I would buy you a drink is if I were to go back to your place to make passionate love to you, and as you look like a bulldog with lipstick, trust me, it isn’t going to happen.’

At that point, she started to call all her sons over.

Now let me pause for a moment to explain why I took what seems like suicidal action. A few days earlier I had watched a survival programme about a bird they call the drunken stork, which lands by the water hole even when the lions are there, and walks towards them in a drunken manner. Now the lions know they can kill this bird very easily, but they are uneasy about the situation because it doesn’t stack up, so they back away. And now I was about to put it to the test.

‘What’s ‘up, ma?’ her sons asked, ready to go through their usual routine.

‘He’s just called me a bulldog with lipstick.’

‘Is this true?’ they asked me.

‘Yes, it’s true. She does look like a bulldog with lipstick, and before you go any further, I know who you all are, but you don’t know who I am.’

‘Well, who are you then?’

I went on to name every major hard case family on Merseyside.

‘Well, which one are you?’ they asked, becoming rather agitated.

‘If you really want to know, all you have to do is lay one finger on me and you will find out; and yes, there are enough of you to give me a hiding, but I promise you this, you will win the battle but you won’t win the war. Now, if you don’t mind, I’m trying to have a quiet drink.’

I turned and faced the bar and never said another word. You could feel the tension rising at that point. I realised what that stork had been going through; if I showed any sign of fear it was over. After what seemed an eternity, I heard the eldest son say,

‘Come on, Ma, you’ve had enough to drink anyway.’

Brains will always outdo brawn.

Oscars

I was working as a doorman at a club called Oscars in Hanover Street, Liverpool City Centre. It was owned by John Hargreaves and Charlie Wynn. John was the son of a Liverpool docker. He had left school at 14 to start his retail career selling Marks & Spencer seconds from a market stall. He opened his first Matalan store in 1985, and the rest, as they say, is history. As for Charlie, he owned a string of hairdressing shops called the Choppin Block. The club was managed by Dave Beattie.

At the time there were only two men working the door at Oscars: Jimmy Coulthard and me. Another friend of ours, Johnny Rice – or Mad Dog as he was known because of the crazy things he used to do – would drop in at the weekend, smartly dressed and wearing a white jacket. He looked like Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*.

‘Would you like to partake in a glass of cognac, David?’ he would say in a posh voice to Dave Beattie, the manager, who would often comment to me and Jimmy,

‘What a nice lad that John Rice is,’ adding, ‘not like you two, the both of you are uncouth. Why he knocks around with you two I’ll never know.’

An extension had been built on the club, making it much bigger to allow for live entertainment. Dave Beattie booked Liverpool Express to perform six months ahead to allow for the opening of the new extension, and on

the night they performed they were number one in the charts. How's that for a shrewd booking?

We told Dave Beattie we needed another doorman as Oscars was now double in size. Dave relented, but only on the condition that we got 'that nice lad, John Rice; he will be a calming influence on you both.' So Johnny started, but this time there was no white jacket; that had been replaced with a black one, so this time it wasn't Dr Jackal who turned up, it was Mr. Hyde.

'Yes, John. We run a tight ship, we don't let any reprobates in here,' Dave told him.

'Don't worry, Dave. Any nonsense and I'll use my axe,' Johnny told him.

Dave Beattie's jaw dropped open. 'Oh my God, he's worse than the other two,' he muttered under his breath.

The three of us worked together like a dream, it was a laugh a minute. One night a girl gave us a load of shirts to change into when we went on duty. They were striped, polka dot, pink, black, but there was only one white shirt among them, so first in was best dressed. One night another doorman asked the three of us if we fancied doing a rota with him. He would work our club while one of us worked his. It sounded fine until he told us where he worked: the Land Fall, a ship turned into a club. If there was a fight and they got the better of you, the River Mersey was where you ended up.

'Sorry mate, we're not interested,' I told him. Johnny chipped in with,

'Have you asked the guys on the Titanic?'

*Long ago my father placed his hand upon my head.
As he laid each finger down he smiled at me and said,
Someday son when you're a man you will understand,
You'll only count your true friends on the fingers of one hand.*

*Five fingers you can count upon,
Five fingers... To **Jimmy** and to **John**, Each of you are one.*

The lion and four oxen

A lion used to prowl about a field in which four oxen used to dwell. Many a time he tried to attack them, but whenever he came near they turned their tails to one another, so that whichever way he approached them he was met by the horns of one of them. At last, however, they fell quarrelling among themselves, and each went off to pasture alone in a separate corner of the field. Then the lion attacked them one by one, and soon made an end of all four.

United we stand, divided we fall

The Bald Eagle has landed

We were knocking off one night, and just before we closed the door behind us we noticed, on the other side of the road, a great character known as the Bald Eagle. He had a tuft of white hair, a big nose and wore a coat down to the ground. You couldn't see his ankles. What was so unusual about the Bald Eagle was that he only had one testicle, but it was the size of two. When you weren't looking, his party piece in the pub was to drop his testicle into your drink. When you noticed, he would apologise saying, 'I'm sorry, old boy, is that your drink?'

People would usually follow it up by saying, 'It was!'

'Well, waste not, want not,' he would say, as he downed the drink.

So this night we called him over. 'Where have you been?' we asked.

'Why, what's up?' he asked, holding onto his lapels

'Dave's been waiting for you down there in his office. He wants you to join him for a drink.'

'Well, I'm not one to disappoint,' he said, appearing to glide down the stairs, his feet out of sight due to the long coat he was wearing. The next night Dave said,

'You didn't close the door properly last night, the Bald Eagle got in. It took me ages to get shut of him; and, incidentally, I didn't know you could get a bollock in a brandy glass.'



John Jimmy Ernie Myself

My boys

After we finished work in Oscars we always headed up to the Shanghai Club in Nile Street, Toxteth. To say it was a late drinking club was an understatement. It was a bit rough; the sawdust on the floor was the previous night's furniture. The chef served broken leg of lamb. The owner was a Chinese man by the name of Ernie Woo, and he used to call Jimmy, John and me his boys. After being in the Shangy, as we called it, for two hours or so, Ricey, as John is also known, would end up talking in the same mode and at the same speed as Ernie:

‘Ernie, if youuuu evarr have any tlouble, just call yourrr boyz aaand weee will sort it out.’

Then Ernie, who would end up talking like Ricey, would reply,

‘Too right, Johnny.’

Never make bets with your mouth that your backside can't back up

One afternoon I dropped in to see Ernie in the Shanghai Club. I had my nephew George with me at the time; he was only a kid. There was a lot of gambling going on. The Chinese are great gamblers; they would even gamble on two steam flies walking up the wall. My nephew started playing pool, and Ernie asked him if he wanted to win some money. My nephew said he did, so they played and George lost.

‘Pay up,’ Ernie shouted at him.

George said, ‘I've got no money,’ where upon Ernie said,

‘Give me your coat!’ and George gave him the coat.

‘You want chance to win coat back? I think I was lucky last time.’

So George played Ernie again and lost.

‘I take trousers this time,’ Ernie said.

And so this went on and on till George was standing in his underpants.

‘You may go now,’ Ernie told him. George, looking at me, said,

‘Me mam’s going to kill me.’

‘You shouldn’t have gambled, should you?’ I said.

George was getting very upset, and so Ernie gave him back his clothes, telling him,

‘You should only gamble if you're good enough and you can afford to lose.’

Hopefully, it was a lesson our George took on board.

A fool and his money are soon parted

Harry Carpenter and Sam Leach

During one boxing event I invited Harry Carpenter, the legendary BBC boxing commentator, to drop into Oscar’s for a drink if he were ever in Liverpool. He took me up on it when Liverpool was playing Arsenal in a mid-week match. He had Sam Leach, head of BBC Sports, with him. As I took them down to the bar, I popped my head into the office and told Dave Beattie that Sam Leach and Harry Carpenter were in the club. With his usual dry wit he asked, ‘They’re not wearing jeans are they?’

John, who couldn’t help noticing that both Harry and Sam were only about 5ft tall, asked Sam, ‘Are you off to see the Wizard?’

‘What wizard?’ Sam asked.

‘The wonderful Wizard of Oz.’

It went completely over Sam’s head as he replied that they were just here for the Liverpool v. Arsenal game.

Later, Harry asked where we could go for a late drink. I told him I knew a place frequented by murderers, robbers, arsonists, prostitutes, and, worst of all, traffic wardens. ‘Take us there,’ he said.

The look on everyone's faces when we walked into the Shangy with Harry Carpenter and Sam Leach! Ernie was over the moon and made a fuss of them, and it wasn't long before they were both drunk. Sam left early... well, it was before 3 a.m., which was considered early. Harry was sitting on a stool at the bar when one of the local thugs, standing at 6ft 5in, told Harry he didn't like what he'd been saying about Mohammad Ali lately. Harry, standing at 5ft zilch, but feeling 7 feet tall with the bottle of scotch inside him, said,

‘This TV you've got, has it got channel buttons, and an on/off switch?’

‘Yes,’ the thug replied, a little puzzled.

‘Then may I suggest you try F*C#i=g using them if you don't like what I've got to say.’

‘Oh no,’ I thought, ‘this is when Harry gets blended in with the wallpaper. I'm going to have to jump in here and save his skin.’

Instead, I was totally surprised when the thug said, ‘There's no need to be like that,’ and walked away.

Pearl one

The Shanghi Club was home to some very strange people. There was a weird-looking bleeder who had a big henchman with him at all times. They were like Peter Lorre and Sydney Greenstreet from the 1941 film *The Maltese Falcon*, also starring Humphrey Bogart. He collected debts, and to get his point over to would-be debtors his henchman would hold them down while he inserted and ran a knitting needle around the circumference of their ribs. Not the type of person you would bring home to meet the family.

1976 was a good year

New Year's Eve, 1976, was *one* of the two greatest days in my life. I met my wife-to-be, Christine; and the funny thing is that I had earlier stopped her getting into Oscars, but I didn't remember till she reminded me. I was attracted to her red hair; she looked like Maureen O'Hara from the film *The Quiet Man*. I later found out it was out of a bottle... she had fooled me.

We met in the Four Winds Club, which stayed open after most clubs had closed; in other words, if you still had money in your pocket it remained open. It was round the corner from Oscars. Chris was with her friend Eileen Barker as she was then. They both worked nights in Jacobs biscuit factory.

I made a date to take her out later on that night. I say 'that night' because we were what was known as 'dirty stop-outs', as it was well into the morning of New Year's day when we got home. I am totally amazed that she ever wanted another date with me after what happened on our first one.

I picked her up and we went into town. As it was then the evening of New Year's Day, hardly anywhere was open, so we ended up in a Chinese club, which shall be nameless, as the last thing I need is the tong coming after me. Anyway, while we were in there, a Chinese man asked me how much for the lady. I realised I shouldn't have taken her there. I ushered Chris out of the door and into a taxi. 'What's all the rush?' she wanted to know.

'I just sold you to a Chinese guy for £10, and it won't be long before he realises that we've gone.'

After all, £10 was a lot of money then. So we went on to Ernie Woo's, the Shanghai Club in Nile Street. I knew she would be OK there; it was rough, but the people were the salt of the earth... even though I can still remember the first words out of Ernie's mouth,

'You shouldn't bring her here; she's too good for this place.'

Yes, he was right, but the only reason we ever went to the Shangie was to see Ernie.

Well, I survived the first date, which is a miracle in itself, and we went on to live together. The first place was a new housing estate in Eastbourne Way, just off Shaw Street. It was a lovely maisonette with the kitchen downstairs and the living room upstairs, but there was a problem. The estate was built on rat-infested land, as we found out one morning. Our faces were covered with plaster from the hole made in the bedroom ceiling by the rats, so we left to go to live in a pensioner's flat in Broad Lane, Kirkby.

Life goes on

The pensioner's flat was where Chris's grandma had lived before she died. I was the cock of the block, as everyone else was over the age of 65 years. One morning there was a knock at the door. It was the friend of the man in the flat facing. I knew him as we frequently met on our way in or

out of the building, and I used to put his bin out for him. He had badly-fitting false teeth and had to keep his mouth shut and talk like a ventriloquist so they wouldn't fly out.

'Can I help you?' I asked.

'It's my friend; I think he's dead.'

'OK,' I said, 'I'll have a look.'

When I walked into the living room, I saw him sitting in an upright position, with a glass of beer in his hand. His eyes were shut and he was stone cold, rigid, and not breathing.

'You're right,' I said, 'he is dead.'

'So, what do we do now?' he asked.

'Does he have any family?' I asked him.

‘No, his sister, who never married, died only recently, so there’s only him left.’

We looked around to find details of his doctor and called him.

‘Doctor, just found a patient of yours dead.’

‘How do you know he’s dead? You’re not a doctor.’

‘Well, it’s the little tell-tale signs: stiff as a board, not breathing, lips blue, and even if I’m wrong about them symptoms, I still think you should get round here.’

‘Hmm, if he’s dead it’s the coroner you need to call,’ he replied, and hung up.

So I phoned the coroner and waited till he arrived. Meanwhile, I asked his friend if there was any little memento he would like.

‘Well, I’ve always had my eye on the television and the video recorder.’

I thought about how life goes on, as his friend put himself, along with the television and the video recorder, into a taxi and left before the coroner arrived.

Give a clown your finger and he will take your hand.

The ghost in the wardrobe

‘We will have him picked up shortly,’ the coroner said, ‘and you will have to notify the housing authority.’

The council told me that they would be sending the house-clearing wagon within the next couple of days. I asked them what would happen to all his belongings. They replied that they would be dumped.

At the time, like most families, we were trying to put a home together. Unlike these days, when everything has to be new, we used to get a table from aunty so and so, or a bed from some other member of the family. We needed a wardrobe, and our recently departed neighbour had a

wardrobe that was in good condition. So, to cut to the chase, I went in and got it before the house-clearing guys came. It was made of teak and beautifully polished, and it came at a time when money was thin on the ground. Chris was expecting a baby, and a pram and a cot were also high on the list, so the wardrobe came at the right time. There were vent holes in the back to allow fresh air to get in, and I took advantage of this one day to pull a prank. Chris was having an afternoon nap. I had already been in and planted a baby intercom system inside the wardrobe. From the living room I began to talk in a ghostly fashion:

‘You had no right to take the waaaardrobe ...’

As there were no clothes in the wardrobe at the time, this echoed eerily around the room. To this day, I’ve never seen Chris get out of bed so fast. She came storming into the living room shouting,

‘That wardrobe has to go!’

And now the fun begins

It was 19th October, 1980, and the second greatest day in my life was about to begin. Chris gave birth to a beautiful girl whom we named Becky, and if I had been a big kid before she was born, I was a bigger kid now. She gave me all the excuses to try out the toys, watch all the kids’ stuff on TV, and try out all the Christmas selection boxes, just to make sure they weren’t poisoned, as you do.

I once made a seat for my bike from a beer crate. I used to take her everywhere on it until one day, when I was out on it on my own, I was knocked down and the bike was wrecked. It shook me to think what would have happened if Becky had been with me, so I never took her out on a bike again.



Becky as the mummy at a school fancy dress

We have enjoyed all the things that we have done together, from wrapping her up in bandages to win a fancy dress party as the Mummy, to telling her bedtime stories. She used to say, 'Tell me a story out of your brain and not out of a book.' One night, as I was about to begin, I noticed that the light was reflecting off my watch and onto the wall, and by tilting my hand I could make it go anywhere, so I told her that she had a glow-worm that watched over her when she slept. She used to watch as the light, or the glow-worm as she called it, came down the wall and faded into the pillow. I was fortunate enough to find a toy glow-worm that lit up when it was pressed, so that was the icing on the cake.

Becky has done nothing but make us both proud, every step of the way; going to university in Eastbourne and supporting herself at the same time, three hundred miles away from home. We helped, but Becky did most of the legwork herself. The greatest thing for a parent is to know their

children can stand on their own two feet. This doesn't mean you stop loving them or stop watching out for them because that never ends, but just to know they will be OK is a great comfort.



Becky's graduation day



Susan and Jimmy

Families... where do you start?

I have a great family. I love each and every one of them, and wouldn't swap them for the world. My late brother Jimmy, who has three children;

Jamie, Vicky and Paul, had a great sense of humour and was an all-round sportsman. He played table-tennis, tennis, squash and football.

Then there's our Susan who has also passed away, and I miss them both. She had three children; Susan, Edward, BJ, but sadly lost Edward to cancer. If she couldn't do you a good turn, she wouldn't do you a bad one. She would always get into the spirit of every occasion. Whether it was Christmas or Halloween night, the kids loved going to her house because she would always go that extra mile for anyone.

When we were kids, we used to perch a door horizontally on four empty milk churns, one at each corner. We would then sit on it and pull ourselves backwards and forwards, using ropes tied to two opposite walls, pretending we were on a raft. As it got dark, we would talk to the man in the moon...err, well, we were only six and seven at the time. Can you imagine suggesting that to kids today?

Our Eddie is the quiet one. When he was a child, he suffered from celiac disease and was on a gluten-free diet. He couldn't eat anything containing wheat (*but he has, thankfully, grown out of it now*).

I remember me dad sending me to the shops for something to eat for the dinner, and I returned with a tin of Irish stew, which he threw at me, shouting, 'Read the Fekin label!' (*Just a bit of advice, don't try reading a can as it comes hurling towards you.*) 'Well, what does it say?'

'Err, Irish stew,' I replied.

'The ingredients, yer gobshite!' (*I think it's an old Irish term for I know you got it wrong this time but anyone can make a mistake.*) 'It's got wheat in it! Take it back.'

I must have had a silver tongue even in those days as I talked the shopkeeper into taking the tin of Irish stew back, even with a dent in it from when it had bounced off my head.

Eddie is very much like our dad, he can eat what he wants and never puts an ounce on. (*Don't you just hate people like that?*)

I remember when our dad died; Eddie was only a child. One night I was shouting at him over something he did wrong, and out of the blue he kicked me, right in the crown jewels. As I sank to the floor, he noted the expression on my face. It was like ***just wait till I get my breath back I'll kill you, you little B*s^a#d.***

So he ran out and hid in one of the gardens across the road. It took me ages to talk him into coming back into the house, promising that everything was OK. And it was and has been ever since.

Our Clair has a tendency to wear her heart on her sleeve. She has an independent trait that she has passed on to her two children Nikki and Jamie. She is constantly striving to improve herself and, at times, can be a workaholic. She gets on great with everyone and also carries the Smith's wicked sense of humour.

Last, but not least, is Mary, my stepmother. She is an Irish red-head and has the temper that goes with it. It's a good job, as she has had to fight tooth and nail to get the things she wanted in life. I can honestly say she is very much like my mam, a hard grafter, and she is still working into her pensionable age. I remember the day Mary asked me how I felt about her marrying me dad. I told her I was OK with it, but that I couldn't call her Mam. 'I wouldn't expect you to,' she replied. We get on great, and maybe she wasn't my mam... but she came close.



Me and my baby sister Clair

The in-laws

My father-in-law, Bobby, was always cracking jokes, right up to when he died. He knew thousands of them, and what's more, he had the gift of being able to deliver a joke. He had a happy-go-lucky attitude about him, and I can honestly say I've never, ever seen him lose his temper; we had some great times together.

And now to my mother in-law, Mattie, whose real name is Martha and who has also passed away. I would constantly crack jokes and wind her up with things like, 'I have a soft spot for you; it's a swamp in Africa,' and 'I worship the ground you've got coming to you ...err, I mean, walk on.'

But seriously, we got on great; and if I were to have given her a compliment, it would probably have given her a heart attack. Anyway, here goes; if she thought she was right, *and on most occasions she did*, she would argue with the devil himself.

Matty had worked hard bringing up a family of four girls, and one was fortunate enough to have married me! The girls are Jennifer, Christine (*the lucky one*), Gillian, and Jayne; and I would say they are all different from each other.

Jennifer is the oldest and has three children; George, Debbie, and Tony. Then there's Christine, who married a prince – yours truly! Although when she kissed me I turned into a frog. Why did I say that? It's because that's what you're thinking. Anyhow, Christine gave birth to ... you guessed it, Princess Becky.

Then there's Gillian, who has her dad's wacky sense of humour. She has two girls, Gemma and Megan. And finally, baby Jayne, who has two children, Gerard and Kayleigh.

All in all, they are like any regular dysfunctional family. Only joking – they have their ups and downs just like anyone else, but let's leave their sex life out of it.



Mattie and Bobby

Put your brain in gear... before you let the clutch out on your mouth

In my younger days I was crazy or foolish or maybe both. I was never scared of anything or anybody, and that really scares me now, and I mean *really* scares me, because I wasn't being smart; in fact, I was downright stupid. When I think of some of the things I was involved in, I realise I could easily have been killed. One night I was in a Greek club with a gang whose thug friend had just been killed. We each had a bottle of spirits; mine was vodka, which I had poured down the toilet and replaced with water so that if trouble kicked off they would have numbers to their advantage, but I would have martial arts training and a clear head.

It wasn't long before they were singing the praises of their deceased friend, who was nothing but a bully. Of course, yours truly couldn't keep his mouth shut.

'He didn't look that hard when I put him into bo bo land with one shot after we had had a set to,' I boldly told them.

You could have cut the atmosphere with a knife. At that moment I felt like a chicken that had been introduced to Col. Sanders ...now was the time to use all the psychology I could call upon.

'As a matter of fact, boys, I think he was an embarrassment to each and every one of you. If anything, he held you all back. You all contributed to him, but can anyone of you tell me what he ever did to enrich your lives, because I can't see it? As a matter of fact, he was a liability, and you need a liability like you need a hole in the head.'

Now, I don't know if it was what I had said or just that they could remember me knocking their so-called god out; or maybe they thought I must have been carrying a gun to have had the nerve to say what I had just said in front of them, but one by one they started to agree with me ...
phew!!!!

The Yorky

The York House Youth Club, or the Yorky as it was known, was one of many youth clubs in the south end of Liverpool and, as I have said before,

it was the hub of the community. It was a place where the kids could be involved with sport and many other activities, thus keeping them off the streets and out of trouble with the police. Respect for others seemed to come naturally, and the kids learnt to stand on their own two feet.

The Yorky excelled at a lot of sports: football, boxing, table tennis to name but a few. Cliff Marshall, an old Yorky lad, was the first black player to play for Everton FC. He then went to America to play in Miami for Miami Torros, which enabled him to play against such legends as Franz Beckenbauer, George Best, and his hero the Brazilian Pele... Ah! The boy done well. We also had a great boxing stable and table tennis team.

A school and fellow Yorky mate, Mick Morrow, was a great all-round sportsman: football, athletics, table tennis, boxing, wrestling, judo, karate, basketball, golf – you name it, he was outstanding. (Mick, you owe me one hell of a drink!)

Another Yorky lad, Buster, used to do a lot with leather. He even made the dog collar for Bruce, the club mascot. One day, I made the mistake of

leaving my leather shoes lying around, and when I came back he had turned them into a three-piece suite – honest! Now, there's talent for you.

I cannot mention the Yorky without talking about the Stockton family, all 3,989 of them! Remember Walton Mountain? Well, this was Stockton Hill. Whatever sport was offered in the Yorky you could guarantee there would be a Stockton in it.

Which reminds me of when I went to Egypt. I was very excited as I entered the great Pyramid of Giza. My heart was pounding as I made my way down to the centre of the pyramid, wondering what I would find in what is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Closer and closer I got to the chamber holding the secrets of the Egyptian Prince who had been laid to rest all those centuries ago. After what seemed an eternity, I finally stepped through a small opening into a large room. On the wall was a message in the ancient Egyptian language that had been lost for 1,500 years. It was not until the discovery of the Rosetta Stone and the work of Jean-Francois Champollion (1790-1832) that the Ancient Egyptians

awoke from their long slumber. Today, by virtue of the vast quantity of their literature, we know more about Egyptian society than about most other ancient cultures. And so I started to translate the hieroglyphs. As I worked away at deciphering the letters one by one, I felt a presence in the room with me, but I had come too far to let anything or anyone stop me now. The more letters I uncovered, the stronger the presence. My heart raced faster and faster as I realised what the letters spelt ... **F#*ing STOCKTONS!**

All joking to one side, they are a great family, and are still churning out more Stockton's as we speak. Now, before you Stockton's start thinking I've gone all smulshy on you, here goes: if I were your parents I, personally, would have put you all in a home when you were kids, but I guess that's one hell of a family allowance money to give up! :)

The people in the Yorky had passion, enthusiasm and a desire to win. It was a place where they supported each other; and, as I said before, we had a 'cut one, we all bleed' attitude.

If there were times when we had our backs to the wall over a particular situation that we disagreed with, then we would fight over our principles.

That's when the dogs of war showed their teeth till we achieved the right and fair result for all concerned.

Liverpool 1980s

Not so long ago it was pointed out to me how Liverpool managed to get back on its feet after the Thatcher administration had hindered more than helped the city of Liverpool and its people.

I likened Liverpool to a thoroughbred horse, as we have always led from the front, whether in architecture, music, comedy or sport; and what happened to this thoroughbred horse was that it had wrong-footed, and its balance had become out of sync causing it to lose ground. Horses of a lower calibre surged ahead and overtook this wonderful horse, and the people – not the politicians, but the people – of Liverpool did the only

thing possible when a horse wrong-foots, we brought her to a halt, smiled into her eyes to let her know we were in this together, whispered words of encouragement into her ear, and got her walking, then trotting, then on to a canter and then on to a full-blown gallop; and one by one she overtook the pretenders to her throne and crossed the line to become the European Capital of Culture.

The people of New York had the same attitude when the attack on the twin towers happened. In the words uttered to Charlie Sheen's character in the movie *Wall Street* '*man isn't judged on how he gets into an abyss, he's judged on how he gets out.*'

He may be wounded Sir but he has the light of survival in his eyes, he is a noble beast and he shall come again. Sir Winston Churchill

So let's take on the big boys

You've got to do unusual things to get unusual results to earn unusual money.

Richard T Smith

'Why are you smiling like a Cheshire cat?' I asked our Jimmy.

'We've just taken over the old Babaloo Club in Seel Street,' he replied.

(This club had been closed for many years and was in need of repair.)

'We? What's with the "we"?' I asked.

'With my money and your building knowledge,' he continued, 'we can turn it into one of the best nightclubs in Liverpool.'

Little did I know that I had more building knowledge than he had money. He had £3,500 to be precise. I pointed out to him that the new Continental Club was being built around the corner to the tune of £250,000.

‘It’s a challenge,’ he said.

‘Yeh, one hell of a challenge,’ I replied.

The plan was to get the building work started and to then put in for a brewery loan.

It was like a scene from the film *Braveheart* as I rounded up all the tradesmen I knew; plumbers, joiners, upholsterers, tilers, electricians, carpet fitters, decorators, bricklayers, etc. We got them all together in the club and made them a deal. We all work for expenses only until we get the brewery loan. We will log down every penny owing to you. When we get the brewery loan we will pay you, and continue to pay you, until completion of the club.

I told them that, basically, it was all down to trust. ‘There are no guarantees in life,’ I told them, ‘but wouldn’t it be great if we could steal the Continental Club’s thunder? Don’t look at this as a job; look at it as an adventure.’ And a truer word I have never spoken.

First, we cleaned up the mess. There must have been half a dozen bins of spliff’s left over from the Babaloo, and every time you took the lid off the bins I swear you could hear Bob Marley & the Wailers. We set up a workshop in the basement and bought a second-hand bench saw. Everything, from the seating and bar areas, the DJ box, you name it, was made in the cellar. We used timber from buildings that were being demolished, de-nailed it, and ran the four sides through the bench saw to leave it looking new. Then we treated it with fire resistant covering and left it bare to be inspected before having it upholstered.

A well-known nightclub owner in London let us have his used disco lighting; it wasn’t old as he changed it on a regular basis. He practically let us have it for nothing. He liked the idea of us getting one over on the big boys round the corner. It also reminded him of when he had first started in the club business.

We were the first club outside London to use Tivoli lighting. The bulbs in Tivoli lighting were small, about the size of the ball in a ballpoint pen. The lights would chase as fast or as slowly as you wished. We later discovered that you could use them for a strobe effect, which made you feel drunk. Just a note: we never, ever took advantage by watering down

the beer, but rumours went around saying Valentino's sold the strongest beer in Liverpool.

Then we hit a problem. Jimmy said we needed fire doors and an emergency lighting system, but money was tight. As luck would have it, the club's sister building next door, which was under the same landlord, was a replica of ours and had been empty for a while. It had everything we needed; fire doors and an emergency lighting system.

We were worried about vandals getting in there and damaging the doors and the lighting system, so being the kind and considerate people we were, we decided they would be safer in our building.

We stored the doors on hinges because we were concerned they would warp, and we treated them with a lick of paint. We protected them so well you could hardly recognise them. Then we went on to store the toilets, sinks and emergency lighting.

Note: The guy who took over the building next door also eventually took over our building. He laughed when we told him what we'd done. He said we had done him a favour because the water pipes in the sister building had burst, and it had been left empty for so long that everything would have had to be replaced anyway.

The opening night was getting closer, both for us and for the Continental. To advertise Valentino's we had a guy dressed as Rudolph Valentino going round town on a white horse, followed by scantily-dressed girls. We got the cast appearing at the Empire Theatre and several footballers to come to the opening. We also had a page three model lined up to work behind the bar. Everything was on track. Then we hit a snag. On the morning of the opening night the inspector came out and said we had to install a bigger extractor fan in the basement toilet as the one that was in wasn't powerful enough. He wanted us to knock a hole through a wall that was five feet thick – and we had only eight hours to go.

If there isn't a solution create one

Well, desperate times call for desperate measures. While he was in there I threw a smoke bomb, used for checking to see if chimneys were clear, into the toilet and locked the door.

‘What the hell do you think you're playing at?’ he shouted.

‘Just sit on the floor and you'll be alright,’ I told him.

He continued to shout for me to open the door.

‘Just tell me when all the smoke has gone,’ I replied.

After less than three minutes the extractor had taken it all out. I opened the door, walked into the toilet and said, ‘Tell me, is the steam off a turd denser than that smoke bomb?’

‘No,’ he said.

‘So, would you agree that the extractor fan is good enough?’

He smiled and said, ‘You’ve got a funny way of getting your point over.’ He then went on to sign the relevant paperwork.

With all the workers paid and suited, and their wives or girlfriends taken to get their hair done at Liverpool’s top hairdresser, Herbert’s, not only did we open on schedule, but we were voted top club in the North West by *City Girl* magazine. Not bad considering we only had £3,500 to start with.

All heart

One night a lad, holding a glass in his hand, fell over. The cut needed stitches so I told the barman to take him across the dance floor and down the far stairs to wait for the ambulance. The barman said it would be quicker to take him down the stairs behind us.

‘I know,’ I told him, ‘but I would rather he bled on the red carpet in the disco area than the grey carpet in the lounge.’

‘You’re all heart, Rich,’ he replied.

When Miller Lite lager came out, the brewery gave three barrels for the price of one to promote it. Some places, unbeknown to the public, had Miller Lite lager put through every pump: Carlsberg, Heineken, Fosters, and Carling, to take full advantage of the promotion. At Valentino's we wouldn't have dreamt of doing such a thing.

When the loss outweighs the gain

A friend told me that one of the barmaids was fiddling. She wasn't taking any money but she was drinking the equivalent of half a bottle of vodka each night. I asked him if he would keep an eye on her again the following night and he agreed. At the end of the next night he said she had followed the same routine; she had taken no money but had consumed the equivalent of half a bottle of vodka. I thanked him and began to walk away.

'Are you going to sack her?' he asked.

'No,' I replied.

'Why not?' he asked, sounding surprised.

'Because she is one hell of a good barmaid. She knows how to mix all the cocktails, how to change a barrel and the gas in the cellar, and she never misses an opportunity to suggest to customers that they may wish to purchase a bottle of champagne when they are celebrating a special occasion. She is the best barmaid we have, and should be on £10 more than the other staff, but if we give her an extra £10, they would all want it. As the vodka she drinks comes to less than £10 and doesn't affect her work, it balances itself out.'

'So when would you fire her?' he asked.

'When the loss outweighs the gain,' I replied.

I would rather lose on my own terms than win on somebody else's

One of the dancers had a huge snake, and one day I borrowed the snake and put it in the office safe, just before our Jimmy came into the office. I asked him to give me some change from the safe for the tills in the bar. The look on his face when he was confronted with Hissing Sid was priceless.

We had live acts on as well as disco: Eddie Flanagan, Bernie Wenton, Two's a Crowd, Ground Pig, Jackie Hamilton; the list was endless. One night Lenny Henry and John Shea, who were in the area making *Coast to Coast* (1987), were in the club. John featured in the TV film *Family Reunion* (with Bette Davis), and in 1997, he played the villain Lex Luthor in the television series *Lois and Clark*. I enjoyed talking to John all night about Bette Davis, the stuff that legends are made of. She came out with a fantastic line that I used for the press when asked why I was getting out of the professional boxing business. It wasn't like the old days where you had to beat the top ten British fighters before you got a crack at the British title. It had reached the stage where certain fighters were handpicked and

fought imported fodder, getting a straight crack at the British title. On one occasion, when one of my fighters was fighting for the British bantam weight title, I discovered that contracts had already been signed, with the approval of the Boxing Board of Control, for my fighter's opponent to fight for the European title, even if he lost. Do I want to be part of a sport where the governing body is prepared to send the losers to represent us? It was suggested that if I had gone along with the system I could have benefited. That's when I used the immortal words of Bette Davis:

'I would rather lose on my own terms than win on somebody else's TV film *Family Reunion* ***' i would like to add*** unless that somebody else is wise and honourable.

Kidnapping a lord

We kidnapped the Liberal politician David Alton, or Lord Alton as he is known these days. It was for charity. We held him captive in our club, Valentino's, till the ransom was paid, with the money going to charity. The plan was to grab him as he was standing at the bus shelter in front of St Luke's Church, located on the corner of Berry Street and Leece Street at the top of Bold Street. He was wearing the longest university scarf you could imagine, so that's what we had to look for. We had nylon stockings on our faces to disguise ourselves.

Our car scorched around the corner and ground to a halt, but we couldn't get out because the child locks were on. The looks on the faces of the people in the bus queue still crack me up to this day. Anyway, we

managed, eventually, to get out and throw the scarf to which he was attached into the back of the car. This was all recorded by ITV news later. People were saying they had seen me on the news kidnapping David Alton. Even though I had a stocking on my head they still knew it was me. It ended up with Labour and the Conservatives paying us to keep him, and us paying the ransom to get rid of him; he was drinking the club dry.... (only joking David!)

Take a Break ... try and solve this puzzle :)



A bottle is placed on the floor. A key is hanging inside the bottle from a piece of string. You have to get the key off the string without you, or anyone else, touching or damaging the bottle

OK, back to the book

The Liverpool County Football Association Senior Cup, commonly known as the Liverpool Senior Cup, is a football knockout tournament involving teams from the City of Liverpool and surrounding areas.

It involves non-league clubs as well as the three professional teams on Merseyside: Liverpool, Everton and Tranmere Rovers.

It's the final of 1984 that I want to talk about, between South Liverpool and Joe Fagan's Liverpool FC, which I shall refer to as the 'Elites'. The result should have been a foregone conclusion, but no-one banked on South Liverpool's guts, determination, and cunning.

If Fagan's men thought South was going to roll over and die, they were in for a rude awakening. It was not the Champions' League or the FA Cup that was at stake, it was much more than that – it was about bragging rights. This was South's moment, their once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and the men of South were determined not to go home empty-handed. They were going to be the victors and the Elites the vanquished.

The game was to be played at South Liverpool's ground. Liverpool FC arrived in their luxury coach with their usual waiting-on staff, and made their way to dressing rooms devoid of central heating and fancy interiors. This was the home of the Dogs of War! And the Dogs of War were about to bite their arses!

As the two teams came trotting out, ex-Liverpool defender Phil Thompson and his fellow staff were met by a crowd that was not only smaller than the Elites were used to at Anfield, but one that differed on all levels.

Level 1: They didn't have a single supporter there; all the supporters were there for South Liverpool.

Level 2: The ground stewards, who were all my professional fighters – and South Liverpool supporters I might add – proceeded to intimidate the Elites; a display of passion and determination that would rival any New Zealand Haka.

The Elites were really pissed off – and it was about to get worse for them.

A team can only be as good as you allow them to be.

The Dogs of War played the Pedigrees off the park. The more the Elites tried to play classy football, the more they kept slipping up. At half-time the manager was ripping the Elites off a strip, so much so that he could be heard from the South Liverpool's changing room. Little did he know that he was motivating the *wrong* team.

Never interrupt your enemies while they're committing suicide.

The Elites were well and truly rattled.

End result: the Elites 1 – South Liverpool 2.

Wait for it... it gets better.

Phil Thompson agreed to present the Man of the Match Trophy, only to discover that it was to be presented to a player who had signed for South Liverpool after being rejected by the Elites. **Poetic justice!**

South won because their determination to win was stronger than that of the Elites. It's as simple as that.



South Liverpool football team our Jimmy's the one in middle wearing a suit



My brother Eddie on my right holding the Liverpool County Football Association Senior Cup after South Liverpool had just beaten Liverpool FC in the final 2 - 1

Make no bones about it

When my brother Jimmy bought South Liverpool Football Club, he put on many functions, and the star of the buffet table was a bronze turkey. What people didn't know was that he would keep the turkey carcass and buy cut turkey from the deli, placing it around the carcass to make it look as if it had been beautifully carved.

Afterwards, he would put the carcass back into the freezer for the next function. One day he went berserk because when he went to get the carcass he found it had been dumped.

Alan Ball

Alan Ball, one of Sir Alf Ramsey's 1966 world cup winning team players, went on to manage Manchester City Football Club. After losing a game in which the whole team had put on a poor performance, the television interviewer asked him if he was going to rip the team off a strip. Bally replied,

‘Are you kidding? There are eleven millionaires in that dressing room.’

It got me thinking about how many of us mere mortals, who don't get paid to play, but pay to play in sports centres and on football pitches every week, fight tooth and nail to win, even if it's just for the bragging rights.

While in London I was witness to something that left a bad taste in my mouth. A certain international footballer walked to the front of the queue at a top nightclub, and became stropic when reminded that there was a queue. He went on to ask the door staff if they knew who he was. The doorman replied that he did, but that he would still have to take his place in the queue. ‘I could buy and sell you,’ the player said, at the same time taking out a £50 note and burning it in front of the doorman.

‘You know sir, if you had given the £50 to the *Big Issue* seller across the street, I would have paid for you to come in. As it is, it's not worth you joining the queue because the last person we want in this club is someone as shallow as you.’

Never think that the people who put the shoes on your feet are not good enough to lace them.

Richard T Smith

Alan told me how it saddened him that not one of the England managers preceding Ramsey had ever asked for his advice, and yet he was the only manager to have lifted the world cup for England. Sad really when you think about it. If you were going to climb Mount Everest, wouldn't you want to talk to someone who had done it before? I often wonder how many more diamonds we have missed simply because we weren't prepared to bend down and pick them up.

Employ your time improving yourself by other men's writings so that you shall come easily by what others have laboured hard for.

Socrates



I'm not really big Alan Ball is small

Bob Paisley

Bob Paisley, Liverpool Football Club's most successful manager, once said '*if you want to be heard, whisper.*' He never gave interviews. As a matter of fact, when the game was being televised by the BBC he would wear an ITV tie, and when the game was televised by ITV he would wear a BBC tie, so the interviewers never came near him. *It was enough for him to let the players do the talking on the pitch.*

Luis Figo

He's played for FC Barcelona, Real Madrid, and Sporting Lisbon. He's won the prestigious 2000 European Player of the Year Award, been selected as Europe's top player by France Football, and won the 2001 FIFA World Player of the year award. So when one of the best soccer players in the world talks about why he ranks Jose Mourinho as one of the best coaches he has ever had the pleasure to serve under, you have to listen. So what was the reason he gave for ranking Mourinho as one of the best? He said that in 32 days of training no two days were the same

This shows that variety is the spice of life, and emphasises the importance of not allowing the players to become stale or allowing monotony to set in. Life's a bit like that; every day should be an improvement on the previous day.

If you are as unsuccessful today as you were yesterday and don't do anything about it, tomorrow will be just another today.

Richard T Smith



Myself Ali Bongo and Alan

A night to remember

It was the 2007 Royal Variety Performance at the Empire Theatre, Liverpool. My friend Alan Singleton and I performed at the after-show party. For both of

us, it was a night to remember because we spent time with two wonderful human beings who have since sadly passed away.

Forget the appearance of The Three Tenors, Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo and José Carreras at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome.

These were The Three Magicians, the legendary Ali Bongo, Alan and I. Just to give you the measure of Ali Bongo whose real name was (William Wallace) here's just a few of the credits in his career in magic.

He taught tricks to the actor Robert Lindsay when he appeared in the role of Fagin in the musical *Oliver!* at the London Palladium

He was a consultant on the children's television series, *Ace of Wands*.

He was elected president of the Magic Circle in 2008

Ali Bongo was also the original inspiration for the character of Jonathan Creek, played by the actor Alan Davies

He had his own BBC TV series, *Ali Bongo's Cartoon Carnival*,

He was for many years associated with the conjuror David Nixon and went on to become an adviser on *the David Nixon Show* and *David Nixon's Magic Box*

Ali travelled throughout the world as consultant to many famous magicians, most notably David Copperfield in Las Vegas.

During the 1980s he worked with Paul Daniels on the *Paul Daniel's Secrets*.

You can see why that night holds such a great memory for Alan and me. We performed together in the middle of St. Georges Hall. The performer

on the stage didn't have a chance as the crowd was being entertained by the Three Magicians. Later, I was humbled when Ali said he was impressed with one of the tricks I did and asked me to show him how I did it.

Sadly he died not long afterwards of pneumonia on March 8, 2009, aged 79

And it was about to get better

We were having a great night and it was about to get better. We sat down with the late and wonderful Sir Bobby Robson and did a few tricks for him. Then I did what I normally do if I'm ever in the company of someone special; I asked questions, first about how he felt about the way he was dismissed as manager of Newcastle Football Club. He said he loved Newcastle and he wasn't going to let one bad apple ruin the barrel.

Bobby was famous for his bad quotes, and being a lover of quotes I reminded him of a few.

'I'm not going to look beyond the semi-final – but I would love to lead Newcastle out at the final.'

'He's the only man I know who could start an argument with himself' (on Craig Bellamy).

'We didn't underestimate them. They were a lot better than we thought.'

OK, Bobby, we'll leave it at that. He was a charming man in every sense of the word. I spoke about the times I met Shankly, and it became pretty apparent they were similar in their thinking. So it's no surprise that they achieved success, not because they had to, but because they wanted to. Yes, Monday 3rd December 2007 was a night to remember.

I destroy my enemies when I make them my friends. Abraham Lincoln

*Long ago my father placed his hand upon my head.
As he laid each finger down he smiled at me and said,
Someday son when you're a man you will understand,
You'll only count your true friends on the fingers of one hand.*

*Five fingers you can count upon,
Five fingers... and you **Alan** are one.*



Alan Sir Bobby Robson and me

Pop or Yank

There was a wonderful character we used to call either Pop or Yank because of the stories he came out with. He was still turning up at Springfield Park every Sunday to play football well into retirement age.

He would play wearing a trilby hat, trousers and braces, not to mention corky boots! And for those who don't know what corky boots are, they are the old-fashioned football boots – none of your soft, supple leathers of today. With a corky boot you could kick your opponent into the middle of next week; and forget the shin pads, a corky would laugh at shin pads. I swear the building industry got the idea for industrial boots from the corky. Anyway, Pop might have been a pensioner, but the corky boots balanced the books.

You were on a hiding to nothing if you took the ball off him; all you were doing was taking the ball off an old man. And if he took the ball off you it was worse, because an old man had beaten you; and if he kicked you with the corky boots and you started whinging he would say, 'If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen.'

But it was later on in the pub that Pop came into his own. He would start telling stories of how he and his friends, working as crew on the Lusitania, jumped ship and ended up in Al Capone's gang.

'Yes, Al used to pay me two grand a week.'

'Two grand, Pop? That's a lot of money.'

'Yeh, but Al knew I drank heavy. Anyway,' he continued, 'I remember one day this kid came over to me and asked if I was carrying a piece. I said to him, "You cheeky sod! This is my own hair."

"No, what I meant was a gun; are you carrying a gun?" he asked me.

"What's it to you?" I said.

'He told me that he had a wife and four children and there was no food in the house, and that he was going to rob the jeweller's across the road. So I

gave him my gun and told him I respect any man who wants to put food on the table.

‘So, with my gun in his hand, he walked over to the jeweller’s, stopped and looked back at me for reassurance. I just nodded. Then he took a deep breath, threw the f#%ing gun through the window, robbed some rings and necklaces and ran off. Why the hell didn’t he use a brick? The police tracked the gun back to me and I was locked up! Lucky for me, Al had a few judges in his back pocket and I was soon set free.’

And so the stories went on and on... He had half his index finger missing so I asked him what had happened.

‘I wore it down pulling the trigger.’ The yarns came thick and fast.

Check this out. I appeared in a film called *Al’s Lads* starring Ricky Tomlinson and Ralf Little from the hit comedy *The Royle Family*. Also in *Al’s Lads* was Richard Roundtree who played the original Shaft, and Marc Warren from the TV series *Hustle*.

I was a corner man in the fight scene for Scott Maslen who plays Jack Branning from *Eastenders*. The movie was about a gang of lads from Liverpool who jumped ship in New York and ended up in Al Capone’s gang.

So maybe Pop wasn’t telling lies after all... he just exaggerated a little.

The clown makes everybody laugh, but who makes the clown laugh?

First my nephew Edward died of cancer. He was only nine years old. Then my wife Christine had a stroke on the day we went to sort out our passports to go to America. We went from earning to yearning in 24 hours. Not long afterwards our daughter Becky came within half an hour of dying of meningitis; the same thing my mam died from.

One day I was driving up the East Lancashire Road and I stopped at a place called Crank. If anybody had seen what I did next, they would have thought I was a crank. I got out of the car, walked into a field and called God fit to burn... ‘You’re nothing but a bully,’ I shouted. ‘You pick on defenceless women and children! Well, come on big licks, give us your

best shot,' I challenged Just then a sun shower started, lasting for just a couple of minutes.

'Is that it? Is that the best you got? What happened to the lightning?'

Then I realised I was covered in the most electrically conductive substance on the planet. 'Maybe he's priming me,' I thought. With that, I quickly got back into the car and went to see my old Chinese friend Ernie Woo.

He asked, 'What's up?'

'Nothing,' I replied.

'I know there's something up because the glint is missing from your eyes.'

'What glint?' I asked.

Ernie smiled and said, 'The glint of mischief.'

At that point I poured my heart out to that man.

'I don't have a laugh left in me. You know, Ernie, the clown makes everybody laugh, but who makes the clown laugh?'

Ernie thought for a moment before telling me, 'You already have the answer, and when you realise it, you will appreciate it more.'

I did eventually find out who makes the clown laugh, but more about that later.

He then asked who the most important person in my life was.

I told him there were two, my wife Christine and our daughter Becky.

'Wrong. The most important person in your life is you.'

I disagreed with him, telling him once again it was my wife and daughter.

'When the cheetah makes a kill, the first person it feeds is itself so that it remains strong enough to make more kills to enable it to keep feeding its

cubs... *you have to nourish yourself before you can nourish others,*' he told me.

With the words of my friend still ringing in my ears, I went home and asked my wife Chris and our daughter Becky, 'Do you love me?' 'Of course we do, why do you ask?' they said.

'There are 24 hours in the day... can I have one?'

As a matter of fact, we all deserved to have an hour to ourselves, and so we changed our back dining room into a relaxation room where I now go and listen to relaxing music, gather my thoughts or read a good book. At first it was hard for my wife to get used to it. If the phone rang, she would look at me as if to say, 'Shall we answer it?' I would reply that if it was important, they would either leave a message or ring back. If it wasn't important, did we really need to disrupt our **one** hour?

Live as if you were to die tomorrow, learn as if you were to live forever.
Gandhi



Scott Maslen and me on the set of Als Lads

Ward Wizards

In this world there are dreamers, and in this world there are dream makers, but sadly, in this world there are dream breakers. Be either of the first two, but beware of the third, they only want to steal your sunshine.

Richard T Smith

A magician friend of mine, Frank Baker, who sadly isn't with us anymore, had an idea for setting up ward wizards at Alder Hey Children's Hospital where we could entertain the children with magic tricks and giveaways, such as sweets and tricks. We eventually had approximately twelve wards where we would entertain on a rota. One day I was on ward C, the cancer ward, and one of the nurses asked me if I had been into one of the side wards to see a little girl who we will call Kerry for now. I said that I hadn't and asked why.

'Oh, she never smiles,' the nurse explained.

'Well, she doesn't have much to smile about,' I said.

'It's more than that,' she told me. 'Children don't understand the seriousness of cancer and smile from time to time. Kerry never, ever smiles.'

'I'll drop in and make a fuss of her,' I promised. So I popped my head around the door and there she was, a 12 year old girl; and I can honestly say I have yet to see a child looking so lonely.

'I need your help,' I told her. 'All the doctors and nurses are after me because I've been playing practical jokes and I need somewhere to hide. Can I hide in here?' I asked. She nodded without saying anything. 'Thank you,' I said, 'and just to show my appreciation, I will show you some tricks that you can try out on your mum and dad.'

Kerry told me that her dad had left her, and that her mum and her only sister were in prison for causing serious bodily harm. She was living with foster parents who never came in to see her. She had pictures of her school friends on the wall, but they too had stopped visiting.

I ended up spending a couple of hours with Kerry. As I finally got up to leave she asked if I would come back to see her again.

‘Just try stopping me,’ I said.

Over the next few months I would go up to ward C after I had been to the other wards. One day there was a policewoman outside Kerry’s room, so I waited in the open ward.

One of the ward nurses told me that Kerry’s mum and sister were visiting but Kerry was asking if I had arrived.

How sad it is that a child looks forward to seeing a stranger more than seeing her family. When they left, I went in to see her and was shocked to see such a change in her. In the short space of time since my last visit she had turned ashen; her beautiful long hair looked very thin and her skin was so tender with the treatment she was having that when I accidentally touched her with a balloon model she screamed with pain.

A couple of days later I was taking in a miniature teddy bear that a friend of mine had made. It was about two inches in height. As I walked into the ward the nurse, without speaking, just shook her head. It stopped me in my tracks. I turned stone cold. At the same time I could see the other children in the open ward jumping up and down on their beds with anticipation of me coming to entertain them. I gestured with one finger to them just to give me a minute. I walked into the small room where the nurses made tea and coffee and I broke down. As I was crying, I had the feeling someone was watching me; and I was right. When I looked up, I saw another little girl in the side ward facing. She asked why I was crying and I had to think quickly.

‘Oh, it’s just that I can’t find a good home for this little teddy bear.’

‘I will look after him,’ she said.

‘Do you promise?’

‘Yes,’ she said. And so I gave her the teddy bear.

Now, every time I think life’s dealt me a lousy hand, and when I’m in an ‘I feel sorry for me’ mood, I just think of *the little girl who went to hell*

before she went to heaven, and I soon realise I don't really have a problem.... Do I?

Penguins can't fly

In the confrontation between the stream and the rock, the stream always wins – not through strength, but through persistence.

Buddha

On one of the wards was a boy who had had an accident that left him in a wheelchair. After I had done a few tricks I asked him why he was in the wheelchair. He told me he couldn't walk. He looked a bit puzzled when I said, 'I didn't ask you if you could walk, I asked you why you are in a wheelchair.' Again he repeated that he couldn't walk. 'Who told you that you can't walk?' He was still puzzled as he said the doctor had told him. 'Really, so that's it, is it? You're just going to give up?'

I went on to tell him about my favourite picture, which I have at home. It's a three frame picture. In the first frame there's a picture of a penguin flying, with a great big smile on its face. All is well with the world. In the second frame a duck flies alongside the penguin and says, 'What do you think you're doing? Penguins can't fly! And in the last frame the penguin falls to earth and never flies again.

I told him that in this world there are penguins who are under-achievers and the ducks are there to tell them they will never amount to anything. There are penguins that have strokes and lose their speech, like my wife, and the ducks tell them they will never speak again. Penguins come in all different colours, religions and nationalities, and the ducks will always be there to discriminate. I told him that my wife decided not to listen to the ducks, and that although her speech was still impaired, she was, at the time, up to about twenty words.

'Can you stand up straight while supporting yourself on the arms of the wheelchair?' I asked.

'I don't know, I've never tried.'

'Well you won't know till you try.' At this point his mother looked worried.

‘Will you try, just for me?’ I asked. ‘I promise to catch you if you fall.’

He didn’t answer but tried to push himself up into a standing position. After four or five attempts he managed it.

‘Are you OK?’ I asked.

‘Yes,’ he said with a touch of exhilaration in his voice.

‘I’m going to ask you to do one more thing. If you can just for a moment let go of the chair, it would mean you would be standing on your own two feet. Do you want to give it a go?’

Once again he said nothing, just letting go of the chair, first with one hand, then, after what seemed an eternity, the other; but only for a short time before grabbing hold and sitting down.

‘Well done! You stood on your own two feet. Next time anyone says you can’t do this or you can’t do that, just look at them and visualise their faces changing into your favourite duck, whether it be Donald Duck or Daffy Duck, and when they ask why you’re laughing, just tell them it’s a private joke; they won’t realise that the joke is on them.’

‘So what happens now?. You know you can stand on your own two feet, but let’s just say you could move one foot about an inch. Well, if it’s possible to move one foot, it’s possible to move the other foot an inch, then one inch becomes two, then three, then four, and so on. The journey of a million miles starts with the first step, but what you have to ask yourself is how many times you’re prepared to fall flat on your face in order to take the first step. Remember, anyone can eat an elephant just one bite at a time.’

As I was leaving the hospital, his mother, who was leaving at the same time, told me she feels very nervous when her son tries to walk in case he falls and hurts himself.

I told her the story of the father who was very protective of his daughter. One day a very wise man bet him that he could grab a rose out of the father’s hand before he could stop him. As the wise man attempted to grab the rose, the father closed his hands so fast that the wise man failed

to get the rose. The father laughed in triumph, but on opening his hands realised that he had crushed the rose.

‘In your attempt to protect your son from hurting himself you do more damage than a fall could ever do,’ I told the boy’s mother.

About eight months later I was in one of the craft tents at the annual Liverpool Show when I felt a tug at my trousers. I turned around and there was the young boy. He could walk with just a very slight limp. He told me that he wasn’t going to give up till he could run. Although I have never seen him from that day to this, I believe he will have achieved his objective.

Persistent people begin their success where others end in failure
Edward Eggleston.





Paul Daniels presenting me with my Guinness world record certificate

World Record

I heard about Dr. Alexander from India setting a new Guinness World Record in the year 2005 for performing the longest magic show, which lasted 24 hours.

And in the tradition of Alan Bleasdale's fictional character Yosser Hughes, played by Bernard Hill from the 1982 television series *Boys from the Black Stuff*, I used his catch phrase '*I can do that.*'

Having spent all that time in the nightclub business, staying awake wasn't going to be a problem. Setting about doing the tricks was the problem. I decided I didn't want to break the world record by just one hour. I have always maintained that, as in boxing, you shouldn't take a champion's title off him by one point or a split decision; you haven't won it, you've stolen it. You should make it more decisive than that.

And so I decided to do 30 hours, adding 6 hours to the record, with a total of 600 tricks, that's an average of 20 tricks an hour, using a memory system that would enable me to remember how to do each trick, and in what order.

I sent the list to Paul Kieve who was the magic consultant to *Guinness World Records* because I didn't want to slip up and repeat them or risk failing because some tricks were the same. For example, if I 'vanished' a coin I wasn't allowed to vanish anything else using the same method. Paul was magic consultant for the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, in which he also appeared, and he privately tutored Daniel Radcliffe in magic.

After some negotiating, the list of tricks was finalised.

Now there was just the venue to sort out. A magician friend of mine, Spencer Lynch, knew the owners of the Bridewell, an old police station where Charles Dickens, one of my favourite authors, had been sworn in as a special constable for the Liverpool Police Force in 1860, for the purpose of aiding his research for the book *The Uncommercial Traveller*. Now the old Bridewell is a restaurant called Jalons Bridewell, 1 Campbell Square, Liverpool L1 5BL.

Charles Dickens made numerous visits to Liverpool and read extracts from his novels to large audiences in St. George's Hall and at the former Masque Theatre in Duke Street. He sailed to America from Liverpool on at least two occasions. His time spent in Liverpool must have been very dear to him because he wrote 'Liverpool lies in my heart next only to inscribed on a plaque at 1 Cambell Square Liverpool'

Although the owners of Jalons Bridewell said I could do it there, it was a bit tricky. I had to have a fresh audience every hour and I couldn't take the chance of anything going wrong, for example, with my audiences and their customers. So, with regret, I had to decline their offer. I ended up competing for the world record in the Moat House Hotel in Liverpool City Centre on 7th-8th August 2004, doing 30hrs 45minutes and adding 6 hours 45 minutes to the record.

I was once asked if there was such a thing as magic...

and as it was a child who had asked me, I thought long and hard before I gave my reply. With a warm heart and a clear conscience I said, 'Yes ... '

You see, **magic** is Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy.

Magic is going through the gates of Disneyland for the first time... **magic** is going through the gates of Disneyland for the second time.

Magic is your first day at school and meeting your first friend, who'll be your friend for the duration of your education.

Magic is your first girlfriend and your first kiss.

Magic is when she says, 'I do.'

Magic is watching your children being born, taking their first steps, and saying their first words.

You see **magic** is a feeling you get when something wonderful takes place. What we magicians do are illusions, and if they're good, then at the point of the illusion taking place – that's when the magic happens.

The sad thing is that some people spend more time trying to catch the magician out than actually enjoying the moment. In most cases the magician isn't trying to fool you, he's trying to entertain you.



As a magic consultant for Nickelodeon's new smash hit series House of Anubis

Commonwealth Games 2002

Our daughter Becky applied to be a volunteer at the 2002 Commonwealth Games. She had just qualified as a PE teacher and believed she would benefit from the experience. I took her to Manchester two weeks prior to the games, but then I had to tell them she couldn't do it because she had been offered a placement in Tunbridge Wells to finish her work experience.

I was surprised when they said, 'What about you?'

'Me?'

'Why not? You've been bringing your daughter here for two weeks and listened to everything she was told – so why not?'

And so I decided to do it... and I had a great time. It took place in the new Manchester City Football Stadium. I got to meet people from all around the world and had the best seat in the house for various events.

In the next story I won't mention the country concerned, and you will see why when you read it.

One day I was asked to chauffeur one of the sports administrators from to the Reebok Stadium, home of Bolton Wanderers FC Club. I noticed as I was driving that the he was asleep. I thought, 'I can't pass up such an opportunity. 'I turned off the M61 motorway, up a slip road and stopped gently. I opened the two front doors and, from under my seat, removed a cord that we used to secure luggage. Wrapping it round my hands I slid onto the back seat next to him, gently closing over the door on my side, but not closing it completely as I didn't want to wake him just yet, not before I had my script ready. Then I nudged him a couple of times till he woke up. As he became aware that my hands were tied, I asked him,

‘Where do you think they’ve taken us?’

For a moment he said nothing, turning white as a ghost as he noticed that the front doors of the car were open. He didn’t get the chance to enquire about anything because I gave the game away by falling out of the car in hysterics. When he realised it was a joke, he said,

‘That’s a very dangerous sense of humour you have, I’m sitting in the front seat for the rest of the journey.’

When he came out of the Reebok Stadium, I was waiting to take him back. He was laughing and said he had told everyone in the meeting about what I had done.

‘So, what have I done for diplomatic relations?’ I asked.

‘They’re good, my friend’ he reassured me, before asking if I knew where the Curry Mile in Manchester was as he had not yet eaten.

‘Get in the back and I’ll take you there.’

‘No, I’ll get in the front and you’ll take me there.’

I just laughed and said, ‘I get your point.’

Arriving at the curry house he said, ‘Come on in and join me.’

‘Oh, so now you want me to taste your food, just in case it’s poisoned,’ I laughed.

‘Correct,’ he said. We seemed to be on the same wavelength – as regards our sense of humour, that is.

As I locked the car I shouted to a policeman, ‘Keep an eye on the car as I don’t want to come back and find the hub caps gone.’

‘What a cheek! You’re not in Liverpool now,’ he shouted.

All VIP cars for the Commonwealth Games were given top priority. They could park on double yellow lines – in fact, anywhere they wanted. And

so the police officer watched the car. Once inside I told the manager that I had to taste everything on the menu to ensure that it was safe for the sports administrator to eat as I could not have his death on my hands. The sports administrator laughed when the manager said it should be the other way around, to make sure the scouser wasn't poisoned. Anyway, a good time was had by all.

Although there is rivalry between Liverpool and Manchester people, it only happens in football. I can honestly say that I got on great with the people I met from Manchester, during the Commonwealth Games, in the boxing business and also in the magic fraternity; in fact, anywhere other than in the football environment.

Let's walk the walk

One of the most memorable things I've ever done was to walk down O'Connell Street in Dublin with our daughter Becky. Over the years I had mentioned that one of the things I regretted not having done was walking down O'Connell Street with my dad. But I never got the chance as he died at work. That's why you should *never put off till tomorrow what you can do today*.

Our Becky must have heard me mention it, as when we were over in Dublin one Easter she said, 'Come on, I want to go to town.' It was pointed out to her that the shops were shut and it was pointless going. 'Come on, Dad, what I'm after isn't closed.'

'What's that?' I asked.

'Never mind, you'll see when we're there,' Becky told me.

We were just setting off to walk when someone asked us why we weren't getting a bus.

'A bus? You're having a laugh! It's just a stretch of the legs.'

It must have been the Irish in her, but we eventually arrived in town.

'Well, here it is,' she told me.

‘Here’s what?’ I asked.

‘The start of O’Connell Street,’ she said. ‘You didn’t get the chance to walk down it with your dad, but I’m walking down it with mine.’

And so Chris Becky and myself linked arms like the Tin Man, the Lion and the Scarecrow out of the *Wizard of Oz* and walked down the Yellow Brick Road, err, I mean O’Connell Street.

Sometimes it’s the little things that people pick up on that make the difference. On that day she was a better person than me, because she made it happen.

Never murder a man who is committing suicide

I once had a bubble gum business filling bubble gum machines with gum and little toy prizes that sometimes came out of the machine with the bubble gum. I drove a Morris Minor Traveller car, the one with wood panelling on the side. It was ideal for carrying the boxes of bubble gum and toys for topping up the machines.

I’m ashamed to say that one night I drove without insurance. It had just run out – and so had my luck. A car came towards me on my side of the road. As I swerved to miss it, my front wheels caught the kerbside and my car went into a role, one roll after another, until it eventually stopped upside down. It was a write-off and I was lucky to get out of it alive. The other car didn’t stop. My head was cut and my body was hurting. I knew I had to get away from the car. I ran off into the bushes and watched as two cars stopped, followed shortly afterwards by a police car.

The headlights on my car were still on, and my blood was on the seats. I couldn’t help but laugh when a policewoman, shining a torch inside the car, said to her colleague, ‘This is worse than we thought, we have a severed limb.’ She knelt down with a plastic bag and tweezers and picked up a finger – not mine I’m glad to say, but a rubber one. It was one of the toy trinkets that went in with the bubble gums.

I walked home and, in the morning, reported the car stolen. I was asked to go to the police station to make a statement. I was aching all over, worse

than when it happened. I felt as if I had been in fifteen rounds with Mike Tyson and lost. After a good, long bath I felt a little better. I brushed my hair over to hide the cut on the back of my head as I knew I had to hide the fact that I'd been in an accident. With a deep breath I walked into the police station. The inspector called me into a side room and took a statement about my car having been stolen while I was out, and how I hadn't been able to drive it as it wasn't insured.

He put the pen down and said, 'Let me tell you what happened. You were driving the car and you crashed it.'

'It wasn't me,' I told him.

'You were seen running towards the cemetery. Look, you didn't hurt anyone. As a matter of fact, you're the only loser here as your car is a total write-off and you won't get a penny. I don't need the paperwork, so as far as I'm concerned this is a closed book.'

At that moment, just from looking into his eyes, I knew he knew it was me. He put his hand out as if to say, 'You have my word, it goes no further.'

I shook his hand and said, 'You're a good man', but just as I opened the door to leave, I turned around, smiled, and said, 'By the way, I was **running away from the cemetery.**'

Shut your trap

Give a man a leg to stand on, and he'll use it to kick you up the backside

Armheesicd

I love characters, they're what make the world go round, and one such character, a light-fingered type, who was passing the Knotty Ash Pub just before opening time, noticed the door was open. Popping his head around the door he must have thought his Christmases and Birthdays had come, all rolled into one, because the till was open and full of money ready for opening time.

He ran in and leapt over the bar. Unfortunately, the trap door to the cellar was open and down he went, breaking his leg. The manageress, who, incidentally, was called Mrs. Jump, came running when she heard the screams.

‘Get me an ambulance,’ he cried, ‘Get an ambulance.’

‘Get an ambulance? I’ll get the police; you tried to rob me. God’s done this to you,’ she told him, adding, ‘Let this be a lesson.’

However, seeing his plight and calming down somewhat, she decided he had probably been punished enough.

‘I’m sorry,’ our light-fingered little friend told Mrs. Jump. ‘If the ambulance men ask how it happened, could you say you asked me to stack some of the shelves and I slipped through the trapdoor? It would save me some embarrassment, even though I don’t deserve it.’

‘We’ll see,’ said Mrs. Jump.

‘What happened here?’ the ambulance men enquired upon their arrival.

For what seemed like an eternal pause to our light-fingered friend, Mrs. Jump explained that she had asked him to stock some of the shelves and he had slipped through the trap door.

He went on to put a claim in to the brewery and received £2,000 compensation! Talk about thinking on your feet, or should I say, off your feet? Now there’s cheek for you.

No Joke like an old Joke

I used to write stories for comics about characters created by a friend of mine, George Nicholas. There were Budgie Malone and Owl Capone, gangster birds who were always being chased by Eliot Nestegg. There were the Nice Mice and Stuntman, who did stunts that no respectable stuntman would be seen doing. There were also Mafia Mouse and the Scare Bears. One day George had a problem. It was about storylines for one of his characters, Scouse Mouse, which the local newspaper was

going to feature in a cartoon strip, but they were insisting on a full six months' supply of cartoon strips ahead of time.

'What's the problem, George?' I asked.

'It's not the drawing of the cartoons that's the problem, it's the storylines.'

'Really, so they want them six months in advance, do they?' I asked. 'How about a year in advance, George? Would you like a year's supply? You can have two years' if you want.'

George thought I was extracting the urine. 'Are you winding me up? How are we going to do that?'

'Get in the car and I will show you.' I took George to the main library in Liverpool City Centre. We went directly to the archive section and asked for back issues of the newspaper in question for the year 1953, January through to June. All the back issues were kept on a reel of film that you wound with a handle.

I had a small cassette recorder with me and, based on the belief that there is no such thing as a new joke, recorded the storylines from the cartoons of that period. The World War I joke became the World War II joke; the Titanic joke became the Belgrano joke, and so on. As cartoon strips are only visual jokes (and cannot be patented), they can be used for any characters, for instance, Mickey Mouse asked the waiter, 'Why has my lobster only got one claw?' 'It lost the other in a fight,' replied the waiter. 'Well, go and get me the winner,' Mickey told him. Homer Simpson asked the waiter, 'Why has my chicken only got one leg?' 'It lost the other in a fight,' the waiter replied. 'Well, go and get me the winner,' Homer told him.

The newspaper received the scripts six months in advance as they had requested. As a matter of fact, the film and TV industry do it all the time. They call it updating or re-release. How many *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *King Kong*'s are there?

Shankly

I had the honour of meeting Bill Shankly, Liverpool Football Club's legendary manager, a number of times in my life. The first was when I was a teenager. I went to Liverpool's training ground at Melwood with a friend of mine, Alan Wall. Alan was a staunch Liverpool supporter, whereas I supported Everton. As the Liverpool team was going into the changing rooms, Shankly came over and asked Alan if he was working, to which Alan replied 'No.'

'Well, you won't get a job here,' Shanks rasped and chased him from the ground.

He then asked me if I was working, to which I replied, 'Yes, Mr. Shankly, I work in the fruit market. We start at 5 a.m. and work our breaks so we can finish early.'

'Good lad,' he replied and proceeded to go into the changing rooms, only to come out a few minutes later with a cup of tea and a tin of broken biscuits. 'Get stuck in, son,' he said, and that I did, as Alan, from a distance, watched his Evertonian friend taking tea and biscuits with the Liverpool manager.

He holds court

A few years later Phil Boersma, a Kirkby lad, was playing for Liverpool. I used to play in some of the games he organised. On one occasion I was privy to what I think was Shankly's greatest press interview. It went like this:

'A young reporter asked Bill what he thought was the secret of good football.

Bill told him that to be a good player three things are necessary: to be a good winner of the ball, a good passer of the ball, and the conviction to carry it out. He went on to explain that it's no good being a good winner of the ball if you go and lose it...that's futile. And it's no good if you are just a good passer of the ball but have to rely on someone else to give you the ball... it means you have to depend on others. And you have to have the determination to carry it out. He said that players want three things

win medals for their club, represent their country, and make a good living... get the first three right and the others will follow

The reporter still looked puzzled and asked about scoring.

Bill explained that if he kicked the ball to someone it would be called a pass; if he kicked the ball to the goal it would be called a shot. Whether a pass or a shot, he said it was the same foot and the same ball, adding that it was a simple game and there was no need to complicate it.

He said that if they have the ball, they can score and we can't. If we have the ball, we can score and they can't, and that is why possession is vital; it gives you the opportunity to win, and causes them to lose.

He explained that the goalkeeper should be protected at all times, like a queen bee and that all danger and errors should happen in the opponents' half of the pitch. He went on to add that the moment the opposition gets into your half, you batten down the hatches and protect your goalkeeper at all costs as you must always want to win more than your opponents do.

I often wonder what he would think of the game now.

Bill Shankly's final match as boss

The Football Association Community Shield, formerly known as the Charity Shield, is a trophy contested in an annual match between the champions of the FA Premier League and the winners of the FA Cup, and usually raises hundreds of thousands of pounds every year, which is distributed to community-based initiatives and charities up and down the country.

The funds are raised through a combination of ticket sales and match programmes.

All clubs taking part in the FA Cup receive money that they can donate to their chosen charity.

Before Liverpool played Leeds United in the Charity Shield in 1974, my brother Jimmy and a friend of ours, Stevie Ware, went up to Bill Shankly's house to ask for his help in getting funding from Liverpool's

share of the Charity Shield fund for York House Youth Club, which our Jimmy was running at the time.

*Can't imagine the fans going up to any manager's home these days; they were more accessible then ... **By the way, Shankly went out with a win!***

Not in front of the Messiah

Another occasion when our paths crossed was when I was getting over an injury. I was a boxing professional at the time, and Brian Kettle lived around the corner from me. He had not long signed for Liverpool and he took me to Melwood to train after the first team had gone up to Anfield. Brian was a left-back and captain of Liverpool's reserve team for several years. However, he was never able to push Alec Lindsay, Joey Jones, and Alan Kennedy out of the first team, so he moved to Wigan. I had just finished a gruelling workout on what was the hottest day of the year, and started a 15 minute tapered down skip. I was just five minutes into the skipping when I felt like throwing up. Just then Shanks walked in. There was no way I was going to quit in front of this man, so I started doing knees to chest double skips, figure eights – there were sparks coming off that rope!

I heard Brian call time.

‘You sure?’ I gasped.

Brian assured me that it was.

Stopping, I asked where the toilet was. Brian showed me. I went into the toilet and was sick as a dog. I had overdone it. When I came out, Shankly started talking to me about when he used to box for the army.

‘A footballer can have a day off,’ he told me. ‘If he’s tired, there are ten other men who can carry him, whereas in the ring there's nowhere to hide. If you’re having an off day, you get a bloody good hiding.’

He went on to say how disappointed he was with John Conte and his love of partying, adding that it’s a short career in the hardest sport of them all. I listened to him for over an hour. Like a sponge, I absorbed everything he said, and I'm not ashamed to admit that I shed a tear the day he died



Jimmy Terry Culshaw and me

If he was knocking on the door, he wouldn't wake the dog up

. Jimmy Patton

Smith & Patton

We used to call it the Smith & Patton Stable that consisted of John Farrell Cliff Domville Marty Jacobs Terry Culshaw Henry Arnold Chris Farrell Sammy Brennan Brian Wareing. Jimmy Patton wasn't only a friend, he was my partner in crime in the professional boxing business; training, managing, promoting, matchmaking – the lot. We travelled everywhere, not just in the UK but around the world. Jimmy had some wonderful sayings. Commenting on a certain fighter he might say, *'If he was knocking on the door, he wouldn't wake the dog up,'* and when a doctor was putting stitches in a cut over a fighter's eye, he'd say to the doctor, *'I'd hate you to make me a suit.'*

One night we were at Trentham Gardens in Stoke. Me and Jimmy knew the two boxers in one of the fights. We went into the dressing room of one of the fighters, whom we will call Charlie, who asked what we knew about his opponent. I proceeded to tell him that he didn't like it when he was shown a bit of class.

'What do you mean?' he asked.

'Well, if you were to drop your arms down by your sides and maybe do the Ali shuffle, his bottle would go.'

'Thanks, Ritchie,' he said, 'I owe you a drink.'

We then went into the dressing room of the other fighter, whom we shall call Pat, where he proceeded to ask me if I knew anything about his opponent, Charlie.

'As a matter of fact, I do. You can always tell when Charlie is a spent force; in other words, he has nothing left in the tank. He will try and bluff his way by dropping his arms by his sides and doing the Ali shuffle.'

'Thanks, Ritchie, for that bit of advice, I owe you a drink.'

'This should be interesting,' Jimmy said as the fight began. In the fourth round Charlie dropped his arms and did the Ali shuffle.

'That's the signal,' thought Pat.

The sight of Charlie hitting the canvas haunts me to this day.

I was at the Central Area Boxing Board of Control Meeting in Manchester, and the two boxers were there.

‘I knew I had you in the fourth round,’ Pat said to Charlie.

‘What do you mean?’ he asked.

‘Ritchie told me that when you’re a spent force you try and bluff your way by dropping your arms and doing the Ali shuffle.’

‘Did he now? He told me that if I did it, your arse would go.’

They both saw the funny side and to this day we often laugh about it. You wouldn’t get that in football; it would be handbags at dawn.

Talking about football, the third member of the stable was Dixie Baines, the physio, whose grandson Leighton Baines plays for Everton Football Club and England International. Sadly, Dixie didn’t live long enough to see Leighton’s success, but he was always proud of Leighton. I’m sure he’s looking down now saying, ‘The boy did good.’

Dixie didn’t really look like a physiotherapist. As a matter of fact, it would be the last thing you would imagine him to be. Dixie was a bread and butter man, down to earth, what you saw was what you got. I can’t ever remember seeing Dixie in a suit, he was a casual man. I’ve never heard anyone say a bad word about him. Dixie gave his services to many a young sports person and never took a penny. He was involved in a multitude of sports and worked at Everton Football Club on many occasions.

Don’t judge this book by its cover

I remember when Dixie went to get his cornerman’s license for professional boxing. A certain Boxing Board of Control doctor was trying to be a smart Alec with Dixie, asking certain medical questions. Within ten minutes, Dixie had him tied him up in knots. The doctor looked as if he’d overdone it on the sun bed he was that red with embarrassment. Jimmy Patton was the trainer. He was a sage when it came to boxing;

very knowledgeable with a great sense of humour. One day this fellow, who was over six foot, was busy telling everybody how hard he was, when Jimmy, who was about five foot eight, said, 'It doesn't matter how hard you are, you will never be as hard as the bumper of my car.' Seeing the blood drain from that man's face was priceless.

The lovable rogue

There was a character named Sammy Brennan who boxed for us; he was a middleweight. Here are just a few stories about Sammy.

In 1985 I took him over to Paris to fight Pierre-Frank Winterstein in an eliminator for the European title. We had to go to Paris as they had won the bid to promote it.

Winterstein was joint promoter of the event, and if that wasn't bad enough, being a gypsy he had over 500 gypsy followers in the crowd; it was the nearest you got to Rocky fighting Drago in the 1985 *Rocky IV*.

'You're going to have to knock him out to get a draw,' I told Sammy, who wasn't at all fazed about the fight.

We had a black limousine laid on to take us anywhere we wanted, with two henchmen dressed in black, wearing dark sunglasses.

'They're looking after us aren't they, Rich?' said Sammy.

'Yeh, they're looking after us alright, or is it to see what we get up to when we do our training later on in the *Marcel Cerdan* boxing gym?'

This was named after the legendary French world *boxing* champion, who was considered by many *boxing* experts and fans to be France and *Europe's* greatest boxer at the time, and one of the best to come out of that continent.

Come to think of it, everything about it seemed like the *Rocky* movie.

They took us to the Eiffel Tower. The lifts take you to a choice of three different levels and you pay accordingly. Just as the ticket person was

asking what level we wanted to go to, one of the henchmen leaned forward and, reaching for his wallet, said,

‘They are going to the top.’ Turning to us he added, ‘Mr. Winterstein wants you to have a good day.’

Well, we didn’t want to upset Mr. Winterstein, so we went right to the top of the Eiffel Tower then on to the Louvre to see Leonardo Da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*, the most famous painting in the history of art, which continues to inspire reproduction, parody, scientific theory, and more. In 2003-2006 they celebrated the 500th anniversary of the painting, which now has its own room at the Louvre. The painting, oil on poplar wood, standing at 20 7/8" x 30", has achieved celebrity status around the world.

Next we went to Notre Dame Cathedral to see Quasimodo, who had a choice of five bells to ring.

‘The great bourdon bell, Emmanuel, weighing in at just over 13 tons, is tolled to mark the hours of the day and various occasions and services, and is located in the South Tower. There are four additional bells on wheels in the North Tower, which are swing chimed. These bells are rung for various services and festivals.

The bells were once rung manually, but when it was discovered that the size of the bells could cause the entire building to vibrate and cause damage they were taken out of use and replaced with electric motors. The bells also have external hammers for tune playing from a small clavier.

On the night of 24 August, 1944, as the Ile de la Cite was taken by an advance column of Allied and French armoured troops and also some of the Resistance, it was the tolling of the Emmanuel bell that announced to the city that its liberation was underway.

On 6 June, 1971 Philippe Petit, the famous French high wire artist, walked a wire between the two towers of Notre Dame Cathedral.

Petit later gained fame in 1974 for his high-wire walk between the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York.

But what is so amazing is that although Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables* would be, and still is, enormously successful, it was *The Hunchback of*

Notre Dame, published in 1831 and quickly translated into many other languages across Europe that was to be the saviour of the cathedral. One of the effects of the novel was to shame the City of Paris into restoring the much-neglected Notre Dame Cathedral, which was attracting thousands of tourists who had read the popular book.’ Wikipedia

When I see three oranges, I juggle; when I see two towers I walk.
Philippe Petit

All that education and Sammy hasn't even thrown a punch yet.

But now it was down to the serious stuff. After training we went to have lunch courtesy of Mr Winterstein. Sitting next to Sammy was an old war veteran wearing a berry and a chest full of medals, his pet poodle at his side.

He started talking to Sammy with what could only be described as a hiccup in his voice. He kept patting Sammy's leg to get his point over; the only problem was that with each pat his hand was going further up Sammy's leg, closer and closer to his private area. I couldn't do anything for two reasons, inside I was laughing my head off, but I also wanted to see what the outcome was going to be. I didn't have to wait long as I soon saw the poodle flying out of the bistro door courtesy of Sammy's boot.

As we got into the ring we noticed hundreds of gypsies with ceremonial daggers in their belts, all Winterstein supporters. The bell went for the first round. Sammy handled Winterstein like a dream. He was sharp, snappy and accurate. The mob, err, I mean the crowd, weren't too pleased, and when their man hit the canvas during the next few rounds, you could see their little eyes glazing over.

In round 7 he caught Sammy with a half-decent shot. At this point Sammy did the sensible thing and hung on to Winterstein, just to take the play away from his opponent. Then, to the delight of the Winterstein supporters and the disbelief of everyone else, the ref stopped the fight in favour of Winterstein.

At the end of the fight they announced Winterstein the winner on TKO. Sammy was showing his disgust, meanwhile, I was applauding

Winterstein, standing at least six feet away from Sammy. (Incidentally, this is what's called distancing oneself; it wasn't worth both of us going down, after all, we had to walk through the Valley of Death to get back to the changing rooms, like when the red Indians made the white man run the gauntlet of tomahawks.)

Back in the changing rooms Sammy was still fuming, and quite rightly so, but that's the name of the game, you fight a man on his own turf and it's an uphill battle. Incidentally, Sammy didn't realise at the time that Winterstein was a class act, just check out his record:

54 fights Won 50 (KO 37) + lost 3 (KO 2) + drawn 1 round boxed 270
KO% 68.52



Sammy and Winterstein before the fight

Follow the Yellow Back Road

After I had taped and bandaged Sammy's hands for the Winterstein fight, an interpreter came over and told me that one of the Algerian fighters would deem it an honour if I were to tape his hands with bandages before his fight and also work his corner for him. I agreed and took the best part of fifteen minutes on each hand in order to teach him how it was done. At the time, Algerian fighters didn't usually have their hands taped up, and in France they didn't have house seconds that worked the corner.

The Algerian fighter was a big lad, standing at 6ft 3inches. The bell went for the first round and what happened next I have seen neither before nor since. He stormed out to meet his opponent in the centre of the ring and threw a combination of shots. As a matter of fact, he hit him with everything but the kitchen sink, so much so, that he had his opponent in trouble. Then he did the strangest thing; he beckoned to his manager to throw the towel into the ring, which his manager proceeded to do, but to the shock of the Algerian fighter, it spun around the top rope and our yellow-backed friend had to see the round out. As soon as the bell went, I jumped in and tried to get across to him that this fight was his for the taking, but it was to no avail as I don't speak Algerian and he doesn't speak the Queen's English 'like what I do'; besides, he was too busy telling his manager to get it right next time, which, I might add, happened in the next round.... Wonders will never cease.

You can take him anywhere but you can't leave him

We were in Edinburgh in Scotland where Sammy was due to fight Billy Louder the Scottish champion. In the afternoon before the fight we took a walk through the town and Sammy noticed that I was looking at a particular hat. After we had walked a dozen yards or so, Sammy asked me what size hat I took. After I told him the size (I can't remember what it was then, but let's say it was six-and-seven-eighths) he went back into the shop, put the hat that I had been looking at, which was the right size, onto his head, and walked up to the manager, who hadn't noticed what he had done, saying, 'Excuse me, do you sell this type of hat in six-and-seven-eighths as my friend is after one.'

The manager said, 'Yes, sir, we do. They're over there by the front window.'

'That's fine,' said Sammy, I will let him know.'

Once outside the shop he threw the hat on my head and said, 'That's a present from me.'

Rogues and running dogs

There was one occasion when Jimmy Patton and I were delivering a van load of hampers. The door at the back of the van was open when this guy came over with a walk that was supposed to indicate that he was a hard case. He was carrying what looked like a giant bradawl, but it was really a large screwdriver filed to a point. He was throwing it from one hand to the other, trying to look even harder, as he asked what we had in the van. Jimmy looked at me and said, 'You know, Rich, on a weaponry scale of 1 to 10 he has a 7,' Jimmy proceeded to bring out a big machete, continuing, 'and this is a 10, and do you know why this is a 10 and that is a 7, Rich?'

To keep the double act going I replied, 'I don't know, Jim, why do you have a 10 and he has a 7?'

'Well, when he sticks out the hand carrying the 7, this will take that hand off. This shows no discrimination; it goes through flesh, bone, sinew, the lot.'

The guy just looked at us and said, 'I better come back when I have more points,' and he turned and walked away with that hard-case swagger.

I wonder what would have happened if we hadn't had that machete and the presence of mind to deal with the situation.



My wife Christine and me in Legends Gym in New York

What makes a good trainer?

I have visited and trained in many boxing gyms around the world, and have come to a conclusion about what makes a great gym. People suggest it's having the best equipment, or a good trainer, or nice décor with fancy showers.

I say it comes down to one thing, a *great trainer* ... that's it. You can have all the best gym equipment in the world, but if the trainer isn't any good you've got nothing. A good trainer makes the best of what he has; he can give you a full blown workout in your own home using stairs, chairs, and the floor.

A great trainer can encourage you, motivate and inspire you, and take you beyond *your* limitations. When Carlos Palomino was fighting Dave Boy Green on the 14 June, 1977 at Wembley, London, I remember seeing him train at the world famous Thomas a Beckett Public House Gym at 320 Old Kent Road. Sadly, it is no longer open for business.

There was a gym on the first floor of the Thomas a Beckett where the late Sir Henry Cooper, former British, European and Commonwealth Heavyweight Champion, trained six days a week for fourteen years from 1954.

Mohammed Ali (formerly known as Cassius Clay), three time World Heavyweight Champion and Olympic Champion, was also known to have visited the gym.

Others who have sparred in the gym are Americans Joe Frazier (Olympic and World Heavyweight Champion) and Sugar Ray Leonard (World Welterweight Champion). Beryl Cameron-Gibbons was Europe's only female boxing promoter and landlady of the Thomas a Beckett for sixteen years until 1983 (though she had lived there for twenty three years). Sir Henry Cooper, OBE, KSG, took over the pub for a while in 1984 after a major refurbishment.

David Bowie rehearsed his Ziggy Stardust persona in the Thomas a Beckett with his Spiders from Mars.

In 1888 a 'shiny black bag' was left at the Thomas a Beckett containing 'a very sharp dagger, a clasp knife, two pairs of very long and very curious-looking scissors, and two preservers.' This led to the arrest of the responsible person, a suspect in the case of the Whitechapel Murders.

So now you get the picture as to why the Thomas A Beckett was a unique Boxing Gym, but let's get back on track.

As I watched Carlos Palomino train, I noticed he was doing clapping press-ups (clapping in between press-ups), but not the usual one or two, he was doing three, which takes some doing... don't take my word for it, try it for yourself. Anyway, he was doing twenty sets of three. When I asked his trainer why Carlos was doing three, he replied, 'How much time does he have to clap three times in between press-ups?' I replied, 'A split second.'

What he said next prompted me to start clapping him in appreciation of his wisdom. He said the opportunity to knock your opponent out during a fight lasts for a split second, but hitting your opponent three times increases the chances of either knocking your opponent out or stopping him.

I later saw that come into fruition when he beat Dave Boy Green with a left-hook KO in the 11th round. Great trainer? I think so.

Before I go any further, read this little piece on Carlos Palomino, written following his induction into the Boxing Hall of Fame.

'It's a great honour and totally unexpected,' Palomino said of his induction. 'Boxing wasn't something that I dreamed of doing as a kid, and the Hall of Fame was a goal I really didn't envision accomplishing when I started my career.'

When Palomino seriously laced up his gloves for the first time in 1970, he couldn't envision much aside from the deadly jungles of Vietnam.

He was 20 years old when he stopped playing Mexican semi-pro baseball, surrendering his childhood dream of manning second base in the majors. Six months after he returned home to the Los Angeles area, where his family had immigrated a decade earlier, he received his U.S. Army draft notice.

He decided to get in some kind of shape for boot camp and signed up at a local gym, where he ran into Armando Muniz, an aspiring welterweight freshly discharged from the Army. Muniz told Palomino that boxers receive special treatment in the service. Palomino, *afraid of returning home in a flag-draped casket*, listened intently and tried to absorb as much boxing knowledge as he could from resident trainer Noe Cruz.

‘That was the goal: to get out of going to Vietnam,’ Palomino said. ‘I didn’t envision fighting as a pro.’

Palomino, however, discovered a gift because of his desperation. Once he reported for duty he let it be known he could box. His 5-foot-10 frame naturally carried 147 pounds, a weight he still hovers around today. But the army didn’t need any welterweights for its squad.

‘The coach told me he wanted me to fight at 139 pounds, and I had to make weight in a month,’ Palomino recalled. ‘I told him, “There’s no possible way I can get down to 139 pounds.” He said, “If you don’t go down to 139 pounds, you’ll have to go back to your base.”’

Desperate times call for desperate measures.

Pernell Sweet Pea Whitaker

I have to be honest and say although I have read about Pernell Whitaker, I don’t know who trained him. Tell me if he could make a great trainer.

When I saw Whitaker in the 1984 Summer Olympics, Los Angeles, I knew right away that he was going to win the gold medal. When he entered the ring, he had a certain confidence about him; he wasn’t like the usual amateur boxer who jumps in to hit his man then jumps out to avoid being hit, thus exerting a lot of energy. He bobbed and weaved more, and had a great loose and relaxed style about him... and he stood out from the rest.

He went on to have an exceptional professional boxing career, eventually being included in the Boxing Hall of Fame.

He won International Boxing Federation (IBF) lightweight championship, 1989; became undisputed lightweight champion, 1990; won IBF junior welterweight championship, 1992; won World Boxing Council

welterweight championship, 1993; won World Boxing Association junior middleweight championship, 1995.

Pernell Whitaker was considered, at the time, to be pound for pound, the best boxer in the world. A titleholder at four different weight classes, he often confused his opponents by changing styles and techniques from one round to the next. Part of Whitaker's success lay in his defensive capabilities, which enabled him to elude even the most relentless pursuit. He rarely, if ever, lost his cool.

This is the bit I want you to take notice of:

Whitaker admits that, growing up, he was a scrappy street fighter who learnt at a young age how to wear down the other guy. 'Two minutes and two seconds,' That is how long most street fighters last before they begin to tire.' What he learned as a youngster, he said, was how to **bide** his time during those two minutes and then close in for the win. "**Once you're tired, I own you,**" he concluded. "You've sold your soul to the Devil.

Good things come to those who wait



Joe Wood, Tony Butler, Mattie Jordon, Robbie Butler, me Dave Gibson, I'm carrying a bit of weight here, mind you I had a lot on my plate ... and I ate it by the look of things.

Butlers

Hard training, easy combat; easy training, hard combat.

Alexander Suvorov

When I think of gyms like the Thomas a Beckett, the Kronk Gym, the Marcel Cerdan and Legends, I have to add Robbie Butler's gym in Liverpool to that list. It has all the ingredients you would want in a gym. First of all there are characters ... and yes, believe me, they are very important, because they're the ones who give out the banter (the jokes and stories and micky-taking).

With them, training becomes more of a pleasure than a toil; a place where everyone mucks in and helps one another; where the training is varied so as not to let boredom set in, a place where everyone knows and respects each other, and, to top it all, there's a good trainer, smart enough to know he can't do it all on his own, and who surrounds himself with the right people.

Robbie's a great guy to know, has a wicked sense of humour and is always looking to learn. When I go there with my mate Mattie Jordan, we love to wind the younger boxers up by telling them how easy they have it now... not like when we were their age and we had barbed wire for the top rope to condition us into keeping off the ropes, and had to swim with bricks in our hands.

'What for?' they would ask.

'To smash through the ice,' would be our reply.

'Do you know why Mattie Jordon is my best mate? It's because when I was a boy my dad used to make me swim underwater from one side of the lake to the other, while all the other kids were ice-skating on top. Mattie would put a ball in the lake the night before.'

'Why?' they wanted to know.

‘So I had an air hole to come up in. Now, that’s friends for yer. Do you know why Alan Singleton is only my second best mate? It’s because he used to wait with a baseball bat to see me come up through the air hole, and he’d shout to the other kids, “Look, here’s a f#c@ing seal.”’

If you told anyone that these days they would never believe you.

Do you get the idea that it’s not just about having all the modern-day training equipment? That’s just a bonus; it’s about having the complete package.

*Long ago my father placed his hand upon my head.
As he laid each finger down he smiled at me and said,
Someday son when you're a man you will understand,
You'll only count your true friends on the fingers of one hand.*

*Five fingers you can count upon,
Five fingers...and you **Robbie** are one.*

The Hawk and the Rabbit

A friend of mine, Tommy, owns a house with a very big garden visited by squirrels, robins, finches and many other birds.

It was when I was installing outside lighting in his garden that I noticed the family’s pet rabbit on a collar and retractable lead, and I had one of my mischievous moments. I took the collar off the rabbit leaving it fastened, and put the rabbit back in the hutch in the garage.

I ran into the house shouting, ‘Tommy, Tommy.’

Tommy, who was lying on the couch nursing a bad back, leapt up shouting, ‘What’s up?’

‘Tommy, a hawk has just flown down and taken off with the rabbit.’

‘What? How the hell did that happen? It’s on a collar and lead.’

‘It hovered above it for a few minutes and then swooped down, and when it got to the point where the lead was fully extended, it just kept pulling on the rabbit until it came out of the collar. I tell you, Tommy, it didn’t

matter how much that rabbit fought and kicked, the hawk was determined it wasn't going home empty-handed.'

'Why didn't you f*c#i*g stop it?'

'Tom, I remembered David Attenborough saying you shouldn't interfere with nature.'

'F*c# David Attenborough, the kids are going to be upset when they get home from school.'

'Can't you buy another one the same, so they'll never know?'

'That was an angora rabbit; you can't simply walk into the nearest pet shop and buy one.'

'It just goes to show the hawk had good taste.' (Tommy wasn't amused.)

At that point, I put him out of his misery and showed him the rabbit, safe and sound in the hutch.

Short and the tall

My brother-in-law Richie Sopp, who sadly isn't with us anymore, was quite a character. He worked as a night security man at a warehouse. He had a Doberman Pinscher for a guard dog. I dropped in for a cup of coffee one night only to find that the gates were locked, so I honked the car horn and waited. He eventually came out with what looked like a wolf on a lead; it was a massive Alsatian dog.

'I won't be able to let you in,' he said, 'not until I get used to all the commands with this new dog.'

'What happened to the Doberman?' I asked him.

'It was too soft, so they decided to replace him with this eating machine.'

'He certainly looks vicious enough,' I said.

'He is that,' said Richie. 'As a matter of fact, I have spent all week with him learning all the commands. Let me show you,' he said, as he went on

to give the dog all the commands he knew: sit, heel, roll over, you name it; he had the dog bopping like Michael Jackson.

‘There's only one command I can't give just yet.’

‘What's that?’ I asked.

‘I can't say it as I have not practised it with him and I don't want him to go berserk if I say the word.’

‘Well, spell it, that's if the dog isn't a smart arse and can spell.’

‘OK,’ he said, ‘it's *F E T C H*.’

So *F E T C H* is the word I shouted, ‘Fetch. Fetch. Fetch’ as, looking like Benny Hill, Richie was chased around the yard by the dog.

When Richie died, his wife Gillian carried out his wish to be buried in his favourite T shirt – not because she wanted to, but because he had already cut up his suits and shirts so she had no choice. It read *Feck off* and bore a picture of Father Jack from the television comedy series. The pallbearers he had chosen were two over six-foot-odd and two midgets. It was a sight to behold.

Stop the car, I want to get in

I was driving through Knowsley Safari Park with a friend of mine, Alan Wall, and when we reached the area housing the rhinos, giraffes, ostriches, zebras and other herbivores, Alan shouted, ‘Stop the car.’

‘Why, what's up?’

‘There, Ritchie, can you see?’ It was a big ostrich feather, about 10 feet from the car. ‘I'm going to get it,’ he said, and proceeded to walk towards the feather. As he reached it, I drove off about 50 feet down the road. All I could see in my rear view mirror was someone who looked like a Las Vegas dancer sprinting towards the car; he would have given *Usain Bolt* a run for his money. As he got near the car I drove further down the road, and continued to do this a few more times, but had to let him in when we got close to the cheetahs. I don't think he could have outrun them.

‘That was a damn shocking prank you pulled back there, Richard,’ he said, or words to that effect.

It’s meant to be

One day I was called out to give a price for an alarm job. On walking into the house I had the strangest feeling. I can’t explain what it was, but I knew that I didn’t want to work in this house. The people were nice and friendly; the father used to be a carter on the docks, that’s when everything was moved by cart horses. On the walls of the living room he had photographs of numerous shire horses he had worked with.

I sat down and did what I would normally do; I told them what type of system I thought they should have and, more importantly, why. The only difference was that I did something I had never done before. I charged an extra £30 on top of my normal price to deter them from using me. I even said, ‘Don’t give me an answer now, think about it, and if I don’t hear from you I’ll know you got a better offer and I’ll understand.’ The only thing I didn’t say was, ‘I don’t want to work in this house.’

However, the father said, ‘We have already had a couple of quotes and yours is the best.’ Gulp.

And so I ended up doing the job. I enjoyed his reminiscing about his days on the docks with the cart horses. I told him that my wife’s granddad Billy Ward did the same job as him and had he been alive I’m sure he would have enjoyed talking to him.

I always say that things happen for a reason, and what I’m about to tell you will show you what I mean. Three years after every job I always phoned to ask if a service of the alarm system was required. I checked for and fixed dry joints that had developed and I checked all connections, promising a service certificate upon completion of the inspection, which could be used to reduce their contents insurance. I used to charge only a small fee for this, but it put me to the front of their mind and could lead to more jobs. Anyway, the time had come to check the old carter’s alarm and, being superstitious, I thought that even though I didn’t like the feeling I got from the house, he deserved the same service as everyone else, so I phoned him. His son answered the phone, and once again I finished my pitch with ‘Now you don’t have to have it ... it’s not compulsory.’ He said it made sense, prevention was better than cure.

So, I thought, here we go again, but this time it was different. The house had changed dramatically; it was as if the house had died. The colour on the walls had lost its lustre; the air had a strange smell. It wasn't a clean smell or a dirty smell; it was just something that I couldn't describe. 'How are your mum and dad?' I asked.

'They're both dead,' he told me.

'I'm sorry to hear that. I found them to be a lovely couple.'

'My mum was taken into hospital with pains in her chest and they found she had lung cancer. She died within ten days, and a couple of days after we buried Mum, Dad had a massive heart attack and died.'

'When did this happen?' I asked.

'Three weeks after you did the alarm.'

'I told the son that I had had this strange feeling about the house, so much so that I charged an extra £30 on top of my usual fee just so they wouldn't use me to fit their alarm system.'

'You were still the best price anyway,' he said.

He went on to tell me how he had been made redundant from a company he had worked for since leaving school, and with his redundancy pay he had bought himself a big Luton van but had had no luck getting work, adding that it was hard to motivate himself.

I asked him if he trusted me. 'Yes' he said.

'Really? So you trust someone who charged an extra £30?' He went on to mention again how my price was still the best. 'OK, have you got a pair of overalls, a white shirt and black trousers?'

'Yes, I've got them, but the overalls are brown.'

'That's OK. What I want you to do is wash and iron the overalls and shirt, polish your shoes and have a tie ready.'

‘What for?’ he asked.

‘Don’t worry, you’ll soon see. Have you ever been in trouble with the law?’

‘No.’

‘OK, tomorrow morning I want you to go to the police station and ask them for a character reference, which will cost £2, then take it over to the library and photocopy it ten times, but always keep the original and I will see you tomorrow afternoon.’

The next day he had done everything that had been asked of him. I brought with me a new folder containing business cards that I had made on my computer, showing his relevant contact details. I placed the ten sheets of references that he had photocopied into a plastic sleeve and gave him a list of companies that dealt in beds, three piece suites and wall units, with their opening times.

We washed the van that had gathered dust but was in mint condition as he had not really used it. We stapled new plastic sheets to the floor and walls of the van, and I got a load of bicycle inner tubes from the local repair shop and cut the valves off. This was to be used to tie things to the walls (this was before small bungee ties were available). With that done, I told him the plan.

‘Tomorrow morning I want you to go to the first address on this list, dressed in black trousers, white shirt, a nice tie and overalls. Be there fifteen minutes before they open, but not one minute after opening time – that is very important; and here is what you say:

‘Good morning (with a smile). I know you most probably have your own drivers, but if you should ever need an extra driver and van, would you bear me in mind?’

(‘At this point there is no pressure on them, as you’re only asking them to bear you in mind, so they would naturally agree.’)

‘Thank you. Here are my contact details and police reference, as you would want to know that your product is being delivered by someone without a police record. This is the van I would be using.’

‘You thank them for their time and then leave. Don’t go to any more on the list as by now you will have crossed over their opening times and it’s important to be there before them.

‘So let’s recap what has happened here. You have answered questions that they didn’t ask:

- ✓ Is he punctual? – yes, he was there before they were.
- ✓ Is he smart? – yes, although he had overalls on they were washed and ironed to go with the shirt, tie, trousers and polished shoes.
- ✓ Is he of good character? –yes, backed up by the police reference.
- ✓ Is the vehicle suitable? – yes, even though it was clean he had gone that little bit further by having clean sheets of plastic put on it, showing respect for their products.
- ✓ He was polite and organised.’

He went on to see everyone on the list. I then told him to go back to the start, same format, i.e. dress code and times, but with a different script that went like this:

‘Good morning. Sorry to trouble you again, but I have changed my telephone number and I’m not sure whether I gave you the card with the new number on it. Take this one, just in case. Oh, by the way, did I mention that I work on a self-employed basis and that you only use me when the business demands and not during slack periods?’

If they threw his card away the first time, now he gets another bite of the cherry. Plus, they now know that he’s persistent and also that they have everything to gain by using his services, as he sorts out his own tax and national insurance, so they would only use him after they had made their money.

So how did it end up? One night me and our Jimmy went to our brother Eddie’s local pub as it was his birthday, and while we were waiting for him to come back from a pool match, the barmaid put two pints down on the bar. Upon seeing the surprise on our faces regarding who bought the drinks, she pointed over to a man on the other side of the bar, ‘It was him, he bought the drinks.’

Going over to him, I realised it was the carter's son, looking rather dapper I might add. 'Wow! You look like a man of substance,' I said.

'Well, I did everything you told me and more. I got the Yellow Pages and kept making up lists of ten and going back, just as before. Now I own a fleet of vans and have other people who work on a self-employment basis, and I make a percentage of each job.'

I told him how happy I was for him, and that it was going to cost him more than one drink.

*I would rather make 10% of the efforts of
100 men than 100% of the effort of myself*

John D Rockefeller

So I was meant to do that alarm, and I was meant to go back three years later to kick him up the backside ... Like I said, things happen for a reason.

The Life and Soul

My father-in-law Bobby Taylor was the life and soul of the party. Everywhere he went people would end up in heaps laughing; all he ever did was crack jokes. He used to swear a lot, but the funny thing was that it didn't seem that bad when he swore, as a matter of fact, when my mother in-law would apologise for his swearing, the women used to say, 'It's alright, it's only Bobby.'

So sit back while I tell you a few stories about Bobby. He used to come with me to the boxing. When Jimmy Patton and me had lads fighting, we used to put a white cornerman's jacket on him and get him in with us, so he got to see the boxing from the ringside.

Anyway, this particular night, after the fights were over, Terry Spinks, the Olympic gold medallist, came into the dressing room and went straight over to Bob and said, 'I would like to shake your hand. You have got these fighters in great shape. They have rack boards for stomachs.'

We all just looked on in amazement to hear Bobby say, ‘Well, I do my best. I’m up 5 o’clock sharp in the morning taking them on their five mile run. I use a bike these days, Terry, what with the old war wound. Then I have them on the pads back in the gym, and I never ask the lads to do anything that I never used to do when I wore the gloves.’

‘You boxed?’

‘Oh yeh, in the army, till I took one in the leg for Queen and country.’

‘Well, all I can say is that these lads are a credit to you.’

‘Next you’ll want to buy me a drink! By the way, Terry, where I come from, that’s a hint.’

And sure enough, Terry Spinks came through the crowd and gave Bob a pint of beer. As Bob was drinking his pint, all the lads said, ‘Take it easy, Bob, don’t forget, you’re up early to take us on our five mile run, then the pads in the afternoon.’ I cannot print Bobby’s response.

Before I tell you another Bobby Taylor story, I would like you to read an article written about Terry Spinks. Would you do that for me? Thank you.

The Guardian 14th January 2002 Interview: Terry Spinks

‘Forty-five years after winning Olympic gold, the boxer was awarded an MBE in the New Year’s honours list. Jim White heard how he sank to the depths before regaining his self-respect.

When Terry Spinks won the gold medal in boxing's flyweight division in the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, he was only 18. Contemporary reports suggested, however, so angelic was he in the face, that he could pass for 14. Studying the newsreel of his return to England clutching his medal, looking to his mum and dad for reassurance, you can't help feeling there was a bit of exaggeration involved. He didn't look a day over 10.

"I looked so young I didn't get served in a pub," he says. "I couldn't buy a drink."

He made up for it, though. He lost much of his middle age to the bottle. Eight years ago a lengthy relationship with scotch took its toll; he

collapsed, was taken to hospital, and given until the weekend to live. He weighed seven stone at the time.

Now he doesn't take anything stronger than a non-alcoholic lager and, despite the ravages, still appears to be outpacing chronology. At nearly 64, he still looks enviably fresh-faced. A full head of hair, barely a line on him, only the boxer's realigned nose as evidence of his trade.

"I'm 11 stone now," he says. "I'm making me comeback as a middleweight."

Physically he is in good form. It is mentally where he has suffered. Though his outlook remains the archetype of cockney chirp, his short-term memory has been fried.

"Ask me about back then, I'm fine," he says. "It's yesterday I've a problem with."

This New Year, however, has been etched on to his brain. In the honours list he was awarded an MBE.

These days it is perfunctory for British Olympic champions to be so honoured. Audley Harrison rightly picked up one almost as soon as he had stepped off the plane from Sydney. But for the last man before Harrison to win boxing gold in the Olympics it was a different story.

Back then, dustmen from the East End such as Terry Spinks were not considered for a gong, even if they had claimed the highest sporting decoration possible in their country's name. And somehow, over the years, as sport's place in the well-being of the nation came to be recognised, Spinks was overlooked. Every year, as retrospective awards were handed out to World Cup winners and former world champions, his friends would scour the list of recipients in the papers and every year they would be disappointed. Spinks was the forgotten Olympian.

That he has received his gong at last has provided a happy ending to a story that at one stage seemed destined for tragedy. This is the tale of the award that gave a man back his self-respect.

"I'm very proud," he says of the MBE. "Very, very proud."

He is speaking in the front room of his cousin Rosemary Ellmore's house in Romford. In the fireplace are scores of congratulations cards.

The place is filled with the smell from the dozens of bunches of flowers sent round by Terry's supporters the moment they heard the news. As awards go, this one was clearly more popular than those handed out for civil service time-serving.

The former welterweight champion John H Stracey is said to have burst into tears when he heard the news.

"We'd known since November," says Rosemary. "Seven weeks keeping quiet about it. It nearly killed me."

Rosemary is a significant figure in Spinks' life. Not only the driving force behind the campaign to get him honoured, but, without over dramatising things, the woman who gave him a new life. Although in private she is happy to discuss how low he reached, she is anxious that the details remain that way. Suffice it to say, after a professional career that culminated in a Lonsdale belt (he remains the only British boxer to be schoolboy, ABA, British and Olympic champion) he began a steady infatuation with booze that left him in a bad way.

"I got a call at work off my mum to say Terry had been taken into hospital," she says of the day eight years ago his constitution could no longer cope. "I hadn't seen him for 20 years and to be honest I didn't recognise him."

Ravaged by his whisky habit, Spinks had lost everything: business, money, family. Estranged from both his wives, too young for an old people's home but too sick to look after himself, when he was discharged from hospital he ended up a long-term patient in a clinic for brain injuries.

"It wasn't doing him any good," says Rosemary. "I just said one day, 'Right, you're coming home with me.'"

At first, Rosemary would drop Spinks off on her way to work at his dad's house and collect him on the way home.

"Him and his dad had a great relationship," she says. "They got on so well, and it did the pair of them the world of good."

But when Spinks senior died, Rosemary, whose sons were by then grown up with families of their own, gave up work to look after her cousin full-time.

"The doctors said at the time he'd never recover," she says. "But he gets better every day. When he gets dressed up for a function and goes along, sees the old crowd, glass of Kaliber in his hand, you'd never know there's been a problem."

Indeed there is a photo on the window sill of Terry and Rosemary at a recent dinner and, in his bib and tucker, broad grin in place, he looks every inch the spry, contented ex-champion.

"I took him along to the London ex-boxers' association soon after he came out of the clinic," says Rosemary. "Best thing I ever did for him. Seeing all his old friends, guys he fought with and against, it gave him back a purpose in life. Now we never miss a meeting. And the first time we went after the announcement of the MBE, the reception was amazing. They was all on their feet cheering, singing Congratulations, wasn't they Terry?"

"Yeah," he says. "Right proud."

Rosemary shed a tear that day, but Terry, she says, just smiled, which was always his way.

"Nothing fazed him. Not even being in the ring with them grown men at the Olympics worried him."

The son of a street bookmaker, who had run bets in the playground from the age of eight, Spinks had been a jockey in Newmarket but was working as a bin man when the call came to join the Olympic team as a late replacement. He had only a week to prepare before he was off to Australia.

"It was all happy-go-lucky for him," says Rosemary. "I remember I asked him if I could take his medal to school and he just said, 'Sure, here you are.' I took it and showed it off and after school went off playing in the street with it in my pocket. Imagine that. I was 11 years old. "After he won the medal, Spinks had come home to a London still mired in austerity and found he had cheered up the entire East End. Bunting hung

from every street corner; it was the biggest party since VE Day. Everyone wanted to buy the champ a drink.

"He was a playboy," says Rosemary. "Used to be in nightclubs till five in the morning. Then he'd come home and go off training."

"I was a rascal," says the man himself. "Nothing illegal, never got so much as a parking ticket. Just Jack the lad."

Everyone wanted to be seen with him. His very presence raised thousands at charity nights. At one function he was photographed with the Kray twins. Some have said that fleeting snapshot may have been the reason he was not honoured sooner.

"We thought that for a while," says Rosemary. "But it can't have been the case, because he's got it now. No, they forgot about him, simple as that."

After a short professional career culminating in the British title ("I never fought for the worlds – I was never good enough") Spinks became a trainer. He coached the South Koreans in the 1972 Olympics in Munich, and raised the alert after he witnessed the Black September terrorists moving in on the Israeli quarters.

"I was out running one morning when I seen all these geezers with black hoods carrying guns going into one of the doors," he remembers. "I thought, blimey, and I jumped through the first door I could find and rang security."

After that he tried his hand at many things, from driving minicabs to running a betting shop.

"I loved gambling, horses, anything," he says. "I don't even look at them now. I blew thousands."

But if working as a bookmaker was not the best of ideas for someone of his appetites, his last venture was even worse: he bought a pub. The problem was that his generous nature was incompatible with running a successful business.

"Terry gave everything away," says Rosemary. "I heard a story once that he was out with mates in this lovely new coat, and everyone admired it. It was well expensive. And his mates popped into a chip shop, but Terry

stayed outside. And when they all come out, they noticed this tramp wearing Terry's coat. He's only gone and given it him. Thank God his dad kept hold of his gold medal is all I can say. Otherwise he would have given that away and all."

Thus he reached the bottom of what Rosemary calls his "roller-coaster life". But she rescued him and helped him recover. And began a campaign to get him the MBE that has been awarded to every other British Olympic champion (except for the similarly shamefully overlooked swimmer Judy Grinham). Note. In 2007, she was appointed an MBE Member of the Order of the British Empire... I wonder why?

"We're that proud of him in the family, and all he's done for people, the money he's raised for charity. We thought it only fair he got something back."

Rosemary organised petitions, wrote letters, and corralled supporters (Kate Hoey was prominently involved) until eventually the news came through.

"I think they just thought, 'Not Spinks again, for Gawd's sake let's give it him to stop that woman writing'," says Rosemary. "I'm that proud.

He doesn't say much about it, Terry, but I know it means the world to him."

And as she talks Spinks sits in his chair, gold medal in his hand, smiling.

"I wake up every morning and I'm very happy," he says. "See, I know I'm alive."

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At the time of Bob shaking Terry's hand, we thought: Olympic gold medallist, British featherweight champion; this man had it all. But we didn't know what a troubled life Terry had ahead of him.

You've gone through it Terry and came out the other side... Well done, my friend.'

Terry passed away on 26 April 2012

Syrup of Fig

It was a boxing dinner show at the Adelphi hotel, and once again Bob was with us, wearing the white cornerman's jacket as usual. I just happened to mention to Bob that the referee used to be the secretary of the Area Boxing Board of Control... until the accounts were, as we say, found to be a little short – if you get my meaning. 'But keep it to yourself, Bob,' I told him, adding, 'Oh, and by the way, the ref also wore the worst wig you have ever seen. I mean, it had "welcome" stamped all over it.'

We all had a great time. Bob Paisley, who loved his boxing, was there, along with Kenneth Wolstenholme, football commentator for BBC television in the 1950s and 1960s, most notable for his commentary during the 1966 World Cup, which included the famous phrase '*they think it's all over, it is now*' as Geoff Hurst drove in the clinching 4th goal. Later on, after the boxing ended, Bobby was at the bar with Kenneth Wolstenholme, and both were a little inebriated. Wolstenholme was giving Bobby cigars, Bobby was cracking jokes; they were getting on like a house on fire. And then, to my horror, the said referee went to the bar and stood right next to Bobby.

The situation was like an exocet missile; you know what's coming but there's nothing you can do about it.

Bob: 'Didn't you used to be the treasurer of the Area Boxing Board of Control?'

Referee: 'Yes, as a matter of fact I was' (smugly).

Bob: 'Yes, till you got caught with your mitts in the till.'

Referee: 'I've never been so insulted.'

Bob: 'Well you need to get out more; (pause) and another thing, that's the worst syrup I've ever seen in my life.' (Syrup of fig – wig.)

Bob turned to Wolstenholme and said, 'He thinks it's all over... it is now!'

Solar Energy

When Bobby was made redundant from Kraft, he said he didn't know what to do with the redundancy pay. I told him it was his business what he did with it, but it might not be a bad idea if he stopped renting the television and bought a new one. So Bobby went out and got a new television, but it was one of the new remote control ones.

At the time, I was doing some work for Colourvision, the television suppliers, and had a master remote for use with most televisions, his being one of them. I went over to Bobby's house and found him sitting with the remote in his hand like the lord of the manor.

'Seen this Rich?' He turned over to another channel, and I switched it back. 'The button must have stuck,' he said as he pressed it again. I pressed the channel button and also the volume button, causing my mother-in-law to kick off:

'Oh no, Big Licks isn't content with just an ordinary television. No, he has to have a remote control one, just because he can't be bothered to get off his fat arse and turn it over.'

In the end I owned up to my little joke.

But it didn't end there. One day I sneaked into their house and removed the batteries from the remote control.

Some two hours later Bobby phoned me to ask if the remote worked on batteries.

I replied, 'No, it's solar powered. Why?'

'It's not working.'

'Where do you keep it, Bob?' I asked, as if I didn't know.

'In a drawer.'

‘That’s your problem. It’s dark in the drawer. You’re supposed to keep it in the light... you need to turn the light on and hold it up close to the bulb. That should charge it.’

30 minutes later:

‘I done that but it still isn’t working.’

‘Well, just get the batteries out of the kitchen drawer, put them into the remote and everything should be just fine.’

Once again, I cannot print what Bobby said.

Yes, Bobby was a character all right, and once more I’m proud to say he was a great father-in-law. No doubt he will have them splitting their sides in heaven, with his wife, Matty, looking on as she always did. God bless you both.

It’s the Sweeney

There was a certain gentleman who, shall I say, drifted off the straight and narrow. He had a dismantling yard and a light-fingered workforce. One day I scorched into his yard in a top of the range rover, spinning the car around on the gravel, jumping out wearing a suit and a black overcoat, only to watch all his staff jumping over the fence to avoid, as they thought, arrest. I swear I was buzzing for weeks just from the look on the owner’s face.

The boy who cried wolf

There was this guy who put in more claims for accidents than Uncle Albert in the television comedy *Only Fools and Horses*. You name it, he’d done it. Years ago, whenever there were holes in the road left unfilled by council workers, they would put paraffin lamps around the hole to stop people accidentally falling in. Today they use battery-powered ones. Anyway, our friend would blow the flame out and empty out the paraffin. He would then lie in the hole moaning till a witness, err, I mean a passer-by came, usually followed by a claim. One night he had a heart attack and collapsed inside the doorway of the Greyhound Pub, and it wasn’t until many people had stepped over him, thinking, ‘Here he goes

again’, that they realised he was genuinely ill; but it was too late and he died. Hence the old saying – *the boy who cried wolf*.

The shoe box

When I look around at some of the youngsters coming into magic, it saddens me to see them trying to imitate other magicians, sometimes right down to the way they talk, word for word. I even heard one young man talk like the fantastic Italian magician Aldo Colombini. The kid would say, ‘Taka the card, donna leta me see it.’

I asked him why he was talking like that, ‘You’re from Manchester,’ I told him.

There was an old magician by the name of Billy McComb who, sadly, isn’t with us anymore. I was fortunate to see Billy lecture not long before he died. He was a class act and respected all around the world.

He came onto the stage with an old, worn-out shoe box under his arm, stared out over the audience and said, ‘I suppose you’re all wondering what’s in the shoe box.’ He was right, we were.

Lesson number one, create *curiosity*.

After a short pause, he said, ‘My life.’

Now we had *intrigue*.

‘Would you like to see?’ he asked them.

‘Yes,’ the audience shouted.

Now we had audience *response*.

He went on to entertain us with stories combined with magic, not the other way around. The trick is only 10% of the show, the rest is the performance. When he did magic around tables, he said the shoe box was his stage as it was higher than the table and became a focal point.

The one-handed magician

Rene Lavand from Argentina lost a hand at the age of 9 in a car crash, but he is one great magician and has appeared on the Ed Sullivan and Johnny Carson television shows, also at the Magic Castle. He shuffles cards and does cup and ball routines that blow your socks off.

He also does something that I not only like, but which I try to implement in my magic, which is to tell a wonderful story that holds hands with the trick, and at times, has the hairs on the back of your neck standing on edge. He uses an interpreter and, believe it or not, there is something magical about the story being translated.

If a trick is well executed, there should be a time-lapse before the audience realises that you were part of the trick. The response the magician should be looking for is ...*that was a great trick* rather than *he or she did a great trick*, as it is important for the audience to carry the wonderment with them for as long as possible. If that happens, the magician will receive acknowledgement in due course, for as long as people talk about the magic, the mention of the magician's name becomes inevitable.

The magic slippers

Our Becky has a great sense of humour, and we're always doing daft things to each other; so let me tell you about the time when Becky came round to our house. We were all sitting on the settee when she said, 'What's that smell?'

'What smell?' I asked.

'Don't tell me you can't smell that, it's awful,' she said.

'I still can't smell anything, maybe it's your mum's slippers.' That got Chris's back up, and she went on to insinuate it was my slippers.

Our Becky said, 'Throw one of your slippers over.'

'Here, see for yourself,' I said as I threw her the slipper.

‘It is your slippers, they reek.’

I had to admit she was right. Later on, I had to back her car out of the driveway to get mine out, so I hid my slippers in her car.

I got a call from her after she arrived home, saying, ‘Don’t ever back my car out again while wearing those slippers as they left a stink that I can still smell.’ (And she could for many days to come I might add.)

Eventually, she came across the slippers while cleaning her car, so now it was war. One morning, after a bad night’s sleep, I found that she had put the slippers under my pillow... ‘Like that is it,’ I thought.

Mind games

Later that day I went to her house and put one of the slippers in the wine rack in the kitchen with a note in it saying *I’m back! Now find my brother...* and in the other slipper there was a note saying ... *there’s one more of us.*

I wish it could be Christmas every day... I don’t think so.

One Christmas I recorded a section of a radio show with the usual Christmas songs but no date or details in it, then burnt it onto a CD. Every so often, when giving someone a lift in my car, maybe in May, June, July or August, I’d make the comment,

‘No wonder Christmas has lost its lustre, they have even started a Christmas radio channel, and it’s nowhere near Christmas.’

‘Ritchie, tell me you’re joking!’ is the usual response.

‘No, I’m not. Check it out for yourself.’ I would play my chosen bit of the CD and then turn it off, and we would continue to criticise the people responsible.

The best part is when they phone me to ask what frequency it’s on so they can tell their friends and have a whinge about it, just like we did.

But thinking about it, you wouldn't appreciate it if it was Christmas every day. Just like the seasons, to appreciate the sunshine you've got to have the rain and the snow, and to appreciate the good times you've got to go through the bad times. It's not always about the ups. You've got to have the downs. Sometimes it takes something to scare you to appreciate life.

I remember when our Jimmy used to call me from his home in Tenerife. He would ask, 'What's the weather like?' and I would reply,

'It's raining, it's windy, it's overcast,' and so on, to which he would **always** reply,

'It's sunny here.'

'Oh yeh? What did you do today, Jim?'

'Sat in the sun.'

'And yesterday?'

'Sat in the sun.'

'And the day before? Stop. Let me guess. Sat in the sun? Jimmy, you're living in *Groundhog Day*,' I would tell him. Anyway, **there's no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong clothes.**'

Street wise

In Liverpool many people are streetwise and can take full advantage of an opportunity if and when it arises. For instance, a man from out of town was selling turkeys from a van on the dock road.

'Buy your 20lb turkeys,' he was shouting. One guy shouted,

'They're never 20lb.'

'They are,' the seller replied. With that the man outstretched his hands to feel the weight for himself. As soon as he had the bird in his hands he nodded, agreeing that it was true, the turkey did weigh 20 lb, and he proceeded to walk away with it. The seller had to stop himself from running after the man as he knew the crowd would have made off with

the rest of the turkeys. All he could do was to shout, ‘I hope it chokes you.’

Another gem was when a lady complained about a scratch on a leather three piece suite that had been delivered. The seller told her it wasn’t a scratch it was a scar as the animal had been involved in a fight.

Trick or Treat

Some people hate trick or treat night, but not me, I’m a bigger kid than the kids. I do everything, from putting chilli seeds in the jelly babies to turning on the hosepipe through the letter box. It’s funny to see them knocking on the door and running to the front gate. I think it’s great to see the effort they put into the costumes and make-up or masks. ‘Good on them’ I say.

I’m Spartacus...

In Liverpool we are known for our sense of humour. Starbucks decided to take people’s names as they gave their order to make the service seem more personal. When one man was asked his name, he said, ‘Spartacus.’

Are you ready? Wait for it... Upon hearing his name being called out, one by one, everyone in Starbucks stood up saying, ‘I’m Spartacus,’ ‘I’m Spartacus,’ ‘I’m Spartacus,’ ‘I’m Spartacus.’...

Only in Liverpool.

Mackenzie’s Pyramid

There are famous roads and streets etc all over the world: 42nd Street, Penny Lane, New York’s Fifth Avenue, Downing Street, and one of the most famous avenues in the world: the Champs-Élysées in Paris – the list is endless. But it’s Rodney Street I want to tell you about. It is known as the Harley Street of Liverpool, and has been home to some eminent people in the past, such as British Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, who was born at number 62, also the novelist Nicholas Monsarrat. Although he was a pacifist, he went on to serve his country in World War 2. In 1951 a book he had written after the war was made into one of the all-time classic war films, *The Cruel Sea*. I could fill many pages with the names of the rich and famous who resided in Rodney Street,

and yet Rodney Street's most profiled celebrity never resided in Rodney Street ... but he does now.

Do you remember when I told you that I used to go to drama lessons in Rodney Street when I was a boy and that I was curious about a pyramid in the grounds of St. Andrews church? It's where William Mackenzie's body rests. In the 1840s Mackenzie was one of the leading European civil engineering contractors. He was a notorious gambler, and it is rumoured that during a night of gambling he lost his soul to the devil who said he would return for it when Mackenzie's body lay in the ground.

Shortly after this he became ill. As Mackenzie had no children, his younger brother Edward was to inherit his estate, valued at £341,848. *Lucky Edward!*

Terrified that the devil would come for his soul, Mackenzie had this tomb erected, leaving instructions that upon his death he was to be placed inside, sitting in his favourite chair, a bottle of whiskey on his card table, a royal flush in one hand and a glass of whisky in the other. In death he wanted what he couldn't have in life: the ultimate poker hand. The cards could be any suit except spades, because that's the devil's suit. Photos of his two deceased wives, Mary Dalziel and Sarah Dewhurst were to be placed on the wall.

His logic was that while his body was above ground, the devil would never be able to claim his soul.

The Diary of William Mackenzie, published by Thomas Telford Publishing in 2000, is a fascinating book. It is a full transcription of Mackenzie's handwritten diaries and it provides an intriguing insight into his busy life.

The curse of Mackenzie

About two weeks before I performed my one man show *All in all it's just another trick in the wall*, I received a telephone call from a stranger who didn't give his name. He asked me if I was going to re-enact the gambling scene Mackenzie had had with the devil. I said that I would; after all, it's a great gambling story.

The stranger asked me if I believed that Mackenzie was sitting in a chair in the pyramid with the royal flush in his hand.

‘I’d like to think so... and that he got one over on the devil,’ I replied.

He then went on to inform me that he had footage of inside the pyramid.

I asked him how he had acquired it.

‘We drilled a hole through the mortar in between the stone bricks and inserted an endoscope level with the floor to support the cable, and we recorded what’s inside.’

‘Is he in there above ground?’ I asked.

‘You make up your own mind, I’m sending it to you ... but you have to promise you will not show it till the night of your show.’

I promised, and while I waited for the footage to arrive, I mentioned it to a friend of mine, Frank Carlyle, who is a historian in Liverpool.

‘I don’t know if I would want to see it,’ Frank said, ‘after all, I do a talk on Mackenzie.’

‘Why wouldn’t you want to see it?’ I asked him.

‘Because as it stands now, we all want to believe he is in there, above ground, sitting in his chair, with a glass of whisky in one hand and a royal flush in the other, and that he’s got one over on the devil... but there again, I’m curious to see it as well. I have an idea who may have recorded it though.’

‘Who would that be Frank?’

‘There has been talk about the new owner of St. Andrews Church knocking it down and removing all the headstones. When it was pointed out that Mackenzie wasn’t under the ground but above it, the owner said it was only a myth.’

Frank went on to say that he thought people protesting about the removal of the headstones and the pyramid had recorded the footage.

‘As what they did was illegal, they want you to show it. That way they get their point over without being prosecuted and you can’t be prosecuted because you didn’t do it, so it’s a win-win situation all round.’

On the night of the show I re-enacted the gambling scene as I had said I would. Then I told the audience about the footage and how I had acquired it, and asked them if they wanted to see it. Their response was an overwhelming ‘Yes.’

At the point where they realised he was above ground and had cheated the devil, the audience cheered – just like we had when watching *Jaws 1*, and Chief Brody shot the canister in the shark’s mouth to blow it up. I had been upstaged by a man who had been dead for over 150 years!

However, many things went wrong, dangerously wrong, that night... Was Mackenzie haunting me? More about that later.

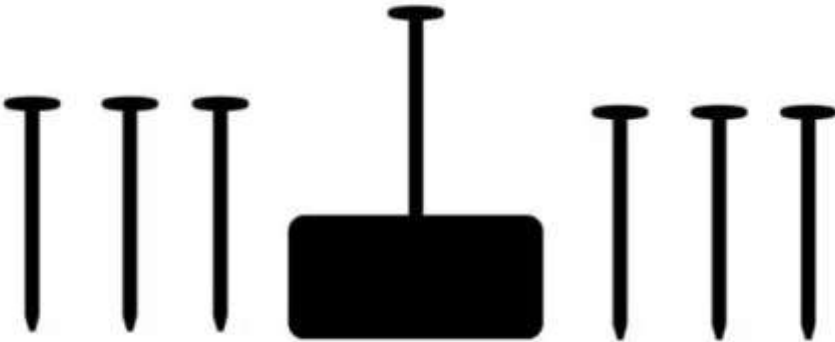
Because I am such a practical joker, some people have suggested that the Mackenzie footage is my doing, aided by my partner in crime, friend Alan Singleton. I tell them to make of it what they will, but the playing cards, the whisky glass, and the card table have been authenticated as being from Mackenzie’s period.



Mackenzie's Pyramid in Rodney Street Liverpool

Take a Break ... try and solve this puzzle :)

The dance of the 7 nails



You have 7 nails. One of the nails is standing upright on a block of wood. You have to balance the remaining six nails on top of that nail without using magnets, string, or anything to stick them in place.

The solution is a great bit of advice for success.

The cracks are starting to show

Life's not about waiting for the storms to pass... it's about learning how to dance in the rain!

Vivian Greene

It is said that everyone arrives at the crossroads of life eventually. I disagree. I think we arrive at the crossroads several times during our lives, and that at times the experience can be life-changing, for the better or worse.

It depends on our attitude at the time.

Nelson Mandela, upon his release after being incarcerated for 25 years of his prime life, was asked if he felt bitter. He replied, '*No time to be bitter, things to do.*' How many of us would have wanted someone's head on a platter?

Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it ... that factor is attitude.

William James

And so I reached another crossroad in my life...

My brother Jimmy suffered a massive stroke while living in Tenerife. He owned a bar called Springer's. His *up-till-all-hours* and sleeping until late lifestyle took its toll and he paid the price; a price that could easily have been mine as I had lived a similar life before I met my wife, Chris.

In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.

Abraham Lincoln

The stroke happened...

in September 2005, and he died on 22nd Jan 2006, and I can honestly say I was glad to see him go. He went from being someone who won trophies for table-tennis, football, squash, and numerous other sports, to only being able to move his eyes because he had locked in syndrome .I remember one day when I went to visit him, as I entered his room I was halted in my tracks. They say the eyes are the windows of the soul, and I read it in his eyes that he wanted out.

Ask me to explain and I couldn't...

I just knew it. I tried to come out with every motivational thing I could think of, but he just looked as if to say 'don't kid a kidder.' If I'd been single and hadn't had a wife and daughter to consider, I might have been tempted to put a pillow over his face.

I later went in to town to pick something up, but my mind was so out of it I phoned my mate Mattie Jordon, who worked in town. We met and had a coffee together. The sad thing was that at the time, Mattie's wife Mary was fighting cancer, and while we would normally be there for each other, we had both been hit broadside and, sadly, we couldn't help ourselves never mind anyone else. Mary passed away later that year, as did my wife's father, Bobby; a great character, the life and soul of any party. He also died from cancer.

*Long ago my father placed his hand upon my head.
As he laid each finger down he smiled at me and said,
Someday son when you're a man you will understand,
You'll only count your true friends on the fingers of one hand.*

*Five fingers you can count upon,
Five fingers... and you **Mattie** are one.*



Alan Singleton Bernie and me on one of a number of occasions we worked at the same venue together

Happy Days

After our Jimmy died, one family in particular came to the fore; it was the Wentons, a very talented family, both in the art of international level boxing, and also singing. We all went to St. Patrick's school together.

When the CD player jammed during our Jimmy's funeral service, Willie Wenton ran to the altar and sang 'Amazing Grace'.

Sometimes, when things go wrong, it's for the right reasons. In Liverpool we call it mucking in.

The time is always right to do what's right. Martin Luther King, Jr

At the same time, Bernie Wenton, who was crowned *Stars in their Eyes* champion for his performance as Nat King Cole, was suffering from cancer. They had organised a show for him at the Devonshire House Hotel. I pointed out to Bernie that the tickets were too cheap as after taking out the cost of the good spread of food he had laid on, there wouldn't be much money left. I argued that, after all, it was his turn to be looked after as he had done a hell of a lot for charity – not that he ever mentioned it, he was bigger than that. Bernie looked at me with that wonderful smile of his and said, 'You've got to look after people, Rich.'

So many entertainers turned up that they had to be restricted to just a couple of minutes each. I'm telling you, there was a wealth of talent in that room.

Days before his death, Bernie had a surprise visit from superstar Chris Rea, who was appearing at the Philharmonic Hall. One of Bernie's sisters had sent a message to him.

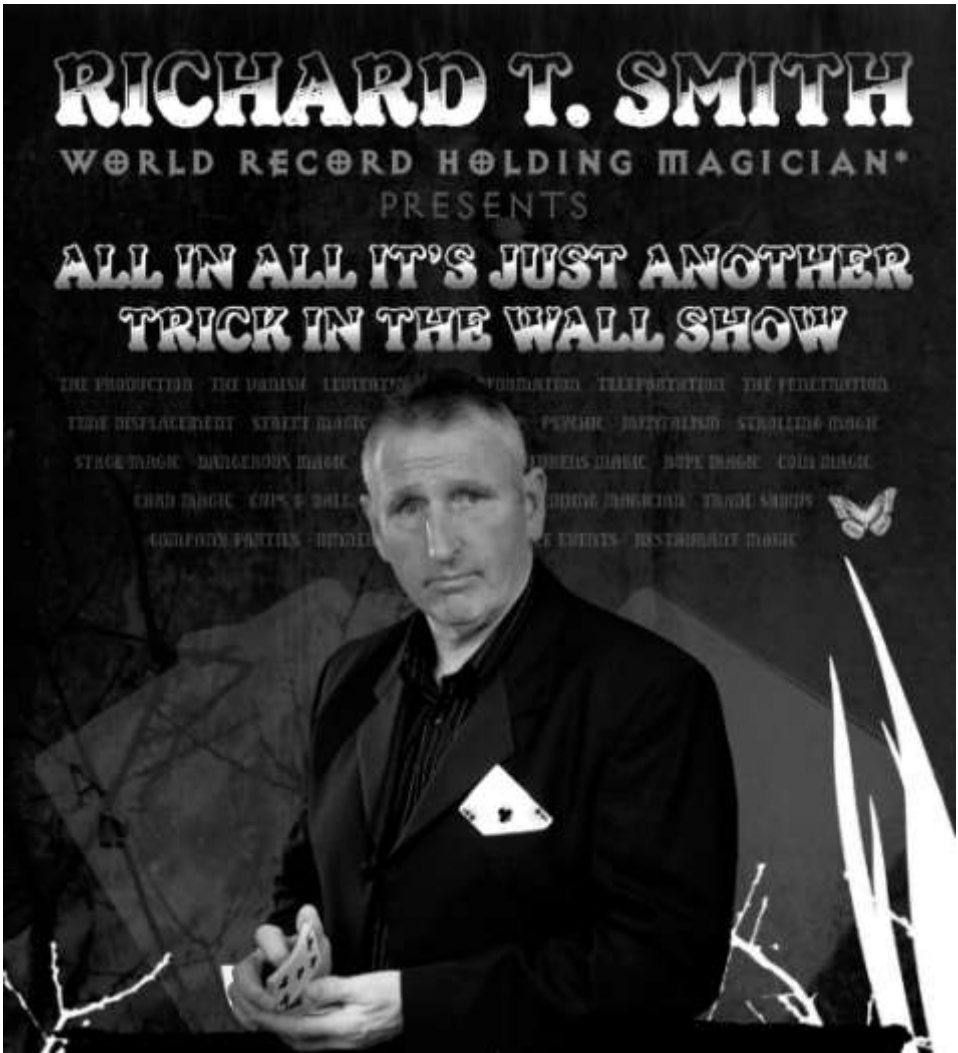
Bernie was in bed when his daughter told him someone had come to see him. When he opened his eyes, Chris Rea was sitting at the bottom of his bed. Bernie and his brother Willy had toured with Chris as backing vocalists in the late 70s.

He spent some time with Bernie, and it seemed to lift him for a couple of days, but then he deteriorated and passed away peacefully at home, aged 59.

There was no side to Bernie; he always had a smile on his face and a song in his heart. If Bernie saw someone without a smile, he would lend them his. His catch phrase was 'HAPPY DAYS', and looking back to the times we shared the same venue together, they certainly were happy days. A true gentleman. God bless you my friend.

I was physically and mentally worn out. My confidence was rock bottom, even to the point where I would take a case of tricks to any booking that I had. I was worrying about what would happen if I ran out of tricks. I still had the Guinness Book of Records mentality in my head. Being the world record holder for the longest magic show, I thought people expected me to do lots of tricks. I never thought that the world record would come back to bite me on the backside.

I forgot what I had been all about before I became the world record holder. It had been about the stories and the gags. I had forgotten that the trick was always only 10% of the performance.



Things started to go wrong when I did my one man show ‘All in All it’s just another Trick in the Wall’ show at the newly revamped Rose Theatre just after a new stage had been fitted. I was told I couldn’t do the snow trick I’d planned, ending with a snowball fight, as the stage had not yet been sealed. Then the lights at the back of the curtain went off just as I was about to do a very dangerous trick. Without the lights I couldn’t find the prop that I used to keep the trick safe; a gun that I used to fire little plastic discs into the audience to get volunteers didn’t work; and my uncle, who was in the audience, was taken out with a suspected heart attack. You name it, it went wrong.

I wonder if Mackenzie was haunting me.

At 8.15 a.m. the following morning I received an email from a lady who had been at my show the night before. I won’t say what was in the email, but you wouldn’t have sent it to your worst enemy. I was depressed for the rest of the day.

When someone spits on you they make you wet, it’s up to you how you deal with it.

Pat Mesiti

Later, my sister Susan phoned to say how much she had enjoyed the show.

‘You must be the only one,’ I said, telling her about the email.

‘What about the standing ovation at the end and all the laughter in between?’ she asked.

‘I don’t remember any of it, Sue.’

‘Well, I’ve recorded it!’

So I went to our Susan’s and watched it, and she was right. I had let the email block all the good parts.

The person who sent the email was a woman who had had a big row with her husband the night before and was looking to take it out on someone else. I just sent her a reply thanking her for her comments and also for attending my show, and left it at that.

If like attracts like, then pity the people who scorn and mock you.

Richard T Smith

The Scorpion and the frog

A scorpion meets a frog on the banks of a stream and asks the frog to carry him across on its back. The frog asks, ‘How do I know you won’t sting me?’ The scorpion says,

‘Because if I do, I will die too.’ The frog is satisfied, and they set out. But in midstream the scorpion stings the frog. The frog feels the onset of paralysis and starts to sink, knowing they will both drown, but has just enough time to gasp,

‘Why?’

‘Because it’s my nature,’ replies the scorpion.

So when someone lets you down or even tries to put you down and you are struggling to understand why they are like that, the answer is ... it’s their nature.

And so I ended up back at the start, correction, less than the start – I was back in debt again. *Big time!*

The true measure of a man is what he is worth after losing all his money. Unknown

The right person in the right place at the right time

I was at a business event at the Kensington Hotel in London. I was probably the poorest man in the room, but fortunately for me, the richest man in the room loved magic and, as luck would have it, I was the only magician at the event.

Don't be envious of successful people, learn from them Richard T Smith

I went over and introduced myself, and the moment I mentioned I was a magician he said, 'Do you have a deck of cards on you that I can borrow?' I did, and I lent them to him. He went on to do the 'card to shoe' trick, in which my card would be shuffled back into the deck and it would end up in his shoe.

'Very good, but you are the apprentice and I am the sorcerer,' I said jokingly.

I took the cards back from him and did the same trick, but with a twist. He chose a card and I then cut the deck in half. With my arms outstretched, sleeves rolled up, I asked him to put his card in the middle of the deck and I dropped the other half on top. Now here's the killer punch. I said,

'Take the cards from me and find your card.'

Don't forget, the cards are in full view at all times. He took the deck and started looking for his card. As a matter of fact, he looked twice, but to no avail... then, looking at me, he asked,

'Where is my card?'

I looked down at my shoes, at the same time slipping my foot out to reveal a card, face down inside.

'No way,' he said, 'you haven't bent down to your shoes once. If my card is in your shoe, you've got to teach me the secret,' he said.

'OK! And if it is in my shoe, you've got to teach me the secret.'

‘The secret?’ he asked.

‘Yes, the secret of success.’

He smiled and said, ‘You have a deal.’

I asked him to take the card out of my shoe as I didn’t want to go anywhere near it. It turned out to be his card. I went on to teach him the trick.

It’s what you have in your head that determines what you have in your hands.

Richard T Smith

He said the difference between successful people and unsuccessful people is that successful people ask better questions, so they get better answers.



Put the man together ... the world will come together by itself

We talked for a while, me telling him about the rut I was in. He told me a story about a man who comes home from work tired. His son runs up to him and asks, ‘Play ball with me, Dad?’

He is really tired and could do with closing his eyes for ten minutes or so, but he doesn't want to hurt his son's feelings. He notices a magazine on the coffee table, and on it is a picture of the world. He has an idea and proceeds to cut up the picture of the world into little pieces, telling his son,

‘I have just made you a jigsaw puzzle, and when you complete the puzzle, I will play ball with you.’

He lies down to rest as his son starts to do the jigsaw puzzle. In what appears to be the blink of an eye, however, he is awoken by his son shouting,

‘Play ball with me, Dad.’

The father says, ‘I told you I will when you complete the jigsaw puzzle.’

‘I have done it,’ his son replies.

The father looks at his watch and notices it has only taken a couple of minutes for his son to do it. ‘How did you do it so quickly?’ he asks his son.

‘I cheated, Dad. You see, on the other side of the picture of the world was a picture of a man, and I figured *if I put the man together ... the world would come together by itself.*’

***‘Build a better world,’ said God... and I answered ‘how?
The world is such a vast place and complicated now
And I’m so small and useless there’s little I can do.’
So God in all his wisdom said,
‘Just build a better you.’*** unknown

‘Tell me, do you read?’ he asked me.

‘Yes, biographies and books on magic, that sort of thing. Why do you ask?’

He said, ‘*The man who doesn’t read good books has no advantage over the man who can’t read.*’

To reach for the things you want you have to stand on the books you read

Jim Rohn

•
‘There are five books you need to read, and if you don’t read them it won’t make a blind bit of difference to *my life*’.

To earn more you’ve got to learn more

‘But if you do read them, I swear it will impact *yours*. I have two copies of the first book in my car, and if I had them here I would ...’ he looked at me to finish off his sentence...

‘lend me a copy... no...sell me one... no ... give me a copy... no...’

‘I wouldn’t lend, sell, or give you a copy. That’s shocked you, hasn’t it?’

‘They’re your books to do with as you wish,’ I said.

‘The reason,’ he replied, ‘is because I like you. When we get something for nothing, we don’t put any value on it. It’s only when we put our hands in our pocket and either send away for, or go and purchase, something, in other words put some effort into it, that we give it some value.’

‘Remember years ago when you saved up for a record, then jumped on the bus to the record shop? You couldn’t wait to get home to play it. Well, it’s the same with these books. I don’t want you to take my word for it, go to Amazon and take a look at what people are saying about them. The first book is called *The Richest Man in Babylon* by George Casson. It’s a one-hour read but a *lifetime of knowledge.*’

The Ox and the Ass

Once upon a time there was a farmer who could understand the language of animals. He was the ancient Dr. Doolittle. One evening, the farmer overheard the ox and the ass talking.

The ox complained about how hard he worked, and how easy the ass had it. The ass sympathised with the ox, and told him he should play sick the next day in order to get a day off. They did not know the farmer could understand what they were saying.

The next day, the ox played sick and got off, just as the ass had schemed. But the farmer ordered his servant to hook the ass to the plough so it could continue the work in the field. So all day the ass worked in place of the ox. After this, the ox and the ass were no longer friends.

The moral of the story:

If you desire to help thy friend, do so in a way that will not bring thy friend’s burdens upon thyself George Casson, *The Richest Man in Babylon*

Simply put If you help others, it shouldn’t be at the expense of taking on their burdens.

The other four books are:

Think and Grow Rich

by Napoleon Hill

Awaken the Giant Within

by Anthony Robbins

The Strangest Secret

by Earl Nightingale

Wake up and Liveby **Dorothea Brande**

‘You will also need a notebook. Don’t rely on your memory; take notes and read them on a regular basis till they become instilled in you.

‘Don’t worry about your debts. As you become a better person – and ***you will become a better person*** with what you’ll learn – your debts will become a thing of the past,’ he told me.

And he was right.

‘I also want you to have this £2 coin. Drill a hole in it and put it on your key ring.’

He went on to tell me that it was what was etched on its side that made it far more valuable than its face value.

On the side was **Isaac Newton’s** quote ‘**standing on the shoulders of giants.**’

‘Ritchie, you need to ask yourself what it is you want, why you want it, and what you have to do to make it happen. Find out who is successful at what you want to do, then model yourself on their actions. In other words, you need to stand on the shoulders of giants.’

One by one, I read all five books, and a lot more into the bargain. The more I read, the clearer things became. Everything I did from that day on was with a different mindset. Decisions seemed to be made with more purpose.

I was beginning to understand who makes the clown laugh

I was now standing on the shoulders of giants, and – who knows? – ***maybe one day we’ll get to walk side by side.***



If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants

Isaac Newton

In the confrontation between the stream and the rock, the stream always wins not through strength, but through persistence.

Buddha

I'm the Business

Now, before you go thinking, 'Who does Ritchie think he is?' let me explain. I don't mean, 'Hey, I'm the business' in a Fonz-like style... no, what I mean is I'm the business, you're the business, Laurel and Hardy were each 50% of the business, the Beatles were each 25% of the business, the Jackson five were each 20% of the business. Do you get it now? So I realised I had to put myself together in order for my world to come together. It could only be done if I treated myself as if I were the business; so I likened myself to a building.

Take Bill Gate's Microsoft building, for example; supposing the outside of the building was full of cracks and the paint was peeling off the walls. Honestly speaking, if you didn't know the man Bill Gates, wouldn't it put you off walking inside and doing business with him? I decided, 'Ritchie, you're carrying a bit of weight; not only is it a bad image, but it's unhealthy.' I needed to lose weight. Then there were the windows – or eyes as we know them. I got them lasered and now I can see perfectly.

The inside of the body is more important. After all, if you walked into Microsoft and there were sparks coming from the fuse box, the water pipes were leaking, and the place was in utter chaos, wouldn't you just turn around and walk back out?

It amazes me how much money people will spend on the outside of their bodies to look good, and they will shovel any garbage into their internal organs. So I decided I needed to eat more sensibly.

And last but not least, I needed to nourish the mind. ***To earn more you've got to learn more...*** you don't win wars with one foot soldier; you win wars with an army.

I realised I would have to enlist the help of others. You don't grow by mixing with people who are on the same level as yourself. I had to mix with people who were in a better position than I was. For instance, if you're out of work, it's pointless associating with other out-of-work people. What you're doing is mixing with your competition. If a job opportunity comes up, one of two things will happen. They will either compete against you for the job, or they will not be interested and will try to talk you out of going for it because they don't want to lose you as their out-of-work friend. It's like when the fishermen catch crabs; they put them in a box without a lid because when one of the crabs tries to escape, the others just pull it back into the box.

You cannot soar with the eagles while you're clucking with the turkeys

Standing on the shoulders of giants

Now I had to decide what it was that I wanted and why I wanted it; also what I had to do to make it happen.

Don't take a job... make a job

I thought back to what Alan Ball had said about Alf Ramsey. I needed to talk to people who had succeeded or failed in what it was I wanted to do. You can learn just as much valuable stuff from someone who has failed as from someone who has succeeded. If one country was shown to be under-equipped to deal with imminent disaster, then you would think a country with similar problems would make sure it didn't happen to them.

I think the greatest achievement is to be in control of yourself. It means you can manage your time, your finances, and your attention. You become more relaxed and stress free. You can't be bought, or dictated to. Also, you learn to be happy with the most important things in life that don't cost money... and believe it or not, when you stop chasing money, somehow, it finds you.



Don't chase the money, chase the dream – then the money will chase you.

When the student is ready... the teacher will appear

In my time I have had many teachers. The University of Life is the majority shareholder, but Jim Rohn runs at a close second. I came across Jim Rohn by accident. It was when I purchased the classic book *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill. I was sent a CD of Jim's work with the book and it just blew me away. His philosophy was just incredible. There were no airs or graces, just plain down-to-earth wisdom, and not a day goes by without me listening to him or quoting one of his stories.

There are leaders and there are followers. There is nothing wrong with being a follower, but you would be wise to follow a great leader, so that one day wise people will follow you

Richard T Smith.

Jim would say, 'Work harder on yourself than you do on your job. Work on your job and you'll earn a living, work on yourself and you'll make a fortune.'

You have to become more valuable to the marketplace to increase your earning potential. I remember someone commenting about Barbara Streisand being paid over a million dollars to perform at the Millennium New Year's Eve concert 'Timeless,' at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, December 31, 1999. They said they didn't think she was worth that amount of money. The fact that she set an all-time Ticket Master record for one-day sales of a single event, virtually selling out in the first few hours of sale eight months before the performance, tells you that somebody thought she was. Hence, she was valuable to someone's market place.

One day a friend of mine, Dave, phoned to ask me to fit a security alarm for a customer of his. I told him I was finished with all that and declined, but he asked me to just have a look at it and give him some advice. I agreed to do that and went along the following day. As the customer opened the front door he asked if I was the man who had come to do the

alarm. I explained that I had just come to check it out and give my opinion to Dave.

For the next 40 minutes I went around the house suggesting the best way to do the job without wires showing and without causing damage to what was a beautiful house. As I was about to leave he asked me when I would be able to do the job. I reminded him that I had been asked to inspect the job and give my opinion to Dave, adding that I no longer fitted alarm systems.

‘Why wouldn’t you want to do it?’ he asked me. ‘After all, you’ve just done the hardest part, the planning.’

At this point I gave him every excuse I could think of to get out of fitting the alarm. I even told him I wasn’t the cheapest and that I would find someone for him.

‘OK. What’s your price?’ he asked.

I then did something I thought would get him off my back. I quadrupled my fee and thought this would be the moment he kicked my sorry backside off his premises. I was gob-smacked when he said, ‘OK, you’ve got a deal.’

As I was installing the alarm I asked why he wanted me to do the job, even after I’d offered to get someone for a quarter of the price. He said, ‘I listened as you went around my home and you were more fussy about my house than I am. It was as if it had been your home and not mine, and that’s more important than the money.’

I realised later that that was what Jim had meant. I had become more valuable to that customer’s market place, and yet I hadn’t treated him any differently. It was something I had always done without realising my worth.

If you don’t know your worth, then you’re not worth your worth.

Richard T Smith

It was incredible, the more free advice I gave out to people about jobs, the more they wanted me to do them.

In the absence of value you will always argue cost

Pat Mesiti

The Richest Man that ever lived

The richest man that ever lived must have been smart, wouldn't you agree? Just to get you thinking, here is Forbes top 5 richest people in the world at this moment of writing, i.e. 1st March 2012:

1. Carlos Slim Helú, Telecom tycoon from Mexico. So you think all Mexicans are poor, eh? Think again. He is the richest person on the planet, with a net worth of \$74 billion.

The wealthiest person in the world living in a poor country!

It's not about where you are, it's about who you are Richard T Smith

2. William H. Gates, Microsoft Software visionary, is now the world's second-richest man, with a total net worth of \$56 billion.

3. Warren Edward Buffett is now the world's third-richest man, net worth, \$50 billion, America's favourite investor.

4. Bernard Arnault, Lord of Luxe, easily retains the title of the richest European fortune, at \$41 billion, thanks to strong demands of luxury items, such as Dom Perignon champagne, Cognac Hennessy, and Tag Heuer watches.

5. Larry Ellison, chief of the Oracle Software Company, worth \$39.5 billion.

Their combined net fortune comes to a staggering 260.5 billion, a mere drop in the ocean compared with the wisest and richest man who ever lived, whose fortune, at today's value, would have made him a Trillionaire.

Believe me when I say that some of the most successful people in the world have taken notice of this man, me included, **and it's not all about the money.** In this man's lifetime there were no wars, and his philosophy holds strong to this very day... so who is he?

You'll find out soon enough if you read carefully.

If someone is going down the wrong road, he doesn't need motivation to speed him up. What he needs is education to turn him around.

Jim Rohn



With one of my pieces of armour Dr Joanna Martin

The Suit of Armour

I decided to absorb as much as I could from some of the most respected, smartest and knowledgeable people around.

I likened it to a suit of armour to protect against negativity and to inspire me to achieve contentment and peace of mind.

- ✓ Helmet: **Tony Robbins**
- ✓ Breast plate: **Earl Nightingale**
- ✓ Back plate: **Napoleon Hill**
- ✓ Gauntlet (2): **Dr. Joanna Martin & Peter Thomson**
- ✓ Arms (2): **my wife Christine & daughter Becky**
- ✓ Greaves Leg plates (2): **Jack Canfield & Zig Ziglar**
- ✓ Shoes (2): **Pat Mesiti & George S. Clason**
- ✓ Sword: **Jim Rohn**
- ✓ Shield: **Robert B Cialdini**

Everything after that becomes an army... *and this is mine*:

The University of Life / King Solomon, the richest man that ever lived / Socrates / Gandhi / Winston Churchill / Plato / Donald Trump – Gill Fielding / Mother Teresa / Brian Tracy Vivian Greene/ Jim Wieddener/ Ernie Woo / Martin Luther King, Jr./ Will Smith / Zig Ziglar / Ralph Waldo Emerson / Bob Ostin / Denis Waitley / Albert Einstein / Rosa Parks / Ted Nicholas / Robert Kiosaki / Henry Ford / Lorraine Nuccol / Isaac Newton / Warren Buffet / Thomas Edison / Charles Dickens / Colette Carlson / Benjamin Disraeli / Stephen Covey / Angela Monet / Oprah Winfrey / Kevin Robinson / Billy McCombe / Dale Carnegie / Theodore Roosevelt / Oscar Wilde / Muhammad Ali / Marcus De Maria / Bob Proctor / Edmund Hillary / Abraham Lincoln / Helen Keller / Wayne Dyer / Mark Twain / Kobi Yamada / Christian D Larson / T Harv Eker / Les Brown / Buddha / Dorothea Brande / Benjamin Franklin / Nelson Mandela / Dan Bradbury / Topher Morrison **and I'm still enlisting.**

Why stop with a suit of armour when you can build a whole army? The difference being with one you become successful, with the other you become humble.

The clown makes everybody laugh, who makes the clown laugh?

I finally had the answer, but more about that later.

Wakeup call

The book you are now reading is the result of hearing one of Jim Rohn's pearls of wisdom. He asked a question that I will here address to myself:

'How many years do you think you have left?'

'I don't know.'

'Well, the general rule of thumb is three score years and ten, that being 70. Now I'm not saying you won't live longer, it's just that after 70 you slow down a lot.'

'Well, I'm 58, so that's 12.'

'Wrong.'

'No, I'm not wrong, 58 from 70 is 12 years.'

'Wrong. I'll tell you what you have. You have 12 more wedding anniversaries with your wife. You have 12 more birthday celebrations with your daughter. You have 12 more Christmases. You have 12 more holidays left, and as you have yet to see three of the seven wonders of the world, to complete your list of seven you better get a move on. Doesn't sound a lot, does it, Rich?'

'Putting it like that, it doesn't.'

'Ritchie, I'm putting it like that because that's the way it is.'

That was the wakeup call. I decided to list all the things I wanted to do, including writing this book; and there's still some crazy stuff, like dressing up as Humpty Dumpty and sitting on the Great Wall of China! After all, if you're going to have a great fall, you need to be on a great wall.

I have four books left on the shelf, so to speak, that I need to write. I would like to put on *A Christmas Carol* and play Scrooge. I would love to learn how to sing (as I am to singing what Herod was to new-born babies); and the list goes on and on.

At this moment I'm trying to set out my life story with a deck of cards, the way Wink Martindale did, showing how a soldier used a deck of cards as a prayer book, a Bible, and an almanac. You never know, I might have it done by the end of this book – fingers crossed.

***Those who danced were thought to be quite insane by
those who could not hear the music.***

Angela Monet

Scratched the surface

In life you have to go as far as you can; do as much as you can; never rest on your laurels. The great actor Charlton Heston, when interviewed following Cecil B. DeMille's 1956 big epic movie *The Ten Commandments* and *Ben Hur* 1959, was asked how he felt at being the ultimate actor. His reply was, '***How can I say I'm the ultimate actor when Lord Olivier said he has barely scratched the surface?***'

You'll have time to rest when you're dead. Robert De Niro

Lessons learnt

The solution to all our problems is inside each and every one of us

It took me over half a century to discover that the solution to achieving all we want to do or achieve is inside each and every one of us. But it's the last place we look.

It's like the mother who, unable to see her child in the living-room, runs outside to look for her, running all around the street, shouting her name, eventually returning home, flustered and upset, to find her daughter upstairs in her bedroom, listening to music. She could have saved herself a lot of time and stress if she had looked closer to home.

In general people are unhappy because they really haven't thought about what it is they want. Oh, they might say they have, but the fact that they haven't acted upon it proves that either it's not what they really wanted or that they haven't given it the thought it deserves.

It's your life ... own it!

The sad thing is that only 5% of people become successful. They know what they want, set definite goals and head towards them. In other words, they have a purpose in life.

First you have the dream, then you plan it but only when you take action does it happen.

Anthony Robbins

So why do we fail? It could be a number of reasons: we lack confidence, have low esteem; or maybe we don't know where to start.

***If you think you're too small to have an impact,
try going to bed with a mosquito.***

Anita Roddick

Decide what it is that you enjoy doing and go all out to excel in it. Don't forget that you stand a lot better chance of succeeding at something you enjoy doing than something you don't; and besides, if you're doing a job that you love, congratulations – you'll never have to work again.

Find the environment where you thrive. We would probably never have heard of Tiger Woods if there were no golf courses

Robert T Kiyosaki

This reminds me of something I heard many years ago. The day is split up into three: eight hours for work, eight hours for rest and eight hours for play.

If you're going to sleep for a third of your life, make sure you're in a comfortable bed, because if it's uncomfortable, guess what? You're going to be uncomfortable for a third of your life.

If you're going to work for a third of your life, make sure you enjoy it, because if you're miserable, you will be miserable for a third of your life. I've heard people say that they are well paid. Maybe they are well paid to be miserable. It still doesn't make sense. You're only on this planet once; why waste a single moment?

And finally, eight hours play, the only time you can relax with family, friends, take time to read a book or listen to music. Whatever you do, don't waste it.

You need to take the first step, which might seem daunting at first, and it's always fear that holds us back.

***Sometimes you have to take a leap of faith and
build your Wings on the way down.***

Kobi Yamada

You need to break down a big task into small ones.

***Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs.
You can eat an elephant one bite at a time.***

Henry Ford

Whatever it is you want to do, imagine it's already done. If it's about losing weight, then see yourself as that slimmer you, and also see yourself doing all the things that you envisage doing when you achieve your results. If money is your goal, then see yourself financially better off and enjoying the trappings of your success.

If you want to walk on water, you've got to get out of the boat.

John Ortberg

My dad once told me that if I was ever short of money, not broke, but short of money (never use the word broke), I should borrow £5 but not spend it; the fact that I had money in my pocket would give me an air of confidence.

They say you have to associate with like-minded people. I agree, with one exception; You should mix with people who are better than you in the profession or project that you have chosen.

Don't join an easy crowd; you won't grow. Go where the expectations and the demands to perform are high.

Jim Rohn

People have the idea that successful people are unapproachable. I have found this to be untrue. In fact, the opposite is true, depending on your approach.

If people like you, they will help you, so increase your likeability – but not at the expense of being false.

Richard T Smith

Make goals, enlist the help of family and friends, but only the positive-minded ones; you need negativity around you like a snowman needs a fire.

Dr. Joanna Martin, an internationally-acclaimed speaker and sought-after educator, commented that no-one ever broke the four-minute mile until someone proved it was possible. She got it bang on the button. How many things are we ***not*** doing because we've not seen someone else do them first?

You were born an original, don't die a copy.

John Mason

Just think of what the world would have missed if certain geniuses had had that mentality of not doing something because they hadn't seen anyone else do it: the light bulb, telephone, penicillin, electricity... get the picture? As has been pointed out, fear is a killer of success. You need to find someone who has become successful in what you want to do, and then go and model them.

If you want to become successful, you simply model the actions of successful people.

This says it all, if you want to become successful, you need to model the actions of successful people. It's really common sense when you think about it. If you want to make scones and your mum cooks great scones, and teaches you how to follow her recipe to the letter, and accompanies you every step of the way, it stands to reason that you will achieve your end goal.

Your failures won't hurt you until you start blaming them on others.

At the start I knew I needed to tighten my belt a little, trim away any excess bills that were causing the pressure of having to work just to make ends meet. This is responsible for holding people back from achieving their dreams.

Put your future in good hands – your own. Mark Victor Hansen

The fact that I had my dream in sight should more than compensate for the loss of, maybe, satellite television, the internet, a fancy health club, or even a top-of-the-range mobile contract. Was I eating out more often than I needed? The list could go on and on, but I had to be true to myself.

Your future awaits the burial of your past.

Your future starts now, and that means getting your priorities right. We pay everyone else and end up with the remaining crumbs. From now on, pay yourself 10% of everything you earn, and by trimming down your expenses. You shouldn't find the 10% that you are paying yourself too

hard to cope with. If you get your wages paid into the bank each month, set up a second account into which you can pay your 10% by direct debit.

Money spent without a return is a loss; money spent with a return is an investment.

You will adapt. You will instantly feel more at ease, because if you really run into difficulty, you will know the money is there. But you need to change your mind-set and ask yourself if you really need to treat yourself as second best. The answer is NO. It's amazing how your savings will grow, allowing you to live a more calm and stress free life.

The richest person isn't the one with the most, but the one who needs the least.

The money you save has to earn its keep; in other words, it must be invested wisely. Some people use banks, and stocks and shares. I always think that the best thing you can invest your money in is yourself. It was pointed out to me not long ago that had I not spent my money on educational and personal development material, i.e., books, CDs, DVDs, and lectures, then I would be a rich man. I agreed, but I wouldn't be enriched; and there lies the difference.

Education isn't expensive, ignorance is, what you don't know will hurt you.

Success doesn't come from having money, money comes from success. A barrister only makes his money after he has become successful.

If you're prepared to learn from those who know more than you, be prepared to teach those who know less.

Richard T Smith

When I turned fifty years of age, I remember being told I had to do a particular task. My reply was that now I'm fifty, I don't have to do anything if I don't want to. Although I was joking at the time, little did I realise it was an attitude I would adopt later on in my life, only now it's 2012, and so I say that I'm fifty nine and so I don't have to do anything if I don't want to. For example, I was told that I must attend a party as it was for a distant member of the family. I said that I didn't like the man, that he was miserable and boring, that he made the Grinch look good and I would rather watch a plank warp than be at his party.

'But you've got to go,' was the reply.

'Hey, I'm 59. I don't have to do anything. I've got to get drunk because everyone else is? I'm 59. I don't have to do anything.'

In other words, I have learned to run my own life. And it's great!

I read *How to get from where you are to where you want to be* by Jack Canfield, and in this book he describes entering the training room on the first morning to listen to Cherie Carter-Scott. Author of *If Life is a Game, These are the Rules*. Everybody was directed to their chairs facing the front of the room, and there was a coloured spiral-bound notebook on every chair. There was a variety of colours: blue, red, yellow, green, etc., and his was yellow. He hated yellow and wished he had a blue one.

When you think about it, he must have been thinking Cherie Carter-Scott will no doubt be giving us a wealth of knowledge and I will have to take notes in a yellow book. This, I might add, is a man who co-wrote with Mark Victor Hansen one hell of a best-seller, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, and many more besides, yet this thing with the colour bothered him.

Then Cherie said something that changed his life from that day on, *'If you don't like the colour of the notebook you have, trade it with someone else and get the one you want. You deserve to have everything in your life exactly the way you want it.'* So he ended up trading with someone who had his preferred blue book.

Lesson learned: you don't have to put up with second best, you have a choice.

My mother in-law, while shopping one day, held up two coats and asked my wife and myself which one she should buy as she liked both. I suggested she should buy both. She was taken aback at first because it was a new concept to her because of her upbringing. ‘Can you afford both of them?’ I asked. ‘Yes,’ she replied. ‘Then buy both,’ I said. Parents would always say you can have one or the other but you can’t have both...

Why not?

It’s that restricted mentality that has stifled the ambitious growth in children.

There’s a great line in Robert Kiyosaki’s book *Rich Dad Poor Dad*. He says, ‘Don’t just get on the ladder to success; why not own the ladder?’

It is often said that there are three kinds of people in this world:

1. *Those who make things happen*
2. *Those who watch things happen*
3. *Those who wonder what happened*

Which one are you?

You’ve got to get the balance right – knowing when to speak and knowing when to listen. What’s the difference between speaking and listening?

If you do all the talking without response then you *learn nothing*.

If you listen without response you have a *good teacher*.

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.

Winston Churchill

Along the way you will always come across people who, for some reason, are just plain stubborn. You get to the point when you ask yourself what you have to do to get a person to respond. Well, my friend, remember this old saying and remember it well: *It's easier to give birth than to resurrect the dead.*

Once I booked a very well-known singer, and when the ransom note – err, I mean the contract – arrived, the demands were a joke. You name it: extra dressing rooms, cases of beer and vodka, whisky, extra hotel rooms and meals for his entourage, and much more. It put an extra £1,500 on top of the £10,000 his agent was asking for.

So what did I do? I just gave birth to another act ...that being a group of lads who reached the final of the *X Factor*, Eton Road. And I'm glad I did, because I got to know a great gang of lads and their families; in fact David Heath's father, Phil, has become a good mate of mine.

*Long ago my father placed his hand upon my head.
As he laid each finger down he smiled at me and said,
Someday son when you're a man you will understand,
You'll only count your true friends on the fingers of one hand.*

*Five fingers you can count upon,
Five fingers... and you **Phil** are one.*

Someone moved my cheese

I had received a call from Becky to tell me that thieves had tried to break into her house but had been disturbed before they could take anything. Later, while using an electric chop saw to cut wood to mend the damage, I slipped. I had felt so angry about the attempted burglary that I had lost concentration and cut my thumb to the point where it was barely hanging on. My thoughts immediately focussed on my profession as a magician, and I wondered if this was the end of it.

I had been in hospital for three days when the hand surgeon came to see me. He said that he loved magic, had been mindful that I was a magician

and asked me how I was going to cope. I just said ‘Someone’s moved my cheese’, and then explained to the confused surgeon all about that best-selling book *Who moved my cheese?* And then he understood.

I started to practise slights of hand with two fingers. After all, if one of my true heroes of magic, Rene Lavand from Argentina, who only has one hand, can amaze people, there was hope for me.

Don’t just sit down and wait to be fed, you need to watch the chef cook your meals, so that one day you can cook a meal in his honour.

Richard T Smith

It’s better to be a has-been ...than a never-has-been

When England drew 1-1 with the United States in the first game of the World Cup because of a goal-keeping error, I thought, ‘Here we go again.’ The newspapers, like vultures, went right in to pick the bones of the goalkeeper. The ‘Hand of Clod’ was the headline in one particular newspaper. I thought, ‘Wow! Is this the way we build confidence in a man who’s most probably at his lowest point?’

One television interviewer asked the England manager if he was going to play him in the next game. Yes that’s right, let’s send in the boot while he’s on the ground!

In Britain we are so negative; we build them up so we can knock them down. Earlier that day the American fans had been asked by a reporter who their favourite player was. The fans had replied that they didn’t know their names or, for that matter, what position they played in, they were just here to support their team, the emphasis being on *support*.

One ounce of encouragement is worth more than a ton of criticism.

In 1985 we took John Farrell over to Australia to fight Jeff Fenech, who became three times world champion and was, at that time, the third fastest boxer to become a world champion, behind Spinks and Muangsuring, when he knocked out Shingaki in nine rounds in Sydney. In 1987 Fenech

became a two time world champion by knocking Payakarum out in four rounds. By 1988 Fenech had become a three time world champion (joining boxing's exclusive group of fighters who had been world champs in three or more divisions), by knocking Callejas out in the 10th round. And yet John had taken him to within three minutes of going the distance of a ten round fight, and it was only through fatigue that we stopped it. Afterwards, Fenech commented that John had been his hardest fight at that point.

Back home he got a small write-up in our local newspaper, while the rest of the page was about another fighter from London. Enough said.

John told me that a lad had called him a has-been; his response... *it's better to be a has-been than a never-has-been.*

Always give without remembering and always receive without forgetting

Brian Tracy

Why should it be me?

We are all guilty of this crime, no-one more than me. How many times have we had a falling out over some disagreement and wondered why we should be the ones to say 'I'm sorry.' I'll tell you why, it's because it takes a big person to do it. I have always liked the words to 'The Living Years' from Mike & the Mechanics. Songwriters: Mike Rutherford, Brian Robinson

I have highlighted some of the lines that I think we have a tendency to overlook:

Every generation

Blames the one before

And all of their frustrations
Come beating on your door

I know that I'm a prisoner
To all my father held so dear
I know that I'm a hostage

To all his hopes and fears

I just wish I could have told him ... (or mom brother sister son daughter friend)

In the living years

Crumpled bits of paper

Filled with imperfect thought

Stilted conversations

I'm afraid that's all we've got

You say you just don't see it

He says it's perfect sense

You just can't get agreement

In this present tense

We all talk a different language

Talking in defence.

Say it loud, say it clear

You can listen as well as you hear

It's too late when we die

To admit we don't see eye to eye ... (why not agree to disagree)

So we open up a quarrel

Between the present and the past

We only sacrifice the future ... (what a waste of life)

It's the bitterness that lasts ... (grievances should always be kept on the surface)

So don't yield to the fortunes

You sometimes see as fate

It may have a new perspective

On a different day

And if you don't give up,

And don't give in

You may just be OK ... (what's the alternative)

Say it loud, say it clear

You can listen as well as you hear

It's too late when we die

To admit we don't see eye to eye

I wasn't there that morning

When my father passed away...(or mom brother sister son daughter friend)

I didn't get to tell him ...(or mom brother sister son daughter friend)

All the things I had to say.

I think I caught his spirit

Later that same year

I'm sure I heard his echo

In my baby's new born tears

I just wish I could have told him ...(or mom brother sister son daughter friend)

In the living years

Say it loud, say it clear

You can listen as well as you hear

It's too late when we die

To admit we don't see eye to eye.

It's sad but it's true. We do sometimes agonise about why we should take that first step to make the peace and not the other party. But it's too late ***when they die*** to admit you didn't see eye to eye.

If you think you would regret not having made amends with someone you don't or haven't spoken to for whatever reason, now is the time to do it, because ***it's too late when they die to admit we don't see eye to eye.***

I've got to say that I very seldom fall out with people, and if I do, I try to rectify it as soon as possible. As I've said before, ***grievances should always be kept on the surface.***

Now don't get me wrong, not everyone wants to resolve a disagreement. Some people thrive on trouble and discontentment, and there are times when you have to walk away. If you did your best to make amends and that person is still disagreeable, then they will be disagreeable with everyone and will go on to lead a lonely life.

Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that crushed it.

Mark Twain

A mile in his shoes

I was in a pub one afternoon and the radio was on. The presenter played a classical piece as requested by one of his listeners. As it was playing, a man in the corner of the bar mentioned that it was Vivaldi's *Le Quattro Stagioni* (*The Four Seasons*), but what was so surprising was that he looked like a tramp. I later found out that he had been the conductor of a top orchestra in the past until one day his family had perished in a house fire and his mind just snapped. He walked away from everything and has lived like that ever since. *There but for the grace of God go I.*

A critic is a chill looking for a spine to run up, judge yourself before you judge others.

Richard T Smith

If I see a Big Issue seller I always buy a copy. I've heard people say he will only drink the money or buy drugs; but what if he decides to turn his life around and becomes a success at something? Who knows how many people he may go on to help in the future?

Never judge a man till you've walked a mile in his shoes.

Narrow-minded people and their narrow-minded ways

It was mentioned that I might leave myself open to criticism over the mistakes and bad judgments I have made in my life – and there have been many.

No-one likes to be criticised, but there is a difference between constructive criticism and ridicule. It doesn't take brains to ridicule

someone, as a matter of fact, the lowest form of life can, and usually does, qualify.

But it does take compassion, honesty, sincerity, integrity and knowledge to give constructive criticism.

A person who is quick to mock someone for being overweight, will not be as quick to praise someone for losing weight.

I don't really care what **that** type of person says about me, *after all, it's none of my business.*

If people have a problem with the colour of your skin, your religion or your sexuality, they are narrow-minded people with narrow-minded ways.

Richard T Smith

The Fox and the Grapes

One hot summer's day a fox was strolling through an orchard. He came to a bunch of grapes ripening on a vine that had been trained over a lofty branch. 'Just the thing to quench my thirst,' he thought. Drawing back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, but missed the bunch. Trying again, with a one, two, three, he jumped, but with no greater success. Again and again he tried to reach the tempting morsel, but at last had to give up. He walked away with his nose in the air, saying, 'I am sure they are sour.'

It is easy to despise what you cannot have.

You've got to kiss a lot of frogs before you get the prince.

Maybe you've heard the story of the 1,009 restaurant owners who rejected Colonel Sanders' Fried Chicken proposal, and Prospect 1010 who finally said 'Yes.'

BUT... did you ever hear the story behind the story? The Colonel had a restaurant in Kentucky. A new interstate highway was planned to bypass the town of Corbin. Realising his business was about to be affected, the Colonel sold everything. After paying his bills, he had nothing to live on except his Social Security cheques. In 1952 he began travelling the country in his car to promote his chicken recipe.

He would walk into a restaurant and announce to the owner, 'I bet my chicken recipe is better than yours,' proposing a cook-off. His plan was not just to promote his recipe, but also to feed himself using the chicken provided by the restaurants he visited, during those lean days. If the owner was favourable, he would 'franchise' his chicken recipe to them at 5 cents per chicken. Over 1,000 restaurants turned him down. One day he was trying to sell his deal to a bar owner, who said to him,

'Sir, I'm trying to sell beer, not chicken. This stuff needs to be a whole lot saltier to make the customers thirstier and buy beer!'

He grabbed the salt shaker, poured some salt on, and took another bite. 'Now this is great,' he said. 'If you'll add salt to this recipe, I'm on board.'

The Colonel took a bite and spat it out! It was terrible! You see, the Colonel had been on a salt-free diet for 30 years, so this clearly was not to his taste.

If you want to know what Mrs. Jones buys, look at it through Mrs. Jones' eyes.

Richard T Smith

Although the Colonel did not like salt, it wasn't about what he liked, it was about what his customers liked. ***You catch fish with bait the fish like, not what you like.*** And so, as they say, the rest is history. The Colonel could have made many more presentations, and he would have continued to come up empty-handed had ***he*** not been willing to ***change.*** For your life to change, you must change

You must be the change you want to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi

Two mice fell into a bucket of milk

Two mice were hopping around a farmyard, when they decided to investigate the barn. Being somewhat careless, and maybe a little too curious, they ended up falling into a bucket half-filled with fresh milk.

As they swam about attempting to reach the top of the pail, they found that the sides of the pail were too high and steep to reach. So they tried to stretch their back legs to push off from the bottom of the pail, but found it too deep.

One gave up and drowned, but the other was determined not to give up. He continued and kicked and kicked until he churned that milk into butter and walked out.

Never Give Up!

Decisions

It is in your moments of decision that your destiny is shaped.

Tony Robbins

Tony Robbins says that your life changes the moment you make a decision; the moment a woman decides that she will never again let her husband hit her, or the moment someone decides they're tired of living a certain way and enough is enough. I believe that the moment you make a decision, it's not just your life that's about to change, its many lives.

For example, in 1955 Rosa Parks was on her way home on an Alabama bus. She went straight to the back of the bus where black people were expected to sit as the front seats were for white people. But soon the bus started getting full, and there were no more seats left for white people. So the bus driver ordered Rosa to give her seat to a white person. After what must have been a gut-churning moment, she said 'NO.' Rosa Parks took a stand for minorities by refusing to give her seat to a white man on a segregated bus.

She was arrested for breaking a local ordinance, triggering outrage and a 382-day boycott that crippled the Montgomery bus system. The following year, the Supreme Court desegregated public transportation, and Parks became a Civil Rights icon. *She is considered the mother of the civil rights movement.*

People always say I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true, I was not tired physically, I was not old I was only 42. No, the only tired I was ...was tired of giving in.

I would like to be known as a person who is concerned about freedom and equality and justice and prosperity for all people.

Rosa Parks

You've got to agree, when Rosa said 'NO' that was one hell of a decision for mankind. How many people owe her a debt of gratitude? When you

think about some of the things holding you back from what you want to do to change your life, how does it stack up in the greater scheme of things? Would the decision you make result in loss of your liberty? If not, then make the decision – now. ***Procrastination is the thief of time.***

I made the decision that I would never let anyone stress me out. Don't get me wrong, I will always help people if I can, but not at the expense of my health as I have done in the past ...in the past. ***I have given many a person a leg to stand on and they have used it to kick me up the backside.***

Power of 3

The number **3** is my lucky number, and was my lucky number long before I realised that many things in my life involved the number 3. For example:

- Anthony Robbins said you've got to have a ***dream***, then you have to ***plan*** it, and most importantly, you have to take ***action***. Without the last one the first two don't count.
- Bill Shankly's 3 principles: be a good ***winner*** of the ball, be a good ***passer*** of the ball and have the ***conviction*** to carry it out.
- The footballer wants to ***win*** medals for his club, ***represent*** his country, and ***earn*** good money.
- An army in time of war will implement ***strategy, position, attack***
- Billy McComb's ***curiosity-intrigue-response***
- You ***sow***, you ***harvest***, you get ***nourished***
- ***Work Rest and Play***
- ***Higher-class, middle-class, lower-class***
- ***Past, Present, and Future***
- What do I ***want?*** ***Why?*** What do I have to ***do*** to make it happen?
- ***Births, Marriages, Deaths***
- ***Being the right person in the right place at the right time***

You'd be amazed at how many times the number **3** plays a part in all our lives.

Sign after sign after sign

Every day I listen to personal development CDs, read books or watch lectures on the subject. Even when I go swimming in the morning, I listen to my MP3 player, which is in a waterproof bag designed for swimming. It's more enjoyable to listen to something while you're swimming as otherwise it can become boring. If I *listen to music*, I am entertained, if I listen to a *good speaker* or lessons on learning a foreign language, then I get educated. I was asked why I listen to the same speaker or read the same book over and over again. 'What's the point?' they ask.

So I use a motorway as an example. As you're driving along the motorway, you see sign after sign giving you the same information. Now, you would think they'd only have to tell us once. We are told on a regular basis just in case we start to drift off course, and that's the same as learning; the more you go over what you have learned, the more it becomes instilled in you. It becomes second nature making you more disciplined. And this is a great advantage in the sense that whatever you plan to do, **you do**.

The old trench-digger

When I was working for Press's during the gas conversion from town gas to North Sea gas, we had to hand dig trenches from roadside kerbs to the buildings. The trenches were usually about 2ft wide by 3ft deep but could be anything from 15ft to 30ft in some cases. I was 18 at the time, fit as a fiddle and thought I knew it all ... wrong! I noticed that while I was sweating buckets, the old man in the next trench wasn't; also that he was leaving me dead in my tracks. It was then that I remembered something that my dad had once said to me:

‘Whenever you start a new job, find out who’s been there the longest and observe them, as they will have made all the mistakes you are about to make and gone on to find the solution.’

It's good to learn from your mistakes, but it's much better to learn from other people's mistakes. So I jumped out of the trench and went over to ask his advice. His secret was **preparation**. While I had focussed on digging out as little as possible, i.e. a width of 18 inches instead of 2 feet, thinking I would storm ahead, the old man had been digging his trenches a bit wider so he wasn't stifled, and he had used a piece of ply board, 2 feet by 4 feet, which he would place on the base of the trench, using a pick to drag the soil onto the board from where it was easier to shovel off, especially if it was a clay soil. This made it easier and quicker. Then he just kicked it forward when needed so it acted as a base and a level.

***Give me 6 hours to chop down a tree, and I
will spend the first 4 hours sharpening the axe.***

Abraham Lincoln

The poodle and the leopard

A wealthy old lady decides to go on a photo safari in Africa, taking her faithful old poodle, Cuddles, along for company. One day Cuddles starts chasing butterflies, and before long she discovers that she's lost. Wandering about, she notices a young leopard heading rapidly in her direction with the intention of having lunch.

The old poodle thinks, 'Oh, oh! I'm in deep trouble now!'

Noticing some bones on the ground close by, she settles down to chew on them, her back to the approaching cat. Just as the leopard is about to leap, the old poodle exclaims loudly, 'Boy, that was one delicious leopard! I wonder if there are any more around here.'

Hearing this, the young leopard halts his attack in mid-strike, a look of terror comes over him and he slinks away into the trees.

'Whew!' says the leopard, 'That was close! That old poodle nearly had me!'

Meanwhile, a monkey who had been watching the whole scene from a nearby tree figures he can put this knowledge to good use and trade it for protection from the leopard. So off he goes, but the old poodle sees him heading after the leopard with great speed, and figures that something must be up. The monkey soon catches up with the leopard, spills the beans and strikes a deal for himself with the leopard. The young leopard is furious at being made a fool of and says, 'Here, monkey, hop on my back and see what's going to happen to that conniving canine!'

Now, the old poodle sees the leopard coming with the monkey on his back and thinks, 'What am I going to do now?', but instead of running, the dog sits down with her back to her attackers, pretending she hasn't seen them, and when they get close enough to hear, the old poodle says,

'Where's that damn monkey? I sent him off an hour ago to bring me back another leopard!'

Wisdom will always outdo youth.

The watermelon story

A farmer who was tired of the kids stealing his watermelons had an idea. He put up a sign that read ‘One of these watermelons has been poisoned.’

That night the kids changed the ‘one’ to a ‘two’ and went home. ***So they both ended up with a lose-lose situation.*** I wonder what **you** would have done.

In times of change you must change.

In times of rapid change, experience could be your worst enemy.

Jean Paul Getty

‘I’m set in my ways.’ How many times have you heard that? Don’t get me wrong, experience is a great thing, as long as you are smart enough to top it up on a regular basis. Billy Butler is a people’s favourite DJ on Radio Merseyside and has a diverse knowledge of music and singers from many decades.

Change before you have to.

Jack Welch

Billy has seen many changes in his life, from records to cassettes, CDs, MP3s, etc. Can you imagine if Billy still had the record mentality and wasn’t prepared to change as and when new technology appeared? I think you’ll agree that he would have been left behind. As it is, he is still at the top of his game.

It is not necessary to change, survival is not mandatory.

W. Edwards Deming

The Dummy Box

To appreciate the end of a book you have to read the whole book. If you switched the television on and caught the last fifteen minutes of a film, *Gone with the Wind* or *Dr Zhivago* for example, it wouldn't have the same impact as it would if you had seen the whole film.

I see it all the time when people try to take short cuts to be successful in financial or career moves. They try to cut out what they call trivial or insignificant stuff. Yet it can turn out to be just as important as the more appealing information.

As an alarm engineer, I consider the dummy box at the back of the house to be as important as the main alarm box at the front of the house. If an intruder comes over the fence at the *back of the house* and sees the bell box, although he knows it's a dummy, he will probably check out the front for the main box and then go on to a house with no alarm. Had the house had no dummy box, the intruder would think the house wasn't alarmed and go on to break a window or door, causing the alarm to trigger. However, the damage is done, and the cost of repairing or replacing a window or door will always far exceed the cost of a dummy bell box. In most cases, the intruder considers that as he's gone that far, he might as well take something for his trouble rather than leaving empty-handed. This highlights the importance of the dummy box.

I never adopt the attitude that I know more than everyone else, because even if I know what they know, I still want to hear their point of view, especially that of young people, because their ways of thinking are fresh and full of imagination.

I have a magician friend, Bob Ostin, who is a genius when it comes to creating tricks, and his knowledge of magic is second to none. Once, when I was doing a trick, I said, 'You'll know this one, Bob,' to which he replied,

'I know a lot about magic, but I don't know everything. People assume I know every trick there is and, as a result, nobody ever shows me a trick. In the end I lose out.'

How sad it is to be in a position where your educational growth is stifled because people think you can't learn anything from them.

After doing one of Bob's tricks, a young lad was surprised when Bob told him that he had performed it better than Bob himself.

Points to remember: if you strut around with the attitude that you know it all, you will lose out in the end because of the self-inflicted barrier that you put up; plus, you may have something to gain from watching someone do something better than you can do it yourself.

Know what business you're in

*If you don't know what business you're
in, then you're not in business*

Richard T Smith

A simple mistake I made for many years was in not knowing what business I was in; but now I realise *I am in the greatest business in the world.*

But for now, I just want to use an example so you can see what I mean.

Ray Kroc was a Czech American businessman who took over the small-scale McDonalds Corporation franchise in 1954 and built it into the most successful fast food operation in the world. While presenting a talk, he asked students what business they thought he was in. The hamburger business, the fast food business, the restaurant business were some of the replies.

They were surprised when he told them that he was in the real-estate business. For every McDonalds that opens, the revenue paid by the franchisee goes towards buying the property. There are thousands of McDonalds around the world, and that's a hell of a lot of properties, don't you think?

I also asked people what business they thought I was in? The magic business, the entertainment business, the mind-reading business, and the illusion business were some of the responses. Although any one or all of them could fit into what I do, it's the curiosity business I'm really in. ***And with enough curiosity you can achieve any result you want.***

As magic is one, if not the only, form of live entertainment that invokes curiosity, people have either thought or said, 'I wonder how he did that.'

Remember when i said

A simple mistake I made for many years was that I didn't know what business I was in, but now I realise I am in the greatest business in the world.

At one point, did you wonder why I didn't tell you what it is?

We all have that curiosity inside us, and for years the shops and media have taken full advantage of it.

That's why, after seeing a trailer we like, we go to see a film, or the reason you are reading this book, or any other book for that matter; it's because the back page created enough curiosity for you to want to buy the book.

Don't get me wrong, I try to create curiosity all the time, whether by telling a story or doing a trick, because it creates intrigue, and we all like a little intrigue.

So it's not just in magic that you can use curiosity, it can be used in all kinds of marketing. Does it work? You be the judge.

I want your money, but I want to give you value in exchange

Richard T Smith



The Jamaican ladies we met in Egypt

I know what you are

I have received some nice comments from people who have suggested that I would make a good inspirational speaker as they have felt inspired after listening to me talk; or that I would make a good philosopher as they think my philosophy on life is wonderful. One ex-professional boxer told me: ‘I remember fighting one particular fighter who was odds on to knock me out. Knowing that my manager and corner man couldn’t shout instructions to me during the fight because of the Boxing Board of Control rules, you came down to the ringside and shouted words of encouragement to lift me up and motivate me. I went on to beat him. I think that you are a motivational speaker.’

I was flattered by all these comments, but it was when I was in Egypt that I finally found out who I really am. My wife and I met two lovely ladies from Jamaica. One of them said, ‘I know what you are.’

‘What am I?’ I asked her.

‘You are a storyteller.’

I thought for a while, then I said, ‘You’re right. That’s what I am.’

I like to perform magic that has a story to it. That’s why I like fables, because you hear a story before you hear the moral. Even at the start of this book, I told you the ‘Lonesome Dove’ story to get a point over.

So, my friends, here’s another story.

The old man and the stones

I am looking to learn all the time, whether by listening to true stories or examples that teach a principle. Here is one of my favourites, and I hope you like it too.

One day an old man was sitting on a park bench when a young man came by dragging a large case and looking exhausted. He stopped and sat down on the bench for a rest. The old man asked him what he had in the case, suggesting it was house bricks.

‘Not quite, I collect stones,’ he replied, between gulps for air.

‘Really? How many have you got?’ the old man asked.

‘In this case, not far off a thousand. Do you want to see them?’

‘Yes, I would like to see them,’ the old man replied.

The young man opened the case, and the stones just poured out; all different colours and sizes. After a short while the old man said,

‘You remind me of myself when I was your age. I collected stones just like you. Would you like to see my collection?’

‘Yes, please,’ the young man replied.

The old man took out of his pocket a velvet bag and poured out a small number of stones. They weren’t rough like the young man’s stones, these were smooth and the colours were more vibrant. You could see every vein from all angles within the stones.

‘Wow! Your stones are far more beautiful than mine,’ the young man told him.

‘Oh, I went for quantity instead of quality till one day I wised up and decided I didn’t want to be burdened down with numbers. I picked out my favourite stones and handled them constantly, rolling them around in my hand, moulding them till they became part of me. I kept the stones that meant something to me.

This white one is the colour of caring and reminds me of all the people I care for and who have cared for me in my life. The black stone reminds me of the dark times in my life and how I came through them a stronger person. The blue stone reminds me of the colour of my daughter’s eyes, and the colour of the sky and the sea. The green one represents my Irish heritage and the colour of the grass and leaves on the trees. The red represents the colour of business and how it’s not a bad thing as long as you keep it in proportion to your family, just like the stones. Then there’s this yellow one with gold veins shooting off in all directions. It represents both money and knowledge, which have one thing in common; they’re both at their best when shared, but worthless if they stay dormant, and the yellow is the colour of wisdom, not cowardice. ‘He who ups and runs

away lives to fight another day.’ That is wise, for it would be stupid to take on a lost cause. There’s the grey stone; its neither black nor white. It represents impartiality, reminding me that I must always see both sides of the coin, meeting people half-way; there must always be a win-win situation.

I have seven stones in total, representing the seven days of the week, and each day I pick out a stone and try to implement part of its meaning into that day. If it’s blue, I will make it my business to talk to my daughter, or maybe take time to gather my thoughts by the sea. If it’s green, I will try to talk to one of my relatives, and if it’s black, I will try to help someone who is going through a bad patch. If it’s white, I will try to show someone that day that I care for them. And if it’s the yellow stone, I will try to pass on whatever knowledge and wisdom I am fortunate to possess. And as for the red and grey ones, I don’t go looking for their situations, they find me. You see, Son, you need to cut down the numbers. It’s a bit like the things we want to do in our lives. People are always trying to chase so many opportunities or business ventures that they become jack of all trades and master of none. You only end up diluting yourself and your chances of success.’

‘I see what you mean,’ said the young man, ‘but which stones do I keep?’

‘Your heart will tell you that, but I will help you with the first stone.’

The old man reached into the case, took out the roughest and ugliest one he could find and gave it to the young man before getting up to walk away. The young man shouted,

‘Why this one, Pops?’

‘Because it needs care more than the others, and if you’re prepared to work hard on it and don’t give up, I swear that will be the jewel in the crown.’

‘What stone is it?’ asked the young man.

‘It’s the foundation stone on which you will build the rest of your life.’

Quality over quantity

Benefactors and thieves

Benefactors and thieves – or assets and liabilities as it's known. I think we all get a little confused as to what is an asset and what is a liability. In down-to-earth terms, anything that *puts money in your pocket* is an *asset* and anything that *takes money out* is a *liability*. It's as simple as that.

It goes for anything you buy, even for your job or trade.

The money you spend on your tools should never supersede the money you earn from using them.

Richard T Smith

I tell the people in the Magic Circle that if they spend more on their tricks than they make from performing them, then what they have is a hobby.

There's nothing wrong with having a hobby as long as you know that is what it is.

During the summer an ice-cream van is an asset, during the winter it's a liability. If you borrow money to buy a van so you can pick up goods from the wholesaler, it's an asset; if you buy a car to run around in, it's a liability. The list is endless: houses, watches, jewellery, clothes, pets, household goods, etc. The next time you go shopping, ask yourself two questions: 'Do I really need this?' and 'Is this an asset or liability?'

The money you spend on things you don't need reduces the money you have to spend on the things you do need

Richard T Smith

Imagination

Imagination is more important than knowledge.

Albert Einstein

You are limited only by your own imagination because it holds no boundaries; it's lack of imagination that sometimes holds us back.

Don't ever allow those with no imagination deplete yours.

Richard T Smith

I am always using my imagination for one thing or another, whether relating to magic or something motivational. If you want to lose weight, imagine yourself slim, if you want to be financially successful, imagine all the things that **come** with it: travelling first class to any country you choose, owning a nice car or house, etc. If you want to be a success at your sport, see yourself as victorious.

When Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay climbed Mount Everest on 29 May, 1953 to become the first climbers known to have reached the summit, they were reported as having described it as a dream come true.

'I have often imagined standing on the top of Mount Everest,' Hillary said, 'and now it's happened.'

If you can dream it, you can do it.

Walt Disney

By the way, if you are a bit of a dreamer, you're in good company. John Lennon must have been one if the lyrics to his classic song 'Imagine' are anything to go by.

You see, imagination is one of the most important things we have. I think you'll find that successful and contented people use their imagination a lot.

But you must always imagine success – not failure. Why not imagine you can be more successful, wealthy, live a better lifestyle, than you are now.
It's your birth right.

Just in case you ever let success go to your head, read this:

The Indispensable Man *(by Saxon White Kessinger)*

Sometime when you're feeling important;
 Sometime when your ego's in bloom;
 Sometime when you take it for granted,
 You're the best qualified in the room,
 Sometime when you feel that your going
 Would leave an unfillable hole,
 Just follow these simple instructions
 And see how they humble your soul;

Take a bucket and fill it with water,
 Put your hand in it up to the wrist,
 Pull it out and the hole that's remaining
 is a measure of how much you'll be missed.
 You can splash all you wish when you enter,
 you may stir up the water galore,
 but stop, and you'll find that in no time,
 it looks quite the same as before.

The moral of this quaint example

Is to do just the best that you can, be proud of yourself but remember, there's no indispensable man.

Wrong for the right reasons

As I've said before, sometimes good can result from things going wrong. When my wife Christine, or Chris as she is known, and I were flying out to join the ship for our cruise around the Middle East, our plane had to turn around just 100 miles from Corfu because of bad weather. This happened twice, and once back at Manchester airport I went into the book shop to get something to read on the plane. While I was looking around the shop I noticed Chris browsing through a book, something she hadn't done since suffering a stroke 16 years previously. Although she had

always read books in the past, now she found it difficult to maintain concentration.

Chris noticed me staring at her and gave me a look as if to say, ‘I won’t bother.’ I asked her if she fancied trying to read, after all, there was nothing to lose except the price of the book, and if it got her reading again then the price didn’t come into it. She decided to buy it.

On our way back to Corfu, Chris didn’t read her book as she wanted to save it for when we went back home, but she did read one of mine, as it was just a small book or, as I call it, a one hour read. The book was a classic best seller called *Who moved my cheese?* and I would recommend it – you’d be amazed how this little book can help you.

On the plane coming home some of the passengers said they had enjoyed the holiday except for the flight delay – we had been accommodated in the Hilton Hotel in Athens I might add.

They looked puzzled when I told them I was glad it had happened. Had we not been delayed I wouldn’t have had the need to buy more books as I had already brought books with me. Chris wouldn’t have been in the book shop to pick up that book, and she wouldn’t have started to read my book because the thought wouldn’t have been in her head.

So next time something goes wrong, look for the positive – it will be there if you look close enough... trust me.

Scarecrow to Carecrow

One day a scarecrow told God, ‘I’m lonely. I have no friends because nobody likes me.’

God said, ‘You have to change the way people see you.’

‘I don’t understand,’ said the scarecrow.

God replied, ‘You stand there with your hands outstretched, looking menacing. All you have to do is bring your arms forward to a welcoming position, and people will see you in a new light.’

Sometimes, when we hit a bad patch, such as losing a job or getting into debt, we go from carecrow to scarecrow, and we alienate ourselves.

People don't want to be around us, and we lose out because we have limited our chances of being helped.

The Boy did well

Brian Wareing was one of my boxers he runs an outside catering company in Southport, Known as Eating Inn specialising in private dining, wedding functions, hot & cold buffets to suit any occasion also cookery tuition. Brian offers a bespoke service that will design a menu tailor made to suit your event. He keeps promising me a custard tart which is a classical dish his brother Marcus who is 7 years younger and better looking cooked for the queen on her 80th birthday Marcus is one of the leading chefs in the country he currently holds 2 Michelin stars for his restaurant *Marcus Wareing at the Berkeley in Knightsbridge London*, His other restaurant is the *Gilbert Scott within St Pancreas train station, London* were the euro star departs for Paris, the Gilbert Scott is within the Renaissance, Hotel it is a magnificent piece of architecture fittingly suitable for such a fine restaurant. Once a Protégé of Gordon Ramsay to then become business partner further down the line. Both have now gone their separate ways, Marcus is highly tipped to become the next chef in the UK to earn 3 Michelin star status. Brian often travels to London to spend time with his brother and work in his 2 star kitchen to get ideas for his own catering company specialises in dinner parties cooked by Brian in the comfort of your own home.

But i have more chance of plating fog than getting him to bake that tart. My wife Christine makes the best Christmas mince pies ever so much so that one Christmas Brian the Grinch Wareing swapped a Turkey for one of Chris's mince pies done on a large plate. When Christine makes a mince pie for us and we know Brian is coming, we have to hide it and bring out the shop ones because he would eat the lot given half the chance.



Brian Wareing outside our house on one of his mince pies visits

Go on adventures and not holidays



Chris and me in the Red Rose City of Petra in Jordan a seven wonder of the world



In front of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece another seven wonder of the world



The great pyramid of Giza in Egypt another seven wonder of the world



Just negotiating how many camels for the wife



Chris and me standing where one of the original Seven Wonders of the World the Colossus of Rhodes stood



The Panathenaic Stadium Athens Greece



Bethlehem in Palestine the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is one of the oldest continuously operating churches in the world. The structure is built over the cave that marks the birthplace of Jesus of Nazareth and is considered sacred



My wife Chris entering the church of nativity in Bethlehem in Palestine

Someone once said to me they preferred holidays instead of adventures because they liked the sun on their face, i can tell you the sun was on our face in all the places we visited.

A Fist Full of Dollars

When my wife Chris and I travelled around the Middle East, we stopped off at Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and in Bethlehem it disgusted me to see a Greek Orthodox priest with a handful of money that he had received for taking people to the front of the queue while everybody else waited in line for over an hour and a half. Hearing him shout at two ladies – who were both old enough to be his mother – for taking photographs, which they were entitled to do, I told him he was nothing more than a bully and asked him why he had not shouted at anyone else. Could it have been because they would have taken him to task for biting the hand that fed him? I asked him what He would have said, *pointing over to the manger*, if he were here today.

‘You’re taking money from people just to get them to the front of the queue! You’re no better than the Roman soldiers who gambled for Jesus’ robe!’

He went bright red and quietly left.

It is unwise to pay too much, but it is worse to pay too little. When you pay too much you lose a little money ... that is all. When you pay too little you sometimes lose everything because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the things it was bought to do. The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot ... it cannot be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder it is well to add something for the risk you run ...and if you can do that, you will have enough to pay for the something better. John Ruskin

If money talks ... is yours saying goodbye?



My wife Chris our daughter Becky and myself in front of the leaning tower of Pisa



I could almost hear Oliver Reed saying to Russell Crow...win the crowd Spaniard ... and you win your freedom

Nuggets of Gold

I don't take any credit for the nuggets of gold I'm about to pass onto you. They are pearls of wisdom I have been lucky enough to have come across in my life, and I hope they may be of some help to you.

When it's raining gold, reach for a bucket, not a thimble. Warren Buffett

1. **If you want to know what people think...** ask them
2. **Don't chase the money, *chase the dream; and then the money will chase you.*** Richard T Smith
3. **Mix in the right environment...** you don't send a duck to eagle school. If you want to be successful at plumbing, you must learn from plumbers and not electricians: horses for courses.
4. **If you want to know what people want...** ask them
5. **If you want people to help you...** ask them to
6. **If you appreciate someone...** tell them
7. **If you come across someone who is wise...** listen to them
8. **If you come across someone who is successful...** learn from them
9. **If the task is too big...** break it down into small pieces. Be successful at little things first, and build up to the big one later.
10. **If it's not broken make it better...** you have heard that old saying *if it's not broken don't mend it*. With that mentality we would still be using the horse and cart; after all, it did the job for hundreds of years, so why fix it? What you're doing might be all well and good for now, but you still have to improve, all the time. Why? Because if you don't, your competitors will. Richard T Smith

11. **Realise your true worth.** *'It doesn't matter how good you are, if you don't realise your true worth then you are not worth your true worth.'* Richard T Smith
12. **Change your mind set.** Positive thinking all the way from now on.
13. **Decide what you want to do and excel at it.** Become an expert and you will be in demand.
14. **Pay yourself first.** Out of everything you earn, no matter how small, pay yourself 10%.
15. **Make the 10% earn its keep.** Invest it in something that gets a return.
16. **Mix with people better than yourself.** You cannot fly with the eagles while clucking with the turkeys.
17. **Don't be scared to ask successful people for advice,** they will not bite, and sometimes they feel flattered.
18. **Know what business you're in.** At one stage the railways lost out to the airlines because they thought they were in the railway business when really they were in the transportation business.
19. **Stay clear of negative people.** Be selective about who you mix with, negative people are as useful as a one-armed juggler; they will only bring you, or what you do, down.
20. **Don't think *if I can*.** Think *when I do*.
21. **Make the decision to change your life ...** *'It is in your moments of decision that your destiny is shaped.'*...Tony Robbins
22. **Don't buy anything you don't need.** *It diminishes the opportunity to buy what you do need...* Richard T Smith
23. **Don't be scared to change.** *For your life to change, you must change...*Gandhi
24. **Set Goals.** You've got to have something that gets you out of bed in the morning
25. **Inspire.** Become someone people want to listen to.
26. **Set out a game plan.** We don't plan to fail, but we fail to plan. *'If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what they might have planned for you? Not much.'* Jim Rohn
27. **Luck** is when preparation meets opportunity; the harder you work, the luckier you'll get.
28. **Become disciplined in what you do.** To become successful you must be disciplined and carry out the plan to achieve your goals.

29. **You never get a second chance to make a first impression,** so check everything before you make your first move.
30. **See yourself as a winner.** Whatever you want out of life, see yourself as having achieved it. Some academy award winners have given acceptance speeches that they had been practising for years.
31. **Deliver what you say you will deliver.** A promise isn't worth anything until it's delivered.
32. **Let them get to know you first.** As I have said before, if people like you they will help you, so increase your likeability, but not at the expense of being false. Richard T Smith
33. **Think outside the box.** Try to look at things from all angles, be different.
34. **If you're selling a product or services, build up the value first.**
35. **Keep it simple.** Do not overwhelm people with all the statistics. A car salesman doesn't have to tell the customer about every nut and bolt that's in the car in order to sell it; they only need to know the benefits.
36. **You cannot change people, they can only change themselves.** You can help and motivate people all you want, but they, and they alone, can help themselves by putting in the effort; you can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink.
37. **Look after your health.** Active body - active mind. A healthy body functions better.
38. **Take action.** Plan to work and work the plan... "If you talk about it, it's a dream, if you envision it, it's possible, but if you schedule it, it's real." Tony Robbins Get the Edge
39. **Become memorable.** As Cesare Pavese said, '*We do not remember days; we remember moments.*' You will be remembered for what you did to help.
40. **Solutions not problems.** Always look for the solution, and if you haven't got it, find someone who has. You don't know it all, so be smart enough to know you don't know it all.
41. **Personal development.** Read good books, listen to successful people, ask good questions.
42. **If someone can't help you that's fine, but don't let them hinder you.**

43. **Every day take one hour for yourself** to listen to a good speaker on CD or MP3, or to read a good book to help your personal development.
44. **Don't be scared to step outside your comfort zone.** Christopher Columbus, the great navigator and explorer, stepped outside his comfort zone – and what an impact he had on the world! Can you imagine if he had just thought, 'I will sit here in Genoa and enjoy the peace and quiet; after all, the world is flat and I don't want to fall off the edge.' 'If you are unsuccessful in your comfort zone, it's obvious your comfort zone is holding you back.'... Richard T Smith
45. **Control your outgoings.** When your outgoings supersede your incomings, you have a problem.
46. **Never provide a product or a service that you're not comfortable with.** Would you be prepared to back it up with a guarantee?
47. **Think about the future.** Watch for trends and changes that could affect your business.
48. **Some will, some won't, so what... next?** You cannot please all the people all the time so don't let it get you down, *'I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody.'*... Bill Cosby
49. **For your business to be in business** your service or product has to be where the customers **really are**.
50. **Increase your ability to earn.** Learn a new skill or become a master at what you do already.
51. **Trust and credibility.** Before people buy into your product or services they buy into **you**, so you need to build up your trust and credibility,
52. **Build strong relationships.** No man can become successful by himself.
53. **The key to living your dream** is to dare to do things differently.
54. **Be thorough.** If you're going to do something, see it through, don't give up half way.
55. **The best way to have a good idea** is to have lots of ideas
56. **You are better than where you are now.** And that goes for tomorrow, next week, next year till the day you die. Richard T Smith
57. **Learn how to influence people.** If you can influence people with your knowledge and skills, they will want to use your services.

58. **Give without expecting.** You will be surprised at what comes back to you.
59. **Beware of conformity.** Don't do what everybody does or expects you to do... be your own person. I have never come across anyone who became successful by conforming, and I'm not about to hold my breath.
60. **Relate to the person or people you're dealing with.**
61. **Get paid for what you know, not what you do.** You might have heard the story of the man who charged £50 for fixing a boiler. When the customer pointed out that he had only hit the boiler with a hammer, the engineer altered the bill, which then said 'hitting the boiler with a hammer £5, knowing where to hit it, £45.
62. **Take your customers, or your audience, from where they are to where they want to be.**
63. **Preparation** is the main ingredient of success. *'If I had 6 hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend 4 hours sharpening my axe.'* Abraham Lincoln
64. **Don't take your eyes off the ball.** Whatever you do, stay focused until the job's done.
65. **Success is your birth right.** Don't think success belongs only to those who are university educated or born into wealth; it belongs to those who seek it.
66. **Be proficient in economics.** Know the value of money, not to be greedy but to safeguard you and your family.
67. **Momentum.** Once you start, keep going till you finish.
68. **Be a good leader.** Never ask anyone to do what you wouldn't do yourself. Lead by example.
69. **Take full responsibility for yourself.** Don't blame others. You stand and fall by your own decisions ... if you're prepared to take the credit, then be prepared to take the blame
70. **Work harder on yourself than you do on your job.** If you work on your job, you can earn a living, if you work on yourself, you can make a fortune. Jim Rohn
71. **Every day help someone, make a friend, earn some money.** You won't go far wrong if you do these three things. Do the first and the second will happen automatically; and so, for some reason, will the third. Richard T Smith
72. **Smile.** You attract friends with smiles not frowns
73. **On the journey to success be careful whose hand you're holding.** The hare would be stupid to hold hands with the tortoise; for

the tortoise cannot run as fast as the hare, but the tortoise can slow the hare down enough to keep pace with it. You can only go as fast as the person whose hands you're holding. Richard T Smith

74. **See** yourself as the person you want to be and act the part.

75. **Listen** to what you need to hear, not what you want to hear.

You don't have to go for the big deals. I asked a millionaire how I could make a million. This was his reply:

- * **You could win the lottery...** a long shot
- * **You could rob a bank...** that's hard to get away with
- * **A relative might leave you a million in their will...** don't hold your breath
- * **You could sell a product for a million...** that's really hard unless you're in the big league of property or diamonds for instance.
- ✓ **You could sell a product for a pound or a dollar to a million people.** That's a piece of cake. How *many* **'Everything's a pound' (or dollar)** shops are there? Find a product that will accommodate a mass market and you are more than halfway there.

76. **Make sure the product or service includes at least 4 from the list below:**

- a. *Everybody wants it*
- b. *Everybody needs it*
- c. *It's priced to buy*
- d. *It's priced to sell*
- e. *It can generate repeat business*
- f. *It's universal*

g. And ensure that the people you deal with have a proven track record of stability

77. You become what you think about. If you're thinking about a worthwhile goal and work towards that goal, then you will achieve what you're focussing on. If you think in negative terms, you'll get negative results. If you think in positive terms, you'll get positive results Earl Nightingale. What you perceive is what you receive. If you can dream it, you can achieve it...

78. Give value for money. And when they least expect it, give them more. Look after the customers you have and you have them for life.

79. Don't be scared of failure... fear of failure is the biggest killer for people wanting to be successful... here are some of the biggest failures of all time:

- ☛ **The Beatles** were turned down by Decca Recording Company who said their guitar music was on its way out.

- ☛ **J.K.Rowling**, speaking at Harvard University, thanked her failures for taking her to rock bottom. This gave her a solid foundation on which to build. Had she not failed at other things, she might never have written the Harry Potter stories.

- ☛ **Thomas Edison** – how many light bulbs did he have to make before he got it right?

- ☛ **Walt Disney** was fired from a newspaper because he lacked ideas.

And one of the greatest failures of them all:

Abraham Lincoln's Failures:

- ☛ **Lost job**, 1832

- ☛ **Defeated** for legislature, 1832

- ☛ **Failed** in business, 1833

- ☛ Elected to legislature, 1834

- ☛ **Sweetheart (Ann Rutledge) died**, 1835

- ☛ **Had nervous breakdown**, 1836

- ☛ **Defeated** for Speaker, 1838

- ☛ **Defeated** for nomination to Congress, 1843

- ☛ Elected to Congress, 1846

- ☛ **Lost denomination**, 1848

- ☛ **Rejected** for Land Officer, 1849
- ☛ **Defeated** for Senate, 1854
- ☛ **Defeated** for nomination for Vice-President, 1856
- ☛ **Defeated** Again for Senate, 1858
- ☛ Elected President, 1860, he failed himself right into the White House.

So when anyone tells you you're a failure, smile and tell them you're in great company. The list doesn't end there, you could throw in John Ford, Alexander Graham Bell, and Albert Einstein for good measure.

You can fail yourself to success... the only time you become a failure is when you **give up**.

80. People will remember specific success stories. Backing up statistics with stories from either clients or personal experiences can greatly increase your chances of a successful deal.

81. Get out of the habit of looking for excuses. *It's better to offer **no** excuse than a bad one...* George Washington

82. Do more than is required of you and you will become more valuable to the market place.

83. Empathy and understanding. No kind deed goes unnoticed.

84. Look for cooperation with people through consent rather than fear.

85. Give attention to detail, no matter how small.

86. Know what you are talking about and know how to deliver what you are talking about.

87. Honesty. If you don't know the answer to a question, say you don't know. People will always respect your honesty. *No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar.* Abraham Lincoln

88. Help others to succeed and you will be dragged along in the tail wind of their success.... Richard T Smith

89. Don't rely on your memory. If you have jewels, you keep them in a safe. Your memories and life-changing information should be written down for you to recollect as and when you or your family need it.

90. Learn to use *we, us,* and *share* instead of I

91. Know when to keep quiet; there will be times when it is best to say nothing. Some people, given enough rope, will hang

themselves. **‘Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.’** Napoleon Bonaparte

92. It’s not a crime to be broke, it’s a crime to look broke...
James Bernard Smith senior (my dad)

93. Mistakes: learn from them, but don’t dwell on them. A mistake is only a mistake if you make the same one again ... the first time was a learning curve.

94. Get your priorities right. Without customers or clients you’re not in business.

95. Progress: The Wildebeest is always on the move because if it stands still it will starve and perish. We, as human beings, are not that much different. It is not necessary to change. ***Survival is not mandatory.*** W. Edwards Deming

96. Never give up ... there will be times when you ask yourself, ‘What’s the point?’ Just sit down and read this list again. You might be listening to or mixing with the wrong people. Maybe ***just talking to someone who is successful at what you’re trying to do*** could get you back on track.

97. Always put your brain in gear before you let the clutch out on your mouth.

98. Every day watch or listen to someone or something that makes you laugh.

99. Make a bucket list. Make a list of the things you want to do before you die, it doesn’t matter how crazy it is. Don’t forget, one of mine is to dress up as Humpty Dumpty and sit on the Great Wall of China. It’s your list and nobody else’s, so be as crazy as you want. Don’t let anyone rain on your parade. ***There is a big difference between living and existing ...it’s better to wear out than rust out.***

100. Leave a legacy... Because the successes of the present are the result of the legacies of the past, and our children’s future depends on all of us to keep it going. It all starts with the man in the mirror – and that’s You.

And finally, never believe anything, no matter who said it, no matter even if I said it, unless it agrees with your own reasoning and your own common sense; and remember, any journey is easier without baggage.

***It should be you running your life, not your life
running you – the tail should never wag the dog***

Richard T Smith

Make a 30 day plan

1. Get a full health check. It all starts with nourishing the body, then the mind. Set out a programme to improve your health, even if it's a walk around the block or an early morning swim to shake off the cobwebs.
2. Decide what it is you want, after all, you don't want to climb the ladder of success to find you're on the wrong wall.
3. Understand why you want it.
4. Now you have to plan how to make it happen. Choose a day and a time to start with... *a car satellite navigation system, as good as it is, still has to be told where you want to go.* You are no different. The route has to be planned.
5. List the advantages and disadvantages of the task ahead.
6. Take stock of your outgoings and decide where you can cut back, because a lack of money can be a killer of dreams... *don't hold back on this one.*
7. Make a list of the things that you fear.
8. Make a list of people you know who are successful and can help you with what it is you want to achieve.
9. Get in touch with the people on your list, tell them what it is you want to achieve and ask for advice about the things you fear may hold you back. Remember, if you don't ask you don't get... you have nothing to lose.
10. Don't forget to break down the task into small tasks.
11. Every night go over what you have done that day and ask yourself what you could have done better.
12. Read good books on your subject.

13. In life you will experience all types of pain: physical, financial, fear of failure, etc., but the pain of regret stands head and shoulders above all others... Richard T Smith

14. Have a mentor – or many mentors.

15. Expect change. To go forward you will have to change the way you think. In times of change we must change. When a footballer becomes too old to play football, he has lost the tools that got him the jewels. He has to look for something else. Just like trends in the market place, when a particular product isn't securing the jewels any longer you have to move on to the one that is.

16. Don't go for the quick fix remedy. It only last for a short while, *set a man on fire and he shall be warm for the rest of his life.*

17. Get on board someone who can keep you on track when you have an off day and vice versa.

18. Mix with like-minded people.

19. Don't listen to negative people. Think positive at all times. Listen to the people who tell you that you can, not the people who tell you that you can't.

20. Circle a date on the calendar by which time you want to have achieved your goal, and celebrate your achievement when it happens.

21. Get your priorities right at all times. If you miss a day, don't worry. Start your 30 day plan again. You are only a failure if you give up.

22. Don't dwell on past mistakes. You cannot do anything about them. **You wouldn't laugh at the same jokes time and time again, so why would you want to cry over the same thing time and time again?**

23. You cannot be an early bird and a night owl at the same time. Stick to reasonable hours for your health's sake and you will be able to function better, enhancing your chances of success.

24. Wealth isn't about the person who has the most, it's about the person who needs the least. The best things in life are **free.**

25. Don't always go for the gold, after all, it was the pick and shovel sellers that made the money during the American gold rush and things haven't changed to this day. The people selling the packaging often make more money than the people supplying the contents.

26. Don't settle for second best. ***Let me be rich let me be poor but don't let me settle for mediocrity.***
27. If you want to be successful you can learn from successful people, whether they are dead or alive.
28. ***The world is one big playground, my friend, and guess what – it's playtime.***
29. Most importantly, take action! Dreams, ideas, goals – call them what you will – are worthless without action. ***Good luck!***

The secret to success? That's easy. Greet every day with a renewed sense of joy and wonder. Remind yourself that it's all a miracle. When the going gets tough, remember this; on that day in the future when you're drawing your final breath, you will gladly take back even the worst day to live over again... to watch the sunrise, to smell the flowers, to hear your child's laughter, to hold the ones you love just one more time. With that in mind, let any adversity you face simply fuel your enthusiasm and determination. Don't waste time viewing others as competitors. You are your only competition. You only fail if you give up... so don't.

Jay Scott Berry, magician

Leave a legacy your family wants

One day a gentleman phoned me to tell me that his dad had been a magician and his mum had been his assistant. They had performed the old style of magic, rabbit out of the hat, etc. When his mum died, his dad never performed magic again. He made his family promise that when he died they were not to throw his tricks and props away but were to give them to someone who would appreciate them, and so the promise was made.

'Would you like my dad's tricks?' I was asked.

'Why me?' I responded.

'After finding you on the internet and discovering that you are the world record holder for the longest magic show, 30 hours 45minutes with a total of 600 tricks, we realised that here was a man who didn't throw tricks away, hence the call.' I said I would like them and went down to his house. There was a large box in the middle of the room. I said I wouldn't know what price to offer until I had seen what was in the box.

We don't want anything. We just want to carry out our father's wishes, they told me.

Later, as I sat on the couch opening the box and picking up one trick after another, I started to understand the magic mind of the man; his thinking

and the style of magic he liked, and I realised I was looking at a man's life ... my life, I was no different from him.

One day my family will have the same task to carry out as his did. It was a shame that he left a legacy that his family didn't want. It got me thinking about what I could leave apart from memories. I wanted it to be something that my family could go back to if they needed to be pointed in the right direction. So I decided to log the wisdom and knowledge of some of the successful people I have either met or read about on my fantastic journey, and put it in a book along with my life story... and that's why I didn't write a book about magic.

I need to know that people are feeling better or lighter or understanding something more about their lives because of my work. The one thing you can take to your grave at the end of it all is that you gave something back.

Patrick Swayze

I want to thank you for reading my book. I hope you got something out of it and I wish you well in your journey through life. Your past doesn't have to be your future, and in the words of Jim Rohn, *'When the end comes for you let it find you conquering a new mountain ... not sliding down an old one.'*

Also thank you to all the people who have contributed to who I am.

I may not know the answers, I can finally say I'm free and if the questions lead me here, then I am who I was born to be.

Lyrics from Audra Mae "Who I Was Born to Be"

By the way, I finally found the answer to my question:

The clown makes everybody laugh, but who makes the clown laugh?

If he's good enough, he makes himself laugh by basking in the response of the performance he has just given... the giving starts the receiving process.

Richard T Smith, the Magic Entrepreneur

From the Chestnut Man by Richard T Smith

The big house Money fine clothes holidays she had everything that is except LOVE

Twelve years after being adopted

Young Emily stares out of her bedroom window to the chestnut man across the street she was fascinated at the way he let down and out people come and put their potatoes on his fire to cook even though they had no money to buy his chestnuts. They would laugh and talk all night sitting around his fire keeping warm. She didn't know where they went as when she got up to go to school they were gone. Except for the chestnut man he was always there. One day Emily through curiosity more than anything else walked over to the other side of the street and asked the chestnut man what exactly are chestnuts.

You mean you haven't eaten a chestnut before he asked

No she replied

Here take this as he handed her a brown piece of paper twisted into a cone.

Keep tight hold now he instructed her as he poured half a dozen hot chestnuts into it from his shovel.

Let them cool down a bit before you eat them.

They feel hard

You don't eat the shells you eat the nut inside he told her

Ok , I'll throw the shells away?

Not everyone throws the shells away.

Why would you want to keep the shells she asked?

If you lived on the streets you might want to keep them.

Why?

To protect you.

I don't understand she said

Like myself others spread the shells around where there sleeping so if someone tries to creep up while you're sleeping you are alerted by the sound of the shells cracking.

Wow that's a wonderful idea.

Off you go young lady otherwise your parents will be wondering where you are.

Later on that night when her dad came into check on her at bedtime he could hear the sound of shells cracking under his shoes

Emily shouted out it works

What the hell is all this he shouted at Emily?

Chestnut shells daddy, the chestnut man said it warns you if someone creeps up on you while you're sleeping.

The father flew into a rage you are never to go near that man again do you hear shaking her as he demanded her to promise.

Emily never saw the chestnut man ever again not through choice but because from the following day onwards he never came back..

Eight years on

Emily was now happily married to a wealthy young business man with her own home and training to be a barrister .they were in there favourite restaurant that they meet up for lunch every day. it was in the middle of the conversation that she stopped talking for what seemed a long time .

Whatever is the matter darling? Her husband asked

That woman outside i know her

You can't know her, she's a tramp.

Wait here she said ... i have to ask her something

With that she raced outside and stopped the bag lady.

What happened to the chestnut man she asked.

The tramp smiled and said you don't know do you

Know what?

The man from the big house facing had him removed...Said he would make things tough for him if he stayed around

Really hurt him that did ... his health went downhill after that i tell ya

It was if he was standing guard over something or someone.

Anyhow that's all finished now.

What do you mean finished

The chestnut man died last week his funerals this afternoon 2 o'clock St Bernadette's

I'm really sorry to hear that she told the bag lady, and then went back inside to join her husband in the restaurant.

The words of the bag lady kept repeating over and over again in her mind

It was if he was standing guard over something or someone.

What time is it darling she asked her husband?

1-35pm

I've got to go

Go where he asked

I can't explain now she said... Talk to you later as she ran out the restaurant.

There's never a taxi when you need it she muttered to herself

It's about 15 minutes from here the man she asked directions from told her as he continued to give her the route.

She ran as fast as she could in high heel shoes, on arriving at St Bernadette's she realised the service had started; she walked slowly into the church and sat down in the only seats that were empty at the back of the church, as it was full.

Emily noticed that the crowd was mixed of both well to do people and down and outs. Various people got up and spoke about the chestnut man with kind words and admiration for him. What was really strange was that nobody knew his real name.

As they started to carry his coffin up the centre aisle and out of the church the most amazing thing happened the people started throwing empty chestnut shells in front of the pallbearers you could hear the cracking of the shell's with every step they took.

Emily cried as she remembered the story he told her that night when he gave her the chestnuts even though he had little and she had plenty and was disgusted at the way he was treated by her stepfather.

As the people left the church she noticed the bag lady she spoke to earlier. And her words once again came to mind

It was if he was standing guard over something or someone.

Hello we meet once again Emily said to her.

The bag lady leaned over and whispered into Emily's ear we need to talk.

Acknowledgements

Charlie Landsborough

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Reference Page

It is better to travel well than to arrive. Buddha
<http://www.brainyquote.com>

Everyone wants to be appreciated. So if you appreciate someone, don't keep it a secret. ... Mary Kay Ash <http://www.brainyquote.com>

The mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains, the superior teacher demonstrates, the great teacher inspires ... William Arthor Ward
<http://www.brainyquote.com>

Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learnt in school... Albert Einstein <http://www.brainyquote.com>

I find it fascinating that most people plan their vacations with better care than they plan their lives. Perhaps that is because escape is easier than change Jim Rohn <http://www.motivatingquotes.com/jimrohn.htm>

Wall Street is the only place that people ride to in a Rolls Royce to get advice from those who take the subway ... Warren Buffett
<http://www.brainyquote.com>

He may be wounded Sir but he has the light of survival in his eyes, he is a noble beast and he shall come again. Sir Winston Churchill Winston Churchill - The Wilderness Years (1983)

http://www.appleseeds.org/indispen-man_saxon.htm

If I have seen further it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants. Isaac Newton, http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Isaac_Newton

If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door... Milton Berle
<http://www.brainyquote.com>

A man who represents himself has a fool for a client. Abraham Lincoln
<http://www.mnbar.org/benchandbar/2009/feb09/lincoln.html>

Employ your time improving yourself by other men's writings so that you shall come easily by what others have laboured hard for... Socrates <http://www.brainyquote.com>

I destroy my enemies when I make them my friends. Abraham Lincoln <http://www.brainyquote.com>

Live as if you were to die tomorrow, learn as if you were to live forever. Gandhi <http://www.brainyquote.com>

Persistent people begin their success where others end in failure. Edward Eggleston <http://www.brainyquote.com>

I would like to be known as a person who is concerned about freedom and equality and justice and prosperity for all people. Rosa Parks <http://www.brainyquote.com>

I would rather make 10% of the efforts of 100 men than 100% of the effort of myself John D Rockefeller <http://www.leadership-with-you.com/john-d-rockefeller-leadership.html>

Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude. William James <http://www.brainyquote.com>

In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years. Abraham Lincoln <http://www.brainyquote.com>

You'll have time to rest when you're dead. Robert De Niro <http://www.brainyquote.com>

the message of the ancient Egyptian language was lost for 1500 years. It was not until the discovery of the Rosetta stone and the work of Jean-Francois Champollion (1790-1832) that the Ancient Egyptians awoke from their long slumber. Today, by virtue of the vast quantity of their literature, we know more about Egyptian society than most other ancient cultures.

<http://www.eyelid.co.uk/hiero1.htm>

Rosa Parks autobiography Rosa Parks and James Haskins, *Rosa Parks: My Story* (1992)

If you think you're too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito. Anita Roddick [://www.brainyquote.com](http://www.brainyquote.com)

“Sometimes you just have to take the leap and build your wings on the way down.”
— Kobi Yamada <http://www.goodreads.com>

If you want to walk on water, you've got to get out of the boat. Title of the book by John Ortberg

Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs. You can eat an elephant one bite at a time.

Henry Ford <http://www.rumormillnews.com>

Don't join an easy crowd; you won't grow. Go where the expectations and the demands to perform are high. Jim Rohn's biography <http://www.jimrohn.com>

You were born an original, don't die a copy. Title of the book by John Mason

Put your future in good hands – your own. Mark Victor Hansen <http://thinkexist.com>

The richest person isn't the one with the most, but the one who needs the least. <http://fredrikblom.hubpages.com/hub/The-worlds-best-quotes>

Always give without remembering and always receive without forgetting. Brian Tracy <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/show/186770>

Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that crushed it. Mark Twain <http://www.brainyquote.com>

Life's not about waiting for the storms to pass. It's about learning how to dance in the rain!

Vivian Greene <http://viviangreene.org/learning-to-dance-in-the-rain/4/>

Hard training, easy combat; easy training, hard combat. Alexander Suvorov http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Alexander_Suvorov

You must be the change you want to see in the world. Mahatma Gandhi
<http://www.quotationspage.com>

It is in your moments of decision that your destiny is shaped. Tony Robbins
http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/t/tony_robbins.html

Give me 6 hours to chop down a tree, and I will spend the first 4 sharpening the axe. Abraham Lincoln
<http://www.brainyquote.com>

In times of rapid change, experience could be your worst enemy. Jean Paul Getty
<http://www.brainyquote.com>

Change before you have to. Jack Welch
<http://www.brainyquote.com>

It is not necessary to change, survival is not mandatory. W. Edwards Deming
<http://www.brainyquote.com>

Imagination is more important than knowledge. Albert Einstein
<http://www.brainyquote.com>

If you can dream it, you can do it. Walt Disney
<http://www.brainyquote.com>

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When it's raining gold, reach for a bucket, not a thimble. Warren Buffett
http://www.cnbc.com/id/35616702/Warren_Buffett_When_It_s_Raining_Gold_Reach_For_a_Bucket

‘It is in your moments of decision that your destiny is shaped.’...Tony Robbins
<http://www.brainyquote.com>

I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody.’ Bill Cosby
http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Bill_Cosby

If you work on your job, you can earn a living, if you work on yourself, you can make a fortune Jim Rohn

<http://mchege.hubpages.com/hub/WANT-A-FORTUNE-WORK-HARDER-ON-YOURSELF>

‘If you don’t design your own life plan, chances are you’ll fall into someone else’s plan. And guess what they might have planned for you? Not much.’ Jim Rohn <http://www.happylifebalance.com/blog/view/202/-if-you-don-t-design-your-own-life-plan--chances-are-you-ll-fall-into-someone-else-s-plan--and-guess-what-they-have-planned-for-you--not-much-----jim-rohn>

It’s better to offer no excuse than a bad one... George Washington <http://www.brainyquote.com>

‘No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar’. Abraham Lincoln <http://www.brainyquote.com>

‘Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.’ Napoleon Bonaparte

It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory. W. Edwards Deming <http://www.brainyquote.com>

The time is always right to do what’s right. Martin Luther King, Jr <http://www.brainyquote.com>

When someone spits on you they make you wet, it’s up to you how you deal with it. Pat Mesiti The University of success

In the absence of value you will always argue cost. Pat Mesiti The University of success

We do not remember days; we remember moments.’ Cesare Pavese <http://www.brainyquote.com>

In the confrontation between the stream and the rock, the stream always wins – not through strength, but through persistence. Buddha <http://www.reinventingmyself.com>

When I see three oranges, I juggle; when I see two towers I walk. Philippe Petit Wikipedia Philippe Petit

The lion and four oxen <http://www.aesops-fables.org.uk>

The poodle and the leopard <http://lerrah.com/poodleandtheleopard.htm>

The Fox and the Grapes <http://www.aesops-fables.org.uk>

Two mice fell into a bucket of milk <http://www.freefictionbooks.org>

The Scorpion and the frog <http://www.aesops-fables.org.uk>

To reach for the things you want you have to stand on the books you read
Jim Rohn <http://inspirationalguidance.com/success-is-something-you-attract-by-the-person-you-become/>

John Ruskin
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Law_of_Business_Balance

‘I’m not going to look beyond the semi-final – but I would love to lead Newcastle out at the final.’

‘He’s the only man I know who could start an argument with himself’ (on Craig Bellamy).

‘We didn’t underestimate them. They were a lot better than we thought.’

All sir Bobby Robsons quotes taken from the Newcastle united blog

She may be wounded Sir but she has the light of survival in her eyes, She is a noble beast and she shall come again ... taken from the film young Winston 1972

Profits are Better Than Wages by Jim Rohn* Adapted from the Jim Rohn weekend event – Excelling in the Millennium

If someone is going down the wrong road, he doesn’t need motivation to speed him up. What he needs is education to turn him around. Jim Rohn Jr <http://www.brainyquote.com>

You’ll have time to rest when you’re dead. Robert De Niro
<http://www.brainyquote.com>