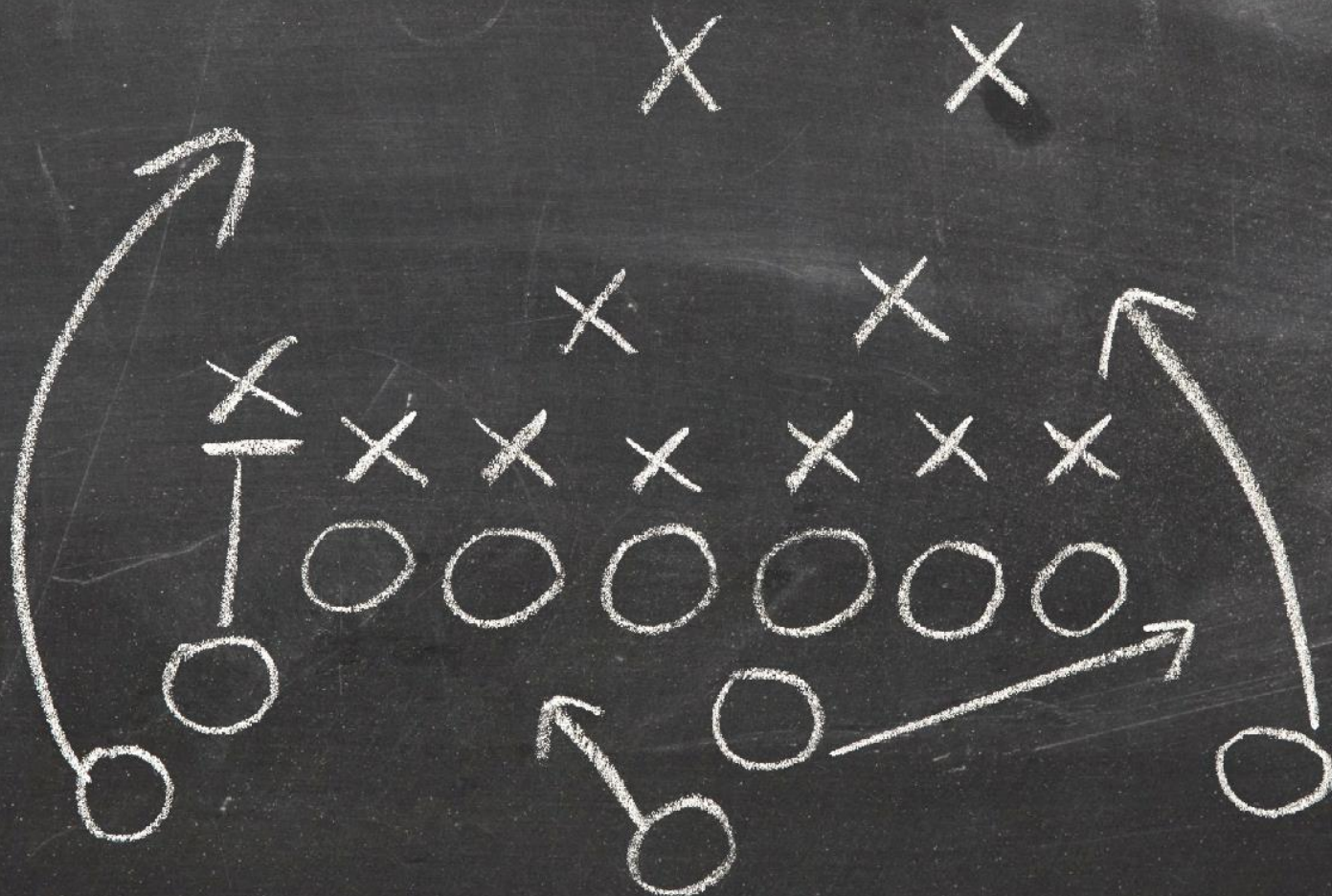




The Game Changers

Good To Great To Greater

“What the Great Champions know, yet Coaches seldom teach”



Robert A. Opie

21 short stories of Insight, Innovation and Inspiration

"Great is not something one is given in life....."

Great is something one must take in life."

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Foreword from Sponsor

Foreword by Sponsor

As Shakespeare once penned,

'Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them'.

Rob's new book takes you 'inside the game plans and the mindsets' of the Great Champions of Business, Sport and Life.

It shares game-changing lessons of greatness in an easy-to-read inspirational format – putting the power in your hands

All you have to do is Believe.

Dr.Doug Mattheus

Executive Head: Marketing



Pre – Game

Pre-Game

The Game of Life can be played in two ways.

Famed, followed and admired Brazilian Author, Paulo Coelho believes ‘The Secret to Life’ is to

“fall down seven times – and get up eight times”

He could be right on the money – as the road known as ‘The School of Hard Knocks’ is certainly becoming an ever more popular one.

But, in this book I would like to share with you an alternative road to Human Greatness – a far easier one which can knock years from life’s learning curve – and help you to unlock and unleash your full potential – on your own unique chosen path from Good to Great to Greater :

It’s called taking heed of:

*“The School of Champions”
what the great champions know, yet coaches seldom teach*

It’s the stuff that you cannot Google, the stuff you will not find on the Internet, and the stuff they do not teach at Harvard!

The purpose of this book is help YOU to build your very own high performance culture of GREAT, by sharing with you: “21 Game Changers” – all of which are derived from the Great Champions of Business, Sport and Life.

Indeed every one of us is on our own unique journey through life, but definite and common patterns of human greatness do exist.

My wish is that between these pages, you’ll find the Insight, Innovation and Inspiration to make your professional and personal journey through life more fulfilling, more rewarding and more fun.

A success journey crammed full of abundant opportunity.

*A journey where the power is in your hands – inspiring that next level of
performance, growth and contribution*

Do let me know how your journey goes. Your feedback is more than appreciated.

I can be personally contacted at robopie@thegameplan.co.za

Best,

Rob Opie

For more information and further Insight, Innovation and Inspiration please do visit
www.thegameplan.co.za

Game Changer

Number One

Step Inside

Great

“Average is not where I want to be”

– Kelly Slater .11 times world surfing champion

At age 34, fourteen years after his first test, the 2015 Rugby World Cup proved to be the best swansong for Richie McCaw, the most capped All Black in history, the most capped player in history, and probably the greatest number seven the game of rugby has ever seen.

I recently took some time out on his last visit to Durban, to find out what has taken this legend to the very top of world rugby – and kept him there for so long.

At 18, his uncle and mentor John ‘Bigsy’ McLay asked him what he wanted to be in life. His answer: An All Black!

His uncle retorted:

“Richie, you do not just want to be an All Black, YOU want to be a Great All Black. Write it down, sign it, and put it up somewhere!”

John ‘Bigsy’ McLay

Richie could not bring himself to write it down in full – as he had not yet even made the national age group team – so he wrote it down on a McDonald’s napkin as G.A.B.

And signed it.

Back home, Richie pinned the napkin up high on his cupboard – where no one else could see it. It was his signed stairway to heaven – committed at eighteen with ‘Head and Heart’.

Using the prefix ‘Great’ before whatever it is you want to achieve in life, does something special.

It sets the stretch. It sets the commitment. And most of all it sets the tone for a high performance culture of great – the way things will get done.

It puts ‘winning against the odds’ before ‘winning at all cost.’

Human Greatness is far more than fleeting success. It’s longevity.

And it’s best captured by the three powerful S’s in great:

Sustained, Success and Significance.

Richie McCaw – with 16 years at the top of world rugby – an ordinary guy doing extra-ordinary things – a shining example of stepping up a notch – stepping inside of great.

“The thing that has made him a great player is his ability to want to get better – his game has evolved over time, hence why he is probably, if not the greatest we have had.” – All Black Coach Steven Hansen

In sport and in life – the Great Champions do more. They make next happen.

“The body will do what the minds says” – Richie McCaw

Key Insight

Using the prefix ‘GREAT’ commits and holds one to a journey of greatness.

Game Changer

Number Two

Mindset

matters most

*“I have always wondered why
somebody does not do something
about that. Then I realized that I was
somebody.” – Lily Tomlin*

Most of us are “heads down” daily – getting stuff done. And we have little or no time to sit down and consider what some of the world’s greatest entrepreneurs are doing.

What they are doing – is fast changing the way of the world. They’re

“Thinking Exponentially”

Steve Jobs first coined the phrase “Think Different “, and it has now spawned the next level of ‘game-changing’ human ingenuity – one of thinking exponentially. A world where $1+1=11$.

Consider South African born Elon Musk, Airbnb’s Brian Chesky, Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg, Whatsapp’s Jan Koum, LinkedIn’s Jeff Weiner, Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, Larry Page’s Google – now Alphabet and Uber’s Travis Kalanick.

Some call it X-ponentiality. Some call it ‘Drastic Disruption’. And some now refer to it as Uber-Cool or Uber-fication – which is best described as the:

“Slimming down of application interfaces into push button experiences.”

It’s the next level of consumerization. Industries which fail to innovate are at market share risk, as these ‘Game Changers’ leverage advanced talent and digital technology to deliver on more convenience – saving more time – and saving more effort.

Elon Musk believes he can cut the travelling time from Los Angeles to San Francisco by more than 90% with his hyper-loop plans. And now he’s focused on the world’s energy crisis, believing he can wean humanity off planet warming fossil fuels. At age 43, at the helm of SpaceX, Tesla Motors and Solar City – he’s only just begun.

Digital, coupled with ‘the network effect’, is the key driver of X-ponentiality. It’s fast changing the way of the world, and it’s no different right here in South Africa.

Consider what Christo Wiese, Johan Rupert, Koos Bekker, Jannie Mouton, Brian Joffe, Markus Jooste, Stephen Saad, Brian Molefe, Maria Ramos, Whitey Basson, Patrice Motsepe, Adrian Gore and other great South African based ‘Game-Changers’ are doing. They’re all fast changing the way things get done. They’re all

‘Exponentially Elevating Humanity’

And what do these ‘Game-Changers’ all have in common? They may well all be leveraging talent and technology to ‘*up the game – up the ante*’, but talent and technology can only take one so far.

They have a mindset where ‘*Head and Heart*’ is in the journey. They think exponentially and see a world where digital convenience is driving abundance.

At heart, they’re all fixers. They see the world’s biggest problems, as the world’s biggest opportunities.

And that’s a potent way to view life itself.

Key Insight

Mindset matters most – the great champions see problems as opportunities to shine.

Game Changer

Number Three

Branding Is
Everything

“The two most important days in your life are the days you are born and the day you figure out why”

— Mark Twain

"My advice: Invest in yourself."

– Warren Buffet

Everyone is in marketing and selling, whether we know it or not. Beauty, strength, intelligence, kindness, wealth, power are all ways we advertise our value as human beings.

But, there's a catch when it comes to unlocking and unleashing one's full potential in life.

And the catch lies in personal branding:

Branding is the "magical multiplier" which takes one's marketing and selling efforts to the next level.

And it's the great champions who seldom fail to leverage the three magical P's of branding – namely Purpose, Priority and Performance.

Let's take a brief look at how these power P's stack up to create a high level game plan – one which is 'made of the right stuff. '

*The first 'P' is **PURPOSE**.*

Coca Cola's purpose is to "create happiness." Disney's purpose is to "make children smile."

Starbucks purpose is to "inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup, one neighborhood at a time."

Google's higher purpose is "to organize and disseminate the world's information"

Great organizational brands are the ones that put purpose before profit, and it's the very same with great personal brands.

An estate agent's purpose is to elevate people's lifestyles. A hairdresser's purpose is to make people feel great. A doctor's purpose is to make people feel healthy.

Purpose happens when one's passion meets the universe's needs.

"When you have got purpose, everything becomes possible" – Lewis Pugh

Purpose is the bigger picture in one's life – it's the difference between motivation and inspiration – and it becomes the key ingredient of both priority and productivity.

*The second 'P' is getting one's **PRIORITIES** right.*

Priorities dictate one's destiny – and without doubt – getting one's priorities right – is one of the most important actions one can take in life. That's because a very fine line exists between human greatness and human implosion, especially when it's one's job to push the human limits – in business, sport and in life itself.

Yet, it's surprising how most people cannot clearly articulate their big five priorities in life.

Some out of ignorance, some out of fear and some because they cannot see the value in doing so. But, one only has to look at examples of sporting champions, like Lance Armstrong, Tiger Woods and even Oscar Pistorious – who were unclear on their priorities in life.

Clear priorities help one to make clear decisions in life – and even the greatest champions get it ‘humanly’ wrong at times – and pay a heavy price in real life.

While we are all unique human beings, definite ‘Patterns of Priority’ do exist for the great champions. Here are the common denominators I have found – and how one’s ‘Big Five’ priorities should be stacking up – to build a great personal brand.

Priority Number One is least understood by so many people. It’s placing ‘ONESELF FIRST’ – the ongoing investment in one’s personal brand, so that one can approach life from a ‘position of strength’. Hence creating the right platform – to be able to help others.

“Great Champions recognize that self-interest is central to one’s human design , but count the greatest gain as the goodwill of fellow humankind “- Bob Bulford

Priority Number Two is to be clear on ‘THE ONE THING’ in one’s life – hence one’s PURPOSE in life. It’s the one thing that one becomes expert in – so that one can positively impact and contribute to this world – imparting great knowledge – and making a significant difference.

*‘Every living being was born to accomplish certain purpose.
It’s the knowledge of that purpose that enables every soul to fulfill it.’
– Mohammed Ali*

Then follow the other priority investments in one’s life – one’s FAMILY & FRIENDS, one’s HEALTH & WEALTH and one’s desired LIFESTYLE.

It’s common to see ‘The Big Five’ for most of great champions to stack up as such.

They pay very close attention to all five of them – investing time and effort – knowing that they can easily be damaged, irrevocably scuffed or lost for life!

With one’s purpose and priorities in place, the third and final ‘P’ is

*The third and final ‘P’ is getting one’s **PERFORMANCE GOALS** right.*

The Great Champions keep the final ‘P’ simple, focused and most importantly – closely aligned to their purpose and priorities.

They guarantee focus – by setting no more than three clear current year goals.

And that means they are very clear on when to say NO – to all the things that are not part of their game plan.

Now one has the backbone of a focused high level GAME PLAN – one which is

“Made of The Right Stuff”

It combines Authenticity, Simplicity and Synchronicity. And it serves as one’s compass in good times, and one’s scaffolding in bad times.

Key Insight

Personal Branding provides the ‘inner’ magic’ – which multiplies the ‘outer’ magic.

Game Changer

Number Four

The One
Thing

*“If you choose two rabbits, you will
not catch either one”*

– Russian Proverb

At a dinner hosted by William H Gates, father of same Microsoft founder Bill Gates, for a number of hand-picked business champions, he asked them to write down on a piece of paper one word which they deemed was the one thing that determined their success and significance in business and life.

Two guests wrote the same word:

“Focus”

They were his own son Bill Gates and Warren Buffet – the two richest people in the world today.

“The most important thing I have learnt in life is to focus my energy on what is important in life.” – Bill Gates

An equally insightful and inspirational question is: What's the secret to life?

Personally, I'm a big fan of Gary Keller's version of “The Secret to Life,” which he reveals in his book: *The One Thing: the surprisingly simple truth behind extraordinary results*.

He believes “The One Thing” is the best approach to getting what one really wants in life. In order to get more, one must have less on one's plate.

Focus, Focus and then more Focus.

Success begets success when one narrows one's concentration to one thing.

*“The One Thing. Just one thing. You stick to that and everything else doesn't mean sh*t !” – Jack Palance in the movie City Slickers*

Malcolm Gladwell in his book *Outliers: The Story of Success* believes that the most important determinant of success is the 10 000- Hour rule. He reckons if anyone dedicated that much time to something, they would make a success of it.

He says talent and opportunities are abundant, but perseverance and hard work are what count in the end.

Human Greatness, defined in this book as “Sustained Success and Significance,” is commonly determined and driven by how narrow one can make one's focus.

Doing too many things, both personally and professional, is the sure fire fastest way to human implosion – the very opposite of human greatness.

Less is often more in the lives of the great champions.

Key Insight

Focus counts in Business, Sport and Life.

Game Changer

Number Five

Sell the

Sizzle,

not the

Steak

“There’s an art to focusing on what matters most”

– George Anders

Many years back Coca Cola research pointed towards 'New Coke' – to counter the loss of market share to competitors.

'New Coke' was seen as a better tasting formula. And when Coke CEO, Robert Goizueta had taken over back in 1980, he had pointedly told employees that there would be 'no sacred cows' in the way the company did its business – including how it formulated its drinks.

Coca Cola's executives believed Coke's one thing was "The Great Taste."

But, when they proceeded to launch 'New Coke', the facts had changed somewhat, and they had to fast change their thinking:

To hear some tell it, April 23 1985 was a day that will live in marketing infamy... spawning consumer angst and consumer unhappiness the likes of which no business has ever seen.

Overnight the Coke executives had created an American outcry. Millions of American consumers were made very unhappy overnight.

To their credit Coke immediately backtracked and reintroduced Classic Coke – realizing they had got it wrong. American's regarded Coke as an American tradition.

A realization that their 'One Thing' was not "The Great Taste," but a responsibility "to create happiness."

To this day, Coke is now clear that the sizzle lies in selling "Open Happiness."

Coke had learnt a valuable lesson– more focus needed to be placed on selling "the why," before "the what"

"Selling the sizzle, not the steak"

Yet another powerful example of this was the tobacco industry many moons back – before the cigarette advertising ban came into effect.

Lexington sold "Satisfaction." Paul Revere sold "The Saddle." Gunston sold "Great." Marlboro sold "Country." Camel sold "Adventure" and Peter Stuyvesant sold "Enjoyment – so much more to enjoy."

Powerful messaging connecting their brands through Heart and Head. Their "sell the sizzle, not the steak" strategy proved so successful that it's likely that it expedited their ban.

Today consumers often see right through advertising messages. They want to know even more about 'the why'. They want to know about sustainability. They want to know what the company behind the brand is all about. They want to know what the brand is doing to "give back".

This has spawned the phenomenal growth in sponsorships worldwide – as companies choose this preferred route to reinforce the brand's 'inner message' – and what the brand stands for.

In a world with ever-increasing product parity, the branding focus has shifted from "the what" to "the why"

Key Insight

It's becoming more and more important to sell "the why" – the narrative, before "the what."

Game Changer

Number Six

Conquer.

Do not fight

“I came. I saw. I conquered.”

— Julius Caesar, 46 BC

One thing is for sure – at some point in our lives we all have to face up to some form of adversity. Extreme challenge comes to all. Our mettle gets tested, and it's at times like these that it's best to take heed of what the great champions of life and health know, do and do not do to overcome some of life's greatest challenges.

Now that's never easy when one is gripped by emotion, so here's a game changer – one which the great champions always choose first:

'They choose to conquer, not to fight.'

Conquering means 'coming from a position of strength'. Fighting, on the other hand, often means 'coming from a position of weakness'.

And there's a huge difference, as in life:

"Ones ships come in over a calm sea" – Florence Shovel Shinn

Everest stands 8848 meters tall. Above 8000 meters climbers enter what is termed "the death zone" or "where helicopters do not fly." This is because at 8000 meters and above, the air is too thin for helicopters to fly rescue missions. You're on your own.

*'And all the great Everest explorers know one thing –
One cannot fight the mountain. One cannot bully Everest.
The mountain will always have the last word.'*

Tragically in the past 12 months alone, we have seen a number of incidents where Everest has taken the lives of those who have not taken heed – as recreational climbers pile on the commercial pressure to be on the mountain.

Everest teaches us many life lessons – when to be on the mountain and when to be off the mountain. Conquering Everest demands taking heed – listening to the mountain – working with the mountain – never against it. Sometimes one must make next happen. Sometimes one must let next happen. Choosing to fight the mountain often ends in tragedy.

The very same applies in the cancer wards of Albert Luthuli hospital in Durban. One cannot bully or fight cancer. Cancer Champions, who go on to conquer cancer, choose not to fight the disease. They take heed of the universal message, which is cancer. They make the necessary lifestyle changes and bounce back to live fulfilled healthy lives. They choose to conquer 'the mountain' called cancer.

Adversity sometimes demands something which the great champions refer to as:

A radical tactical shift: R.T.S

They know that when something is not working – it's wise to approach it from a different angle – by working with 'the mountain, not against it'.

Greater knowledge, hence greater levels of human awareness, becomes 'the game changer' to conquer adversity – in business, sport and life!

"Never fight a rip tide" – Shaun Tomson

Key Insight

Conquering means coming from a position of strength.

Game Changer

Number Seven

Turn Adversity

to Advantage

*“Adversity is the diamond dust that
heaven polishes its jewels with.”*

– Tomas Carlyle

What do American golfing sensation Jordan Spieth, British Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton and Canadian Olympic ski champion Alex Bilodeau all have in common?

They inspired through adversity. They turn adversity to advantage. It's what sets them apart.

For Spieth it's his younger autistic sister Ellie. For Hamilton it's his half - brother Nicolas, who has cerebral palsy. And for Bilodeau it's his brother Frederic, who also has cerebral palsy.

It is no coincidence then that an inspirational bond exists between high-achieving athletes and disabled siblings.

"Life's greatest setbacks often reveal life's greatest blessings"

While all three athletes compete in sports that encapsulate the notion of the international jet-set, they all still possess the same sense of grounding which comes through observing adversity close by. It comes from a home environment that reinforces a bigger picture; one that serves as a constant reminder of good fortune and inspired these champions to make the most of their advantages.

It's about taking every opportunity out there.

"He's my everyday inspiration, sometimes I wake up in the morning and it's rainy and I don't want to train or go out and ski. I look at my brother and if he had that chance he would go, he would grab it." – Alex Bilodeau

While Spieth is taking on Rory McIlroy, he finds inspiration and is driven by the thought that not every human is allowed his or her destiny. It then becomes a duty to take that test on. And humbly appreciate it.

"Golf is not my life – it is part of my life." - Jordan Spieth

Spieth often appears unruffled in the heat of battle. That nature comes, his family explains, from leading a domestic life that cannot promote him as the star of the show, no matter his own noble achievements.

His father Shawn giving him the following advice before he teed off on the final Sunday at Augusta.

"The Masters is the greatest game, but it's still a game".

Spieth, Hamilton and Bilodeau have the advantage of seeing the bigger picture.

Champions drawing strength from adversity – and turning it into an inspirational force – for the good of others.

Doing well – while doing good.

Entertaining, Educating and Enriching other people's lives through their god given talents.

Key Insight

The Great Champions see adversity as their friend – it inspires them to do more.

Game Changer

Number Eight

Simplicity

beats complexity

“Simplicity is the key to brilliance.”

– Bruce Lee

From finance to the latest growing trend of functional foods, professionals and marketers like to keep things complex in the belief that herein lies the road to greater margin – greater profits. Yes, this may well be true in the short term, but is it sustainable?

No, because someone great will change the way things get done.

Take Uber for example. Making things more convenient – simpler – Saving you time. Saving you effort. Saving you money.

In the United States, Tony Robbins – who has become “The CEO Whisperer,” is able to charge millions of dollars for his services because he has a unique ability to help CEOs.

To deconstruct complexity – to simplify highly complex subjects.

He says that complexity is the enemy of execution. And he's right.

Recently we have seen the phenomenal and sustained growth of Capitec Bank who made small loans simpler – empowering many more people to access finance in a historically complex industry. Their model has changed the way things get done. Their marketing slogan wisely latching on to what Leonardo da Vinci said many years back:

“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson put it as follows:

“Nothing is simpler than greatness, indeed, to be simple is to be great.”

Yet, in reality – often the very opposite happens. Teams go away on “Bos-beraads” and return with added complexity to the business – complexity breeding complexity. Game Plans begin to cram up with all “the wrong stuff,” and the road from ‘Good to Great to Greater’ starts to resemble what looks like the Dakar rally – of ups and downs in business .

Complexity often drives dis-engagement. And unity remains a distant dream.

Great CEO's, are those who can appreciate the complexity of things and go on to distil what they hear into simple focused strategy – establishing clear priority pillars for the business – it's called “The Right Stuff “.

To be clear and simple in thought and deed, to give direct and uncomplicated instructions, to take the shortest route to the finish line, to use five words when everyone else uses 50: these are all things that make for great.

“Any fool can make things complicated. It's hard to keep things simple”

– Richard Branson

Focus, in other words, simplicity, becomes one's productivity multiplier. Beware when complexity creeps into your professional and / or personal game plan for life.

“Simple can be harder than complex: You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But it's worth it in the end because once you get there; you can move mountains.” – Steve Jobs

Key Insight

Keep it simple.

Game Changer

Number Nine

Mavericks

with Mentors

“Nothing great is ever achieved alone”

Whether it's in business, sport or life, it's tough at the top - tough to get there and even tougher to stay there. It's here that mentorship plays a key role.

On claiming his third Wimbledon title, Novak Djokovic had this to say:

"I'm 28, I feel good. I don't feel old. I going to try and push my own limits and see how far I can go."

Djokovic paid special tribute to the support he received from his coach and mentor Boris Becker, himself a three-time winner at Wimbledon.

"In the tough times, Boris was there, as was the entire team - encouraging me to keep going, supporting me. That's a unity that keeps us together and allows us to experience these beautiful moments."

Djokovic was commenting on bouncing back from the bitter disappointment of losing a hard fought French Open final to Stan Wawrinka earlier in the year.

The player's box at Wimbledon reveals how carefully the champions pick their inner circles of trust. In Roger Federer's box was coach and mentor Stefan Edberg. When the going gets tough, the champions come back to the fire, not for coaching, but for mentorship.

Jim Rohn famously said:

"You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with."

It's no secret that the people around you can either make you or break you.

In golf it's no different. Tiger Woods seems to be a big fan of going it alone on the road called "The School of Hard Knocks," whereas Rory McIlroy prefers the far easier road of modeling the success of successful people. It's called taking heed of "The Great Champions".

He's recently forged a close mentorship bond with Jack Nicklaus, and even bought a house close to Mr. & Mrs. Nicklaus.

It's a win-win scenario for Jack too. It's called passing the torch, as there is something special in knowing that someone great is using one's ideas, one's thinking, one's wisdom – to become greater – and to go on to become genius.

Mentorship is an immensely powerful tool, especially if you're the World Number One!

Mentors are the ones who guard the fine lines of life – the fine lines between focus and obsession– between sportsmanship and gamesmanship– between attitude and arrogance – between pedestal and pit – between hungry and greedy – between winning against the odds and winning at all cost– between rut and grave – between genius and madman – between human greatness and human implosion.

Jason Day on winning the US PGA at Whistling Straits had this to say:

"If I didn't drive it as long and as straight as I did this week – there's no chance I would have won it by hitting it just average." – Jason Day at Whistling Straits

The great champions like to push the human limits.

Key Insight

At heart, the great champions are Mavericks, with Mentors.

Game Changer

Number Ten

Fortune favours

the brave

“Be brave. Be bold. Be first.”

In 2015, World Golf welcomed a new Super Star in 21 year old Jordan Spieth, who announced himself by winning back to back majors at Augusta and Chambers Bay. Judging by his spectacular performance at Chambers Bay, it looks like he is going to be around for a long time at the top of the world golf rankings.

"I'm just really fortunate to be on this side of it."
- Jordan Spieth on winning the 115th US Open at Chambers Bay.

Spieth seems to have all the aces up his sleeve to be World Number One - it's certainly within his own realm of possibility. It looks as if at age 21 he possesses a full bag of C's – what champions are made of:

Let's take a brief look – as they all apply in real life as well.

COURAGE:

Spieth has it – and more. He says he was fortunate at Chambers Bay - with Dustin Johnson missing two clutch putts on the 72nd. But moments earlier Spieth had birdied the very same hole.

CONQUER:

Chambers Bay is not a place for the feint hearted. At well over 7000 meters long, "basically unplayable" was how people described it. Whilst many golfers spent their time criticizing and complaining about the course, Spieth went about his business with a different mindset, with a game plan to conquer – not fight the course.

CHARACTER:

There's a funny thing about great champions. The greater they become – the more humble they become. At 21, Spieth seems humble beyond his years. Those close to him speak with great admiration and affection for the Texan who's inspired by a very close bond with his younger autistic sister. His feet are firmly on the ground, drawing strength from adversity.

CAPABILITY:

Spieth may not be the longest driver on tour, but his all round game is setting him up to be the World Number One. Capability is about creating and coming from a position of strength.

In Spieth's case, like with most of us, talent and technology can only take one so far, and then it comes down to practice, preparation, planning and process – both physical and mental.

CONSISTENCY:

Golf is a game of consistency. Spieth being one of only six players to ever win the Masters and US Open in the same year – no easy feat.

CERTAINTY and CONTROL:

Add certainty and control to consistency. They're something that champion golfers thrive on. But, they also know that every tournament, every course, every hole, every shot is different.

They grasp the notion of "controlling the controllables".

There's always an element of luck in golf. Maybe philosopher Lucius Seneca captured it best:

"Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity."

CONCENTRATION:

Champion golfers also grasp the fine line between the mental states of concentration and awareness. It keeps them fresh for when they have to step up to the plate. Spieth certainly did that at Chambers Bay – stepping up to birdie the 72nd.

Knowing when to concentrate, and when not to, preserves one's finite energy levels.

"Don't hurry, don't worry. Enjoy the roses along the way." - Walter Hagen

COMMITMENT:

Lewis Pugh, "the human polar bear," was once given the following powerful advice;

"If you're going to swim the English Channel – you must leave your doubt on the beach in Dover " - Lewis Pugh

Champions zone in on "the one thing – their one thing." Fear, Worry and Doubt are the poor cousins of Faith, Confidence and Belief.

CHALLENGE

Champions love challenge – they regard challenge as a building block. And they never allow challenges to turn into constraints. They take action – they make next happen.

CREATIVE INSTINCT

Champions clean out their inner minds – to allow the flow of their creative instinct – it's what elevates their game from great to genius.

It enables them to make those magic moments, those magic shots – when instinct simply takes over.

CONFIDENCE:

Conquering a monster course like Chambers Bay is never easy. It takes Faith, Confidence and Belief (F.C.B) – the hallmark of every great champion.

And Spieth seems to have a few other champion C's in his bag – he's Cool, Calm and Collected.

Exciting times ahead for world golf, as Jordan Spieth, Rory McIlroy and Jason Day seem to be fully capable of forming a tripartite domination, which was last witnessed with Palmer, Nicklaus and Player

Key Insight

Fortune favors the bold and the brave – be prepared.

Game Changer

Number Eleven

Control the

‘Controllables’

*“Success is achieved by focusing on
the process – not the result.”*

- Gary Kirsten

Many years back I attended an inspirational talk by Victor Vermeulen – a man who had his promising sporting career cut short by a freak accident that left him paralyzed at age 19 . Today he enjoys a promising career as a motivational speaker, motivating others, encouraging them to concentrate on what they do have, and to appreciate the small things in life.

I took an extremely valuable insight from his power presentation:

Control the 'Controllables'

So often we get it humanly wrong when we seek to control too much in our lives. Vermeulen had national colors well within his sights at age 19, and then suddenly it was taken away – out of his control. But, his forward journey in life wasn't.

Great Champions go on. When the going gets tough, they go forward.

“Control what you can control and spend no energy worrying about the things that are out of your control.” – Andre Agassi

Agassi has the view that someday, somewhere, someone will have your number. And that too much control often proves counter-productive in sport and in life. It's best not to chase the outcome, rather enjoy the journey.

Many great careers have faltered by chasing the outcome, chasing the game, too much control.

Tiger's obsession to become the World's Greatest Ever Golfer – by surpassing Jack Nicklaus's 18 Majors – has proved counterproductive by creating relentless self-defeating pressure on himself. It's what often leads to 'Burn Out', and sometimes can go as far as human implosion – as we have witnessed with other sporting greats.

There's no doubting that Tiger Woods is a golfing genius – and the golfing world would dearly love to see him back to his very best. But, sadly his current game plan is not working.

Maybe it's time for what the great champions call a “radical tactical shift” – and change the way things get done.

If Tiger's focus shifted away from controlling the outcome – and his self-destructive goal to become “the best ever golfer,” to rather one of focusing on the bigger picture of entertaining, educating and enriching others through his genius – then many more major wins could be within his realm of possibility.

Tiger is that good.

Champions – who play the game for the enjoyment, who express themselves with authenticity, who focus on the most valuable use of their time, and don't try to control the outcome and the game itself – will always do better in the longer run.

Key Insight

Focus on the journey – not the outcome.

Game Changer

Number Twelve

Bouncing

[back](#)

*“Stood alone on a mountain top,
staring out at the Great Divide. I
could go East, I could go West, and it
was all up to me to decide.”*

— Bob Seger

In her autobiography, Billie Jean King describes why great champions say:

“Pressure is a Privilege.”

It’s the privilege of being responsible, of carrying responsibility, or previously proving to others that one has what it takes to come through for them. It means that there is something expected of you. And it has the effect of eliciting talent, which under calmer circumstances could and would have lain dormant.

Often it is pressure that we most need – to achieve our greatest results.

But, for some it often works differently. We have all watched in sport as some crack under pressure, while others seem to step up to the plate and go on to reach the next level of great. They have the ability to snatch victory from the jaws of death, while others snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. They choke.

Yes, it certainly is tough at the top - tough to get there and even tougher to stay there. Tough when it’s one’s job to push the human limits. Being constantly hunted.

Every great champion knows about the ups and down of sport and life. Relentless pressure can create loss of form and can sometimes even lead to burn out – the inability to continue at the highest level.

But the great champions have a key weapon in their armory. It’s called resilience.

They know that the wheel turns. They never give up. They get back on the horse .And that means they know only too well – how to bounce back in sport and life.

Resilience is human buoyancy at its best.

In 2012 Rory McIlroy was in sync and could do little wrong. He shot to the top of the world golf rankings after winning the 2011 US Open and the 2012 USA PGA Championship each by a record 8 strokes.

Yet, at the 2013 British Open, his game had all but disappeared. He had gone winless the entire 2013, surrendering his number-one ranking to Tiger Woods and carding a horrific 79 in the first round of the Open. It was his worst first round at the Open by no fewer than 8 shots. Most golf experts blamed his slump on his move to a new club sponsor, but Rory finally admitted;

“It has nothing to do with technique and clubs, it’s all mental. I’m trying to concentrate, but I really cannot fathom it at the minute. It is a very alien feeling that I have never felt before.” – Rory McIlroy

Rory McIlroy took some time out to do what all the greats do. Make some tough calls:

Reflect, Refine, Refresh and Reboot.

Twelve months later he had bounced back and reclaimed the No.1 spot in world golf - a true great.

Key Insight

Great Champions take back the power, by making the tough calls in life.

Game Changer

Number Thirteen

Instinct

is the

ultimate force

*“I skate to where the puck is going to
be, not where it has been.”*

– Wayne Gretsky

In sport there exists something called:

“In the Zone.”

When Tiger Woods stood at the top of world golf for a nearly a decade, psychologist Steven Kosslyn had this to say:

In Tiger’s head there is an orchestra. And it’s not just that some of the orchestra players are virtuosos. A lot of them are. He has all the aces instinct becomes the ultimate force - Steven Kosslyn

Tiger Wood’s dominated world golf for a sustained period of time.

The very same can be said of 11 times world surfing champion Kelly Slater.

Now well into his 40’s he still competes at the highest international level. Some call Kelly Slater a freak of nature, but what helps a champion like Kelly Slater sustain such high levels of performance is the confluence of his mind, his person, his world, his purpose, his beliefs and his culture.

When mind, body and soul are in sync:

Instinct becomes the ultimate force.

Great Champions manage go to places that their competitors fail to reach. Experts believe that the average human being only taps into 10 % of their brain power.

This belief is based on the ice berg theory, where the human brain has three components, namely the sub conscious mind (the store), the conscious mind (rational) and the super- conscious mind (intuition / instinct).

Kelly Slater is renowned for his unrivalled competitive streak, his ability to read the situation, to read the ocean, to anticipate, and to win contests. It comes from accessing and leveraging all three components of the human brain – with the primary elevator being one’s intuitive super conscious mind (from with-in).

It’s called instinct. .

Some may just call it “a gut feel” for things , but the super conscious or instinctive mind can certainly become one’s powerful partner – creating a magical multiplier effect, which elevates performance from good to great to greater – and then on to genius.

With eleven World Surfing Titles to his name, Kelly Slater can arguably lay claim the title of the World’s Greatest Sport Champion.

It’s similar in real life where champions of business and life are those who can anticipate best.

It’s the advantage of knowing.

Some may call it expert. Some call it genius.

Key Insight

Great Champions anticipate. It’s called instinct.

Game Changer

Number Fourteen

Like

Attracts like

*“Every thought of yours is a real
thing – a force.”*

– Prentice Mulford

As human beings we have become fascinated by what science can do for us in real life. Yet in reality, science does not mimic real life. It contradicts.

One of the most powerful laws in physics is that opposites attract, but in real life one of the most powerful universal laws of life & health is that:

“Like attracts like.”

Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone summed it up as follows:

“When life is easy, you get lucky and everything goes well. When things start going wrong, they start piling up and going more wrong.”

It's the universal law of magnetic attraction in action. We send out human vibrations and the universe sends back “like” vibrations. This means we create our own life experiences. We act as our own life engineers, depending on how we feel, think and talk about life. We have the power to magnetically attract into our lives what we feel, think and talk about most of the time – negative or positive.

Our human-thought focus therefore directly affects the quality of our lives. We have the power to attract or repel any of life's multitude of opposites, for instance good or bad, success or failure, pain or pleasure, joy or sadness, pride or shame, win or lose, ease or dis-ease and even life or death. It's our gift of choice and nobody can change the way we think. Only we can.

“The quality of my thoughts is so important during these swims. If you start thinking; “Shit, I'm cold,” within a second it'll be digging into you.” – Lewis Pugh

The Universal Law of Attraction unfolds as simply as this:

Treat yourself as a first class citizen, and you will attract first-class results

The great champions of life all choose wisely to travel ‘first- class’ in life. They know that if they choose to travel in the third-class cabin, they will receive a third-class meal. The universe returns a first-class meal to those who choose to travel first class. It's the magnetic law of attraction in action where success begets success.

“It's funny about life. If you refuse to accept anything but the very best, you will very often get it.” – W Somerset Maugham

Mohammed Ali is probably best renowned for using words to positively impress the subconscious mind and affirm success, but how powerful were these words – spoken to Retief Goosen by mind- guru Jos Vanstipout, before his first US Open victory.

“The Black Mamba will strike. Nobody knows who Retief Goosen is. It will be sneak attack .Nobody will see it coming

Great Champions set up to win by focusing on what they do want in life, not on what they don't want in life.

Key Insight

We create our own life direction– and design . Our feelings, our thoughts and especially our chosen words have a powerful vibratory force.

Game Changer

Number Fifteen

Take

a balance

*“Our sports stars live on the edge and
taking a balance is nearly
impossible.”*

– Derrick Watts

A fine line exists between Human Greatness and Human Implosion. This is especially true when it is one's job to push the human limits. Some go on to achieve greatness, defined as sustained success and significance. Some burn out. And some even implode. The difference quite often comes down to one thing – one's ability to take a balance.

Finding and taking a balance is never easy, but the great champions of business and sport just do it. They even model it.

Firstly, let's take Raymond Ackerman's' "Four Legs of a Table" model for success.

What he's saying is that it's impossible to achieve sustained success and significance in life, unless one is clear on one's priorities in life. You are the tabletop, and the four legs of the table are your pillars of your success. Each one is of equal importance in creating the balance required to deliver optimal performance of the table.

Having a clear focus therefore makes all the difference. Steve Jobs said:

"People think focus means saying yes to the thing you've got to focus on. But that's not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are. You have to pick carefully." - Steve Jobs

Picking carefully means having a clear To-Do list and an even clearer To-Stop list.

Lance Armstrong employed a similar four legged model to conquer in life and in health – against all odds.

While some people choose to love him and some choose to hate him, there can little doubt that he has shared invaluable insight, innovation and inspiration with the world. In his book: *It's not about the bike*, he shared "the stuff of champions" – some of which went mostly unnoticed.

Seven times he won the Tour de France, albeit in a cycling era riddled with doping. He conquered the Pyrenees, but his greatest feat must still be how he conquered an even bigger mountain – a mountain called Cancer. Through Live Strong, he went on to become a hero to millions of cancer sufferers worldwide. His model employed four legs – it's a model commonly replicated, refined and used by many other great champions in business and sport.

Let's call it "The Champions Table," or the "The Stuff of Champions."

Here are some insights into a model which can be used in many real life situations to create balance – and to create success.

Table Leg one is RESOLVE: The Power of Human Purpose

Lance Armstrong has always maintained very high levels of resolve. Resolve comes from living life with purpose. And purpose is something far bigger than chasing down any goals. Winning the Tour de France is a goal. Entertaining, educating and enriching others' lives through one's God given sporting talent is a purpose. Conquering cancer is a goal. Educating, enhancing and enriching other cancer sufferers lives is a purpose.

Goals motivate one to do. Purpose inspires one to do. There's a big difference. When the going gets tough, it's resolve that keeps champions going. It's an ability to see the bigger picture. They never give up.

Table leg Two is KNOWLEDGE: The Power of Human Awareness

Malcolm Gladwell summed it up best with his 10 000-hour rule. If someone dedicates that much time to something, they would make a success of it. One becomes expert. And when one shares

the one thing that one is expert in – one's experiences – great value is imparted. It's the advantage of knowing.

Table Leg Three is SUPPORT: The Power of the Human Collective

Nothing great is ever achieved alone. All champions build powerful inner circles of trust and confidence. They leverage off other people's expertise and support. As they say, the Peloton allows one to achieve 40 % more.

Table Leg Four is GAME PLAN: The Power of Human Focus

Armstrong used the word "Hope" as the forth leg to his Champion's Table, but hope can be seen as another word for "nothing left to use." In reality Lance Armstrong went way beyond just hope

- he had extreme focus, and a high level Game Plan to conquer.

It's with the forth leg of the Champion's Table where one's Purpose, Priorities and Performance goals all come together to determine human greatness (or human implosion).

Sustained Success and Significance in life is determined by how well one can keep all four legs of "The Champions Table" balanced – how well one can play the game of life.

Many moons back at a university commencement speech, Brian Dyson, the CEO of Coca Cola at the time, had this to say about taking a balance. It's a speech crammed full of wisdom:

Imagine your life as a game in which you are juggling five balls in the air.

You name them - work, family, health, friends and spirit - and you are keeping all of these in the air.

You'll soon discover that work is a rubber ball .If you drop it – it will bounce back.

But, the other four balls are made of glass .If you drop these they will irrevocably scuffed, marked , nicked, damaged or even shattered .They will never be the same.

You must understand that and strive for balance in your life. Here's how:

Don't undermine yourself by comparing yourself with others .It is because we are different that each of us is special.

Don't set goals by what other people deem important. Only you know what is best for you.

Don't take for granted the things closet to your heart. Cling to them as you would your life for without them, life is meaningless.

Don't let your life slip through your fingers by living in the past or for the future. By living your life one day at a time, you live all the days of your life.

Don't give up when you still have something to give. Nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying.

Don't be afraid to admit that you are less than perfect. It is this fragile thread that binds us to each other.

Don't be afraid to encounter risks. It is by taking chances that we learn to be brave.

Don't shut love out of your life by saying it's impossible to find. The quickest way to receive love is to give, the fastest way to lose love is to hold and the best way to keep love is to give it wings.

Don't run through life so fast that you forget not only where you've been, but also where you are going.

Don't forget that a person's greatest emotional need is to feel appreciated.

Don't be afraid to learn. Knowledge is weightless, a treasure you can always carry easily.

Don't use time or words carelessly. Neither can be retrieved.

Life is not a race, but a journey to be savored each step of the way.

Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is gift.

That's is why they call it 'THE PRESENT “

Balance is the key to happiness and health.

Key Insight

Balance comes from getting one's Purpose, Priorities and Productivity aligned.

Game Changer

Number Sixteen

An Attitude

of gratitude

*“You make a living by what you get back,
but you make a life by what you give.”*

— Winston Churchill

The story of tennis great Andre Agassi is a fascinating and inspirational one.

Nicknamed “The Comeback Kid,” Andre Agassi was one of the world’s most beloved athletes and described by the BBC on his retirement as ‘perhaps the biggest worldwide star in tennis’s history - a tennis genius.

Possessing a lethal return of service and phenomenal hand-eye coordination that allowed him to take the ball early, Agassi is credited with helping revive the popularity of the game in the 1990s, with his flamboyant, unorthodox and non-conformist approach to tennis and life.

A life where he was constantly seeking balance and battling the complex nature of opposing forces. Self-destruction vs. self-preservation, love vs. hate, control vs. conflict, pain vs. gain, non-conformity vs. traditionalism, and risk vs. reward.

At age 25, Agassi was world number one, but by age 27 his professional and personal life had all but imploded, his world ranking slumping to 141. A chance meeting was to change the way he played the game of life.

“Andre, be careful with your decisions, Andre, be careful with your words, Andre, be careful with your relationships. André, we must all live our lives carefully.”

– Nelson Mandela

18 months later Agassi reclaimed the No.1 ranking in the world. Overall throughout in his career he held the top ranking for 101 weeks. Recently asked if he could bring something back to life, what would he choose? Agassi answered:

“The spirit of Nelson Mandela, which seems to be extinct.”

Madiba had sparked a remarkable metamorphosis in a remarkable champion. Agassi developed a deep appreciation for the game of tennis and the game of life.

“It took me decades to figure out that we are here to do - to do good quietly, to shine in secret, to give when no one is applauding, to give of ourselves to someone who can offer us nothing.”

- Andre Agassi

Agassi now runs a charitable foundation for underprivileged children in Las Vegas, where he lives with his wife, Steffi Graf, and their two children. PHILAN-THROPY is high on his hierarchy of values. It’s what many on the great champion do. They shift the letter ‘H’ to read PHILAN-TROPHY.

They give back the TROPHY – knowing that while self-interest will always be central to human design, the greatest gain in life is the goodwill of fellow human kind.

“ It’s no accident that tennis uses the language of life: service, advantage, break, broken and love.” – Andre Agassi

Agassi is now recognized as one of the most charitable and socially involved ex-players. It is claimed that he is the most charitable athlete of his generation.

With an ‘attitude of gratitude’

Key Insight

Great Champions know that the universe conspires to help those who conspire to help others.

Game Changer

Number Seventeen

The Power

of the Peloton

“Izandla Ziya Gizana “

*- a Zulu saying meaning
“hands wash each other.”*

The Tour de France is no easy race. The modern editions of the tour consist of 21 grueling stages over a 23-day period and cover around 3,500 kilometers. And they say there are days at the Tour de France when one would consider swapping non-vital organs for a bit of shade.

One thing is for sure – it's 21 days of intense competition where the champion riders, dogged by constant scrutiny and continuing doping allegations, seek to find and apply leverage in many different legal formats.

“Leverage defined as the ability to do more – with less.”

One of these forms of leverage is the Peloton (from French, meaning little ball or platoon). The purpose of the Peloton is to do more with less – hence creating a

“Elastic Band Effect – up to 40 % say sports scientists.

It's all about the team – alignment and synchronicity creates the magical multiplier.

In many ways it's the same in real life: T.E.A.M standing for “Together Everyone Achieves More.”

By riding close to other riders (drafting, slipstreaming and particularly behind), the reduction in drag is dramatic.

Up to 40 % say sports scientists.

The peloton travels as an integrated unit (similar in some respects to birds flying in formation) with each rider making slight adjustments in response to their adjacent riders. Riders at the front are exposed to higher loads, and will tend to slip off the front in order to rejoin the pack farther back. A fluid formation often results in a situation where the center of the peloton appears to be pushing through its own leading edge.

The Peloton mimics strategies and tactics used in real life situations – and having to adapt to constant change.

A strong headwind or a hard effort tends to spread out or string out the riders, while a slow tempo or tailwind tends to bunch up the peloton into a wider formation. Side wind forces the peloton to form into echelons in the direction of the wind.

Often, the width of the road forces the peloton to form several echelons. When two or more groups of riders want to contest control of the peloton, several lines may form racing one another. It's always advantageous to be close to the front of the peloton.

One reason is to avoid being affected by the “elastic band effect” in which a change in speed becomes amplified as it propagates to the back of the peloton – often resulting in wipe outs.

All types of team dynamics come into play as teams seek to create competitive advantage and deliver their lead rider to the bottom of the first big Pyrenean climbing stage – fresher than any rivals – and with the opportunity to let loose.

It's the power of the Peloton. It's called leverage.

Key Insight

The power of “the human collective” in business, sport and in life can never be underestimated.

Game Changer

Number Eighteen
A Spirit of

abundance

“There will always be another wave.”

- Shaun Thomson

Watching Schalk Burger, at age 32, recently lead the Springboks out to a full- house Ellis Park was something special. It shows that the great champions never stop believing. Their realm of possibility lives on despite some of life's greatest challenges.

Tipped to become the Springbok captain on the retirement of John Smit, Schalk Burger had the world at his feet – except he participates in a game where injuries are part and parcel of the game!

Schalk's story is one that legends are made of – having come back from a potentially career ending neck injury to be part of Jake White's World Cup winning team in 2007. Game after game he put his body on the line and gave it his all.

But, it was a bout of injuries, starting with a knee injury in 2012 that was to really test his mettle. A back scan revealed a cyst on his spine, which needed to be drained. It was during the draining operation that Schalk contracted a hospital bug, which led to bacterial meningitis placing him in isolation for 5 days. Schalk was engaged in his fiercest battle yet – the battle for his life.

Most people believed that this time, it was the end of the road for this legendary Springbok talisman. But Schalk was not having anything of it. Doctors had told him he would never play rugby again. Burger refused to take that verdict to heart. Instead, he took it as a challenge and climbed back on the horse. Remarkably he'd found his way back into Heyneke Meyer's Bok squad, coming off the bench at Newlands to inspire a second half driven victory over the Wallabies. Six months later he delivered another 'Man of the Match' performance at Twickenham.

The Incredible Schalk was back – earning him the Laureus World Comeback of the Year award in 2015. And in July 2015 he became the 55th Springbok captain – leading from the front against the All Blacks.

Every sport loving South African knows that his recognition at the recent Laureus Awards was not solely about his come- back story, but more about his humble way – from rugby great to human great. Schalk plays and lives the game right.

A great South African who believes that nothing is impossible.

“Before I got injured and ill - rugby played a massive part in what I was and what I did. It dominated life. After that life got put into perspective for me.”

- Schalk Burger

It seems that the greater they become – the more humble the great champions become. Behind it lies “the spirit of abundance.”

The focus is never lack, but rather the profusion that is possible – a belief that there will always be another wave.

Key Insight

In an abundant world – opportunities abound.

Game Changer

Number Nineteen

No Health.

No Wealth.

“The idea in life is not to become the richest man in the cemetery.”

There exists a fine line between human greatness and human implosion. Often the loss of one's health is the price that is paid when one pushes the human limits too far.

So, here's some of the most valuable insight on health and life – which I have discovered to date. Surprisingly, it did not come from the medical fraternity. It came from a sporting legend – one of Great Britain's greatest ever middle distance athletes:

“We all have a finite amount of energy. Whether you use physical or mental energy it all comes from the same source. Wherever you focus your energy you're either filling or depleting the same well.” - Sir Sebastian Coe

It follows that it's our job to make sure that one's human energy well never runs dry.

Here's how.

The human well, wellness, or wellbeing has three buckets, each one of equal importance – namely physical, chemical and emotional buckets. Physical, is what we do with our bodies. Chemical is what we put in our mouths, and emotional is what we put in our hearts and heads.

Thankfully the genius of modern medical science has made us all pretty adept at how to fill our human energy well from the physical and chemical buckets. We know how much sleep and rest we need. We know how much exercise we need. We know which foods agree with us, and those which do not. And Prof Tim Noakes seems to keep us all on our toes with the latest on nutritional thinking. Our bodies even have wonderful feedback mechanisms to help keep us balanced in the physical and chemical realms of life and health. We know what to take in. But, it's never that simple in the emotional realm.

Surprising very few people grasp how our emotions can turn toxic.

Negative emotions 'taken in' and harbored long term can kill.

Often this is where human implosion happens. Unwittingly or habitually, we continue to drain the human energy well from the emotional bucket, creating an on-going state of imbalance. A tipping point is eventually reached and breached – and the human energy well runs dry. The body moves from a state- of- ease to a state of dis-ease.

Here are a few valuable pointers to keep one's human energy well filled to the brim – and yourself on the road of ease, as opposed to the road of dis-ease.

To fill up the human energy well using the emotional bucket – one should focus one's life on the 'Big Five' positive emotions, namely;

Unconditional Love, Gratitude, Acceptance, Forgiveness and Happiness/ Joy.

They Energize! They're life's greatest healers.

And be sure to steer well clear of life's Big Five 'negative emotions' – namely;

Resentment, Guilt, Criticism, Hate and Futility/Self-Pity.

They Drain! If held long term, they turn toxic – and become life's greatest killers. Ultimately, it's a human choice as to how one manages one's human energy well on one's journey through life – to happiness and health.

Key Insight

Live. Love. Learn. Leverage and Laugh – it's the best medicine.

Game Changer

Number Twenty

Faith, Confidence

And Belief

*“Fear is countered with its inverse – namely
Faith.”*

Durban born big wave surfer Grant “Twiggy” Baker, who’s twice won at the infamous Mavericks in California and is a Big Wave World Surfing Champion, displays the ultimate “stuff of champions” – it’s called

*“Faith Confidence and Belief:
F.C.B*

Some might just call it “Gigantic Brass Balls:” G.B.B

Baker is no ordinary guy. He’s a hunter, an extreme big-wave hunter. He surfs waves that weigh a few tons, reach three stories high, blow eardrums, wipeout towns, crunch bones and sometimes even take lives. Baker participates in a sport where waves are not measured in feet, but increments of fear. It’s the ultimate in extreme challenge – to win against all the odds.

“Fear is always there. It’s something you learn to conquer, bit by bit. Big wave-surfing isn’t something you just pick up in a few days; you need to work your way up to the bigger stuff. Most of the famous big-wave surfers are between 30 and 40 years old, and that’s because they have worked their way up to the level they are now. I train hard so that I’m confident in my physical abilities and in the mental preparation that I’ve done.” – Twiggy Baker

Baker conquers fear with its inverse – and that’s called faith.

Faith in his own ability to deliver – and a realization that there exists a greater force in the Universe than himself.

“It’s not all about surfing- to give back is more important at this time of my life.”

Baker wants to be part of that integral force. He builds extreme confidence through extreme training, and an inert ability to read the ocean – to be in sync with nature.

It’s important in his game as:

“In big wave surfing, the next set can easily be your coffin.” – Bruce Jenkins

It takes something special to put your life on the line every time the big swells roll in at the world’s famous big-wave breaks. You need to be ultimately prepared to go all the way. Apart from unwavering commitment, Baker’s secret weapon is his planning and preparation – what he describes as his “free diving training programme.”

“It’s hectic – it normally leaves me lying on the side of the pool for a very long time. But it also provides me with the confidence to be underwater when things go wrong and to know my limits. You aren’t normally under for longer than 45 seconds to a minute, but you learn to calm down and trust in your own ability. I have worked my way up to breath holds of five minutes, which really helps in the long run.”

Great Champions go in ultimately prepared with very high-level Game Plans. Hours and hours of physical and mental preparation means that they expect to conquer. Twiggy Baker trains to win titles and sometimes to save his own life. He sets up to win.

“I don’t exercise for the sake of exercising; I do it because I love it – I look at every session as a learning curve and a stepping stone to the next level of performance,

and I guess life is just like that. Listen, look and learn, because you're never as good as you think you are."

Twiggy Baker, an ocean warrior and a great champion in a lesser known sport – and life, inspires others to believe that. And that nothing is impossible.

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

— Theodore Roosevelt

Key Insight

F.C.B. – the hallmark of every great champion.

Game Changer

Number Twenty One

The Discipline

of execution

*“The pain of discipline is measured in ounces .
The pain of regret is measured in tons”*

- Jim Rohn

Strategy is important, but execution is everything. Great Champions follow through.

In his book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins revealed the importance of a disciplined culture – disciplined people who engage in disciplined thought and take disciplined action – deliver greatness. Those who don't – deliver mediocrity.

While every great champion breeds a culture of discipline, some do stand out as shining examples of execution – and achieving sustained success and significance in sport and life: Gary Player is famously quoted as saying:

“The harder I practice, the luckier I get.”

But in reality, Gary Player is renowned as much for his dedication to the principles of excellence as he is for his golfing accomplishments. He is recognized worldwide as an uncompromising perfectionist who settles for nothing but the best. His impeccable set of values, stringent regimen of health and fitness, and insistence on quality, have earned him admiration the world over.

Travelling the globe, The Black Knight Player has been involved in projects all over the world – travelling more than 25 million kilometers, winning more than 165 tournaments worldwide, designing over 325 golf courses, breeding over 2000 thorough-bred race horses, writing or co-writing 35 books, and raising millions of dollars in funding for impoverished children worldwide. Now that is execution par excellence.

Gary Player had a burning desire for doing more, and giving back. But, what truly astounded me about Mr. Player was a small defining moment – another hallmark of great champions.

After reading my first book entitled *The Game Plan*, he found time to pick up the phone, to chat, to compliment and to encourage myself to do more – to do more to help others – and to do more towards building a better and better South Africa.

How he finds time to do that - is something special?

“Rest is Rust. I am as busy as ever as I see that there is so much to do in life. My passions for life are what keep me going.” – Gary Player

And here's one more example of great.

Sebastian Coe in his book *The Winning Mind: What it takes to become a True Champion* describes how on one bitterly cold Christmas day he got up and ran 12 miles. He returned home feeling pretty pleased that he had done well.

But after lunch his mind turned to his major opponent Steve Ovett and he began to worry, thinking Ovett would be out running his 2nd session of the day. This worry was enough to make him get changed into his kit and get out and run a 2nd session in the snow and ice. Great Champions believe in doing at least one thing every day no one else is willing to do.

Just one thing. After one week, they become good. After one month they become great. After one year they become greater. Some go on to become genius.

Gary Player and Sebastian Coe – two shining examples of what it takes.

“DIN & DIP: Do It Now and Do It Properly.” - Greg Norman

Key Insight

Great Champions do more. They go the extra mile.

Game Changer

one more

Life-long

learning

*“If you’re green you grow – if you’re
ripe you rot.”*

We live in the most technologically advanced society that mankind has ever known, yet as much as things seem to change – they stay the same.

One such thing is the desire that most of us all share - our desire to reach the next level of performance, growth and contribution.

Great Champions call it sustained success and significance, or put more simply,

“Doing well, to do good ”

It lies at the heart of every high level game plan – the science and art of playing the game right.

But, to do this we need to do what the great champions do. They never stop learning – ‘taking heed’ from those who have gone before – taking those key lessons to the next level

“A moment’s insight is sometimes worth a life’s experience.” - Oliver W. Holmes

Indeed, the only real antidote for this frenetic pace of change is to never stop learning, and to continually

Re-fine, Re-fresh and Re-boot.

The best way to do that is as Warren Buffett puts it:

“Read, read and when you're tired, read some more.”

So here are my top 21 picks – books which share insight, innovation and inspiration - and impart great value.

- The One Thing: Gary Keller
- Four Seasons: Peter Bregman
- What they do not teach you at Harvard Business School: Mark. H. McCormack
- The Four Legs of the Table: Raymond Ackerman
- How to win when life is unfair: Larne Neuland
- The Right Mind for Golf: Rene Kurensky
- Let’s do it. Richard Branson
- The Game of Life: Florence Schovel – Shinn
- 21 Yaks and a Speedo: Lewis Pugh
- Half Time: Bob Buford
- The Power of Positive Living: Norman Vincent Peale
- The Values Factor: Dr John de Martini
- Surfers Code: Shaun Tomson
- The Outliers. Story of Success: Malcolm Gladwell
- Pipe Dreams: Kelly Slater
- Think and Grow Rich: Napoleon Hill
- The Secret: Rhonda Byrne
- Good to Great: Jim Collins
- Pressure is a Privilege: Billie Jean King
- Inspiring Champions: Henning Gericke
- The Alchemist: Paulo Coelho

Key Insight

Never stop Learning.

in Closing

The Game
goes on

*“Predicting rain doesn’t count. Building arks
does.” - Warren Buffett*

Human Greatness? Can it be equally measured?

Throughout this book I have ascribed human greatness as to achieving:

“Sustained Success and Significance in life “

However, modern society places a heavy emphasis on money as a measure of greatness. Yes, money is important, and it's a great enabler, but it has never been an accurate measure of human greatness. How does one even begin to compare Bill Gates with Mahatma Gandhi, or Warren Buffett with Mother Theresa?

They are all human great in their own special way.

Human greatness happens when one's passion and purpose meets the universe's needs. One becomes an expert at that 'One Thing', and it's when one chooses to share that expertise with the world, that great value is imparted. It can be on a world-wide scale, or it can be in one small corner of the world.

It's because we are all different, that we all have the opportunity to be human great.

On returning from circumnavigating the world in a single expedition from 1577 to 1580, one of Francis Drake's sailors was asked this about his worldly possessions:

‘You have nothing after so much time and effort?’

The sailor's reply was:

‘No, I've not made much, I've been cold, I've been hungry, shipwrecked, desperately frightened, but I have been with the greatest captain who ever sailed the seas ‘

I believe, Human Great comes from creating, building and delivering on

“Win - Win Scenarios”

Theodore Roosevelt told Americans that:

The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.”

If we can all do that daily, then this world will be a better place for it.

Every one of the remarkable people mentioned in this book has inspired and influenced me to do that. This book is therefore my gift of opportunity to you. Please do pass it on to whoever you deem will find value.

And I do hope that, somewhere between these pages, you have found that 'silver bullet' which can help to make your journey through life, to be one of greatness.....

‘Putting the Power firmly in your Hands’

Thank you.

The Author

More about

Rob Opie



Rob Opie , B.Business.Science : UCT, is the founder of The Game Plan - a Strategic Brand Consultancy, Brand Strategist, Key Note Speaker, Author and ' The Greatness Coach' to organizational teams and individuals.

Running in Rob's blood are People, Brands and Turnarounds.

He inspires and helps PEOPLE to reach the next level of GREAT.

A 'corporate entrepreneur' at heart , Rob has worked extensively in the dynamic South African FMCG / Food business environment – for both leading South African companies, as well as multinationals - in Brand Development , Sales and Business Category roles.

He currently contracts and consults to organizations and individuals– helping them to build a culture of great.

Recently he has taken his new business ventures into online education through his ground-breaking and game- changing' initiative:

“Growing South Africans Great “

It's playing a small role in helping to shape the future of online education in South Africa, and already it's changing lives – helping people to improve their lives – helping people to do life better.

Having recently published his third book: The Game Changers: Good to Great to Greater, Rob now delivers his Individual and Corporate Greatness Programmes to select audiences who want to make next happen.

Those who want to be Game -Changers. Those who subscribe to

‘A CULTURE of GREAT’

To find out more please do visit www.thegameplan.co.za

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This book is dedicated to my two champions, Shane on turning 21 and Brandon 19.

First published electronically by The Game Plan: TGP MEDIA in 2015

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The Game Plan is a Durban and Johannesburg based Specialist Brand Consultancy

Website: www.thegameplan.co.za

Cover design, graphics and website thanks to Marc and Brittany:

Collectiv (Durban): www.clctiv.com

Thank you to all the great champions who selflessly shared their esoteric knowledge and collective wisdom contained within these pages – without you *The Game Changers* would not have happened!

And special thanks to all those who have contributed with their invaluable time, input and support.

Thank you Gavin Varejes. Thank you Doug Mattheus. Two Great South Africans.

ISBN 978-1-4314-2098-8

Edit and layout by Collectiv

Umhlanga Rocks

South Africa

Set in Berkeley Old style 9.8/13.5pt

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