

Peace, Prosperity
and the Courage
to Change
Course in Life
and Business

**MILLION
DOLLAR
FLIP FLOPS**



RODRIC LENHART

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Peace, Prosperity, and the Courage to
Change Course in Life and Business

RODRIC LENHART

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DEDICATION

*“All the art of living lies in a fine mingling of
letting go and holding on.”*

—HAVELOCK ELLIS

Arriving in Tokyo late one night, I knew the next day wouldn't be easy.

We'd spent the last month or so on sabbatical in Southeast Asia as I was writing this book, and on this particular day, it was time for the dedication.

In a brand new city, I pulled up Google and searched for a nearby coffee shop, and immediately Beck's Cafe appeared. I would expect nothing less.

This book is dedicated to my late mother, Beckey Lenhart, who passed away in November 2020. A teenager at heart, she died unexpectedly just before her seventieth birthday. Far too young.

Though we grew up with little money, I never felt a lack. Mostly thanks to my mother's huge heart. She had no formal business acumen, yet she encouraged my entrepreneurial spirit from a young age. She instilled in me a knowing that anything was possible... as long as you were willing to work for it. And that failures aren't losing. They are the only pathway to winning.

She taught me to value my time above all else, the free yet priceless commodity we can neither save nor get more of once it's spent.

When I had a crazy new “business plan,” she always helped make it possible with ideas, support, and love... not money.

When I started my first small business at seventeen—the first official one, anyway—she made a little corkboard with the business name handwritten on top with a Sharpie. Forever my #1 fan.

While she was never able to travel much, she made sure I saw the world through the occasional trips over the border to Canada or Mexico to experience other cultures. When I was thirteen, she spent money she didn't have to send me to Europe with the “rich kids” on a school trip. Now forty-eight countries later, I wonder how different life may have played out had she not lit that fire inside me.

So this one's for you, Mom. I only wish you were here to see your boy living a life he never dreamed was possible, but something tells me you're right here as I type these words.

Shall we begin our journey together?

See you inside.

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INTRODUCTION

‘What If My Whole Life Has Been Wrong?’

In Leo Tolstoy’s *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, the main character, Ivan, on his deathbed, looks up at his wife and says, “What if my whole life has been wrong?”

It’s a frightening question but one we must ask frequently to avoid having the wrong answer creep up on us before it’s too late.

In my short four decades or so on this earth, I’ve noticed that most of us live in a series of reactions.

React. React. React. Die.

Having never really examined, at the deepest levels, *why* we make any decisions at all.

Sure, we might put pen to paper and scribble out a pros and cons list occasionally. We might ask a few friends for their opinions on the matter. We might even consult the “great books” of the ages for guidance.

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How many of us, however, possess a personal guide, a constant point of reference? An individual North Star to lead us through every difficult decision we face, whether it's personal or business-related?

How many of us are equipped with a customized tool, tailor-made for our needs, that enables us to make massive changes with ease, self-assurance, composure, and poise?

Who among us doesn't desire to reduce anxiety, improve our relationships, and live more balanced, adventurous, and purposeful lives? Questions that hardly require an answer.

From a young age, ideas are ingrained in us:

- Seek security at all costs.
- Keep moving up and up and up.
- Bear the weight of your exhaustion.
- Count your blessings.
- Don't complain.
- Never be a quitter.

Do you ever ponder if how we have been taught to spend our days could ever bring true fulfillment? Have you ever taken real time to examine what exactly it is you do every day and in which direction those habitual activities are leading you?

We all have the answer deep inside, but it's locked away. We just require the tools to fashion the key that will open the door to what we *really* want from this life.

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Do you have a Statement of Purpose? Do you know why every company has a mission statement?

Do you have a values list you turn to—in ranked order—when facing major life decisions? Even though we just met, can you guess what my top three values might be? Do you see why knowing someone else's values may be beneficial? Whether they are an employee, a friend, or your partner?

This is just the very beginning of the journey I take with my coaching clients, but it starts with the first call. It's that important. The baseline for all the other work we do together.

Your Statement of Purpose (SOP) and Values List are used to make sure what you are doing is aligned with who you want to be in the world. It defines how you want to show up for your partner, your friends, your family, your business, and most importantly, yourself. These tools, when refined, build in us the courage to make massive shifts when needed with patience, confidence, and grace.

This work doesn't guarantee—but is guaranteed to assist in—assuring that when you are in the final moments of your life, you don't look at those surrounding you and say, "What if my whole life has been wrong?" You'll arrive at the end knowing, deep down, that you lived your life on purpose.

While my private work is mainly with entrepreneurs, and as such, it's the basis of many references in the following pages, the tools we develop here can be used by anyone at any stage of their life. We are all in business; sometimes, that work

just looks like the business of relationships or family versus the business of heading your department or running your company. The core principles all remain the same.

Jack and Diane

In my coaching practice, my typical client falls into two categories—let’s call them Jack and Diane.

Diane

Diane has had what most would call a happy and successful life. She goes to work, lives comfortably, takes a couple of vacations a year, and enjoys the simple things. But one day, she looks around and discovers that she has never really made her own decisions.

She’s always done what was best for her parents, her friends, her partner, and now her children. She had a vision when she was younger of what her life would look like 20 or 30 years from now as an adult—and while her current situation is “fine,” she wants more. She wants to bring her long-held dreams back to life, the pieces of that beautiful future she had imagined as a girl that had been put aside again and again—before it’s too late.

Diane knows she wants more from life but doesn’t know exactly what that is or where to begin. She just has that uneasy feeling that she has more to offer the world. She needs help

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pulling all of that to the surface in an orderly way and building the confidence to take action.

Jack

Jack has been successfully self-employed for most of his adult years, dabbling in the construction trades and eventually starting a roofing company. By all measures, he has a thriving and successful business. He provides for his family, makes his own schedule, and can take his business in any direction he chooses.

Five years into his growing firm, he finds himself being pulled in 1000 different directions. Every day is a blur, putting out fires, trying to beat last year's numbers, knowing he needs help if he wants to grow, but unsure who to hire for what role. His days aren't planned; they unravel. He's anxious with every phone call, not knowing who or what will be on the other end of the line.

Jack is presented with a unique opportunity to scale his company by starting a location in a second city a few hours away with a family member. But he's not sure that's what he really wants. He didn't start his business to grow for growth's sake. He wanted freedom. Financial freedom and time freedom, and he is already struggling with the latter.

Jack needs someone or something to help him know if this decision, and many others in his life and business, are "right."

Where are we going? No idea!

It seems so simple. We rarely leave on a long road trip without a map or destination. Imagine just hopping in the car with nothing but a great idea about vacationing and a pile of positive affirmations.



Yet, for the last twenty years, I've seen those around me do this again and again and again.

Do you know someone who's followed this mapless path? Maybe intimately?

Perhaps it's my background in building houses, my passion for restoring classic cars, or that I've spent the better part of my adult years planning extensive world travel that it all seems so second nature. In the past few years, I have traveled around the world twice — once toward the East and once toward the West. How many maps were required for these journeys?

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Starting with the end in mind, knowing exactly where we want to go makes perfect logical sense. Yet we don't do it.

Why?

Perhaps you're an entrepreneur in the trenches like I have been, suddenly finding yourself two to three years into your *dream* business, and you're no more excited to get up in the morning than when you had a "job."

Perhaps you've settled into that comfort zone where you know your situation *could* be better, but it's not bad enough yet to encourage that first step. Or you think you want to be your own boss, and you're just starting to get that dream down on paper. These words are for you.

PS—Whatever you do, avoid the comfort zone! Our comfort zone is where our dreams go to die.

If you think you want to start a business, you're in good company. There are over 500,000,000 entrepreneurs in the world. In the US, 5.1 Million new businesses were started in 2022 alone¹. Being your own boss and becoming an entrepreneur is all the rage these days. But it's not for everyone. Most will fail. Of those who succeed, many won't be happy if and when they do. Sadly, they likely won't even know why. You and I are here to fix that, building a roadmap to *your* destination but, most importantly, knowing *why* you're heading there in the first place.

1 <https://www.oberlo.com/blog/entrepreneur-statistics>

Entrepreneurs are simply built differently than the rest of the population. And we talk about some of those qualities at length in these pages. I like to think of entrepreneurs as modern-day adventurers, those brave souls who left land behind for uncharted new worlds, for possibility.

Just as explorers must be bold, adventurous, and willing to take risks, entrepreneurs must be ready to venture into unknown territory, make calculated decisions and innovate to succeed. They also need a strong sense of direction, a clear vision, and the ability to adapt to changing conditions, much like how explorers navigated using the stars and a compass. Sometimes they are forced to change course. Sometimes they must abandon the journey altogether. The journey you and I are about to take is designed to build the tools, from the inside out, that allow us to make these tough decisions with confidence and ease.

Some think that being an entrepreneur and becoming the captain of your ship is an instant ticket to happiness. For many, that dream never comes to fruition.

With your newfound freedom to direct your course as you choose comes myriad challenges, or “mountains and monsters,” as I call them. You’ll likely put out more fires in a week than most executives do in a year. There is nobody else to blame, ever, for the results of your life or your business. Often, you have nowhere to go for advice other than the space between your ears.

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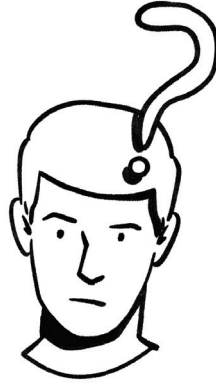
Many aren't prepared to handle that level of accountability. I want to ensure that you're equipped to do so. When the inevitable challenges arise, I want you to have the confidence to dive deep and examine if it makes sense for you to handle them in the first place. If you need to make significant changes in your personal or professional life, I aim to provide you with the unique tools to make those brave choices... repeatedly. The hard choices. The necessary choices.

Everyone Wants to Eat—Nobody Wants to Hunt

If you're reading this book, I will assume you're one of the few who *do* versus the many who *talk*. You're smarter than the average bear — or you wouldn't be sitting down with these words, hoping to gain an edge in your life or business. So for that, I commend you. You're here to hunt.

I hope this book shifts your perspective on your business and subsequently impacts your life. Happy business — happy life, as it were. It's time we start with *that* as our goal before we ever open the doors to our first customer. If we do, it's a win-win proposition for us all.

Is this book for you?



Maybe....

This book is for you if:

You feel trapped in your own business or life and need to see the way to freedom.

Significant decisions in your personal and professional life are causing you anxiety.

You're ready to take control and develop a North Star to guide all your decision-making.

You desire greater self-confidence in creating the life and business you deserve.

You're ready to embrace vulnerability and put in the work to bring your true self to the surface.

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You're ready to put the power back in your hands, step up, and take charge of your life.

You *know* you need to make a shift but need the tools to ensure it's "right" and the courage to take that first step.

What this book is *not* is some get-rich-quick scheme. It wasn't designed for those that prefer just to read positive affirmations all day without taking action toward change.

If you're happy with "good enough." If you're "comfortable." If you aren't willing to be 100% honest about where you are and where you *really* want to go, while I hate to say it—your time is likely better spent elsewhere—at least at this moment.

My educated guess is that you fall squarely into the "for you" category. It's not that I can see the future, but anyone who buys a book with this title and has made it even this far is already part of my tribe.

Welcome!



HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

“Although the road is never ending, take a step and keep walking, do not look fearfully into the distance... On this path, let the heart be your guide, for the body is hesitant and full of fear.”

RUMI

I recommend that you take this book in chunks. Read a chapter or a section. Go on about your day. Then come back and reflect on where these items came up in your business and your life.

Take notes. Keeping a business journal has been instrumental to my personal and professional growth. It’s a powerful way to reflect on your progress and map out where you’re headed. As a companion to the work we’re about to do together, I hope you’ll pick up a copy of the Million Dollar Flip Flops journal.

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It was thoughtfully designed to accompany this book, and like the book, all profits are donated to charity.

If you're serious about doing this work, it will multiply the transformation you will get out of the book alone exponentially. That said, it doesn't matter to me how you keep these notes, just that you keep them. I urge you to keep a record of everything you're doing during our time together here. Can you sense my passion for this?

Often we don't spend enough time appreciating the things that are now our everyday reality that were once a dream. Your MillionDollarFlipFlops Journal, the notes on your phone, or heck, even crayon scribbles on the back of napkins stuffed in a shoebox, will serve as that reminder of your progress. Imagine looking back a month, a year, or even ten years from now and seeing how far you've come. You'll be glad you did this. Promise.

By purchasing this book, you have put your faith in me as your coach, at least for the few hours we will spend together here. I respect that you're busy. You have many choices. I'm honored.

To that end, I am putting my faith in you as well. I have faith that you'll continue to show up to these pages until our time together is complete. That you'll do the work. That you have inside of you what is required to take action on your business and your life.

Most importantly, I hope that you'll share with me how this journey has affected you. You can find me at MillionDollarFlipFlops.com. I'll look for you there.

Fad Free Zone

Everything in this book, is evergreen. This isn't some fad. What you read between these pages are time-tested and valuable tools from me and some of the best mentors and teachers in the world, including hundreds of conversations with small and medium-sized business owners, corporate executives, government officials, and myriad others on the same path as you.

Daily I watch this process unfold for others in my private practice, our courses, and at live events around the world. It works. It works for my clients, it's worked for me for decades, and it will work for you. These systems, like most things in life, will reward you based on the amount of effort you put into them.

If there is one underlying thing that makes all successful people I've crossed paths with the same, it is that they are willing to spend time and money to invest in themselves. They understand that their life will never outpace their personal development. It's part of what makes us who we are.

Ready for some jaw-dropping statistics²?

2 Literacy Inc. "About Us." n.d. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://literacyinc.com/about-us/>.

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- 33% of U.S. high school graduates never read a book after high school.
- 80% of U.S. families have not purchased a book this year.
- 50% of books started are never read to completion.

Yet most of the successful people you come across are devoted to lifelong learning — they are multi-domain readers interested in improving their lives in every arena, bit by bit, every single day.

“The rich are voracious readers on how to improve themselves. They’re reading self-improvement books, biographies, books about successful people, things like that,” says Tom Corley, the author of *Change Your Habits, Change Your Life: Strategies That Transformed 177 Average People Into Self-Made Millionaires*.

This book requires deep introspection and honesty with yourself. That can be scary for some people. It can be scary for me! Sometimes life hands us things we just can’t “power through.” If that’s not you at this stage of your journey, I encourage you not to force it. I will still be here when you are ready.

People will say, “Yeah, I know that,” or “I’ve heard that before.”

It’s usually those very same people, and I’ve been that person plenty of times, who isn’t putting whatever “it” is into practice.

There is a vast difference between grasping a concept and knowing it. You may understand something but not know it

at its deepest level. You might be able to identify the essence of what's being said, but unless you're implementing it every day, you don't know it.

Sometimes all it takes is hearing it from someone else's perspective, through their life's lens. From a different set of lips that have had a different lived experience. Only then it, whatever *it* is, clicks, and we begin to really *know* something at a level deep enough to move us toward action.



THE WAVES METHOD™

Ultimately, we will have developed three powerful personalized resources by the time you finish this book:

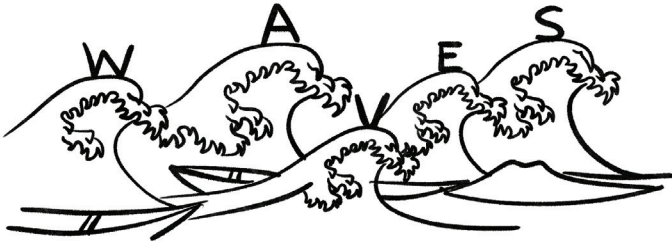
Your Passionate WHY

Your Values

Your Statement of Purpose (SOP)

The systems and tools we use to build these we call The WAVES Method™

You should be able to take these systems, methods, and exercises once you're finished and use them for the rest of your life. These tools are a filter. When you have a decision to make in your life or business, we will look at both the decision itself and the vision of what your future will look like after having made it. As you progress through the layers, your vision needs to fit like a glove in every area.



W—Why—What is it, really, that drives you at the deepest level?

A—Authenticity—Being brutally honest, with yourself, about what you want from life. Who you are really and who you want to become.

V—Values—The individual components that make up our WHY, our SOP, and our very being. Things can get tricky here, and you'll soon discover things about yourself and what drives you that have been locked away.

E—Exploration—Your WHY and Values will change as you live with them over time, and that's not only okay, it's the only way to truly get the results you desire.

S—Statement—Finally, your Statement of Purpose (SOP). Building upon the insights we find in developing your Why and Values, this is a distilled and finessed phrase that encompasses your very being.

The waves also represent the notion that each time you revisit the program, it will change slightly. Your Values will shift a bit, your WHY will expand, and your SOP will reflect those

changes. So while the component parts are very similar, the outcome is different every time—like the water, sand, and salt that makes up a wave.

Think of it like visiting the same city in Europe every few years. Though Rome is largely the same as it was ten, twenty, or thirty years ago, you are likely very different and see the city with new eyes. You bring a different you to the city every time you arrive, with budding passions and shifting goals for your life. In turn, the city greets you anew, welcoming your refined life's lens with exactly what you need at the time.

Each of the sections build on one another, but you'll discover that we go about developing them in a very unique way.

The first section, Your WHY, is intended mainly to be thought-provoking. We will talk about what it shouldn't be as much as what it should. There will be many examples, both from my life and from others, designed to get you thinking. Less work—more thought. This is very much on purpose. We just want to get some ideas brewing and maybe a few things on paper here. Out of our brains and hearts and into our journals or phones. Light. Easy. A personal brainstorming session.

Once we've greased our cognitive wheels, we talk at length about authenticity, or lack thereof, especially when it comes to the way we view ourselves. All of this work is meaningless if we are doing it with anyone else in mind. It's only once our authenticity gauges are hitting the redline that we begin to work through our values.

Your values can and will change as you engage in this process. Invariably, in my private work with entrepreneurs across the globe, the same series of events unfold before my eyes. They build their initial list of values, and as we discuss them in detail in the following sessions, there is a point at which they shift dramatically. From my perspective, it's thrilling to watch the proverbial light bulb illuminate for the first time. It's magic! There is no doubt you will watch that unfold for yourself as well, especially if you are working with someone guiding you through this process.

This brings us to exploration. While it may seem like you could just skip this section, it's in the exploring that the real progress takes shape. Living each day with your loosely configured WHY and Values, in the highs and lows of your life and business, you'll find them starting to change. Shifting ever so slightly with each passing moment, just like the sand beneath your feet at the beach.

Then, after all of this work is complete, we will build your Statement of Purpose. The culmination of everything you've developed to that point. And just as you're putting the finishing touches on that statement, you'll find the compelling urge to revisit your WHY, which will domino into tweaking your Values ever so slightly, living with them for just a bit longer, and so the process goes.

With each new round of The WAVES Method™, you'll find a little more refinement. A little more "right." A little more you.

Remember, most people have never taken the time to do this work. Most people rarely read past the first chapter of a book, for example, a statistic that just blows my mind. We buy a book, and the purchase alone makes us feel better, without ever taking action towards whatever it was that book promised to deliver. I want you to possess a unique perspective that sets you apart from others. If you're willing to put in the work, the *real* work, to give yourself an edge when it comes to making the right choices, you're in the right place.

I'm glad we are here together.

See you on the journey...



FINDING YOUR WHY

“I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it’s not the answer.”

JIM CARREY

A Big Enough Why

One of the very first things I work on with private clients is developing their WHY. I ask this simple question: Why are you in business? Oh, and it comes with a curveball: The answer can’t include money, power, or notoriety.

After adding the qualifier to the question, it’s common to be met with a blank stare and uncomfortable silence. Try it for yourself with a friend or family member. You’ll quickly see what I’m talking about.

With a big enough WHY... any how is possible.

Please repeat after me.

With a big enough WHY... *any* HOW is possible.

Got it? Awesome! Let's dig in.

You Are Your Biggest Challenge

Your journey is not dissimilar from the basic storyline of any movie or video game. There is a mountain. You want to get to the top of it, and there are monsters you'll have to defeat along the way.

Sound familiar?

Those monsters come in myriad forms. Sometimes it's a competitor, sometimes, it's someone close to you, but most times, it's you. Yikes!

(Looks around the room) Did he say I'm the problem? I think he did.

Almost always, the story you tell yourself about why you can't do something—why you can't start at all or why you can't take your life and business to the next level—is different from reality. It's just that: a story.

With the right bag of weapons, you can defeat any of the monsters that come along on your journey. Especially the ones inside, which we will discuss at length in the coming sections.

It all starts with your WHY.

Before beginning life as an entrepreneur, taking a promotion, deciding to start a family, or moving to a new city, it is essential to ask yourself why you are doing this in the first place. While the scenarios are different, the question is the same. If you desire to venture out on your own as an entrepreneur or explore a new business model, for instance, it takes work. There are one thousand better ways to make a buck, I promise you.

Knowing what motivates you is crucial in keeping yourself inspired during challenging times, as they are bound to happen, mainly when the struggle within is more dominant than any external forces.

Your WHY will influence decisions well beyond the startup phases of your business. It may even lead you to choose not to expand and remain intentionally small. Something you may not consider at the beginning when you're figuring out how to get your first customers. Pursuing constant growth isn't the best option for everyone, as was the case for Adam, a client of mine.

Adam runs a successful chiropractic practice in Rock Hill, South Carolina. You can see and feel the love for his work in every conversation. Due to this passion for helping others, his practice quickly grew to the point where a second office would be needed to keep expanding. After a deep dive into the WHY behind starting his practice in the first place, the decision was made to remain small and hands-on.

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What values were at play here to drive Adam to confidently choose quality and personal touch over quantity and top-line revenue? To move forward, how crucial was it for Adam to comprehend his WHY at the deepest levels? What tools can we develop to make such major decisions with courage and ease?

For the next what will seem like one hundred paragraphs, I intend to present this to you by any means necessary. To tease, cajole, reframe, and rewrite this in so many ways that you can't help but see its importance while at the same time chipping away at *your* WHY, bit by bit.

So before we go further, grab your journal. Why do you get up every day other than a paycheck? Whom do you serve and why? If you're the entrepreneurial type, start by writing down all of the reasons why you want to start a business or take your current business to the next level.

Riding the WAVES Exercise: Imagine you are being interviewed by a toddler, and with every question you answer, they say, "But why?"

Keep going until your page or your journal is full or you're exhausted. Then come back...

Remember, once we build your one true WHY, we will use it as a guide to assist in making decisions in both your personal and professional life. Let it inspire you, motivate you, and give you direction. Have fun with this! By aligning your actions

with your WHY, we can create a life and business that are truly extraordinary.

A Dark Place

I was twenty-five, making more in a month than my parents had ever made in a year. I had multiple homes, was married, and had just moved to South Carolina from the frigid north where I grew up. I could buy and do anything I wanted. As a kid who spent his childhood listening to his parents argue about money, specifically the lack thereof, what more could I want? Yet I found myself depressed and deeply unfulfilled.

Laying on an operating table about to agree to have the discs in my back fused, I was disoriented, angry, and sad. I was in the prime of my life, had played sports for as long as I could remember, and despite the pain, I still coached school baseball and played in adult leagues three nights a week. None of this agony made sense when I was otherwise healthy by every other metric.

I was so disassociated that when the doctors talked about the possibility of being paralyzed for life from the procedure, I didn't even care. "Do it," I thought. "What do I have to lose? At least *some* of the pain will go away."

While I'll never know exactly what took hold inside of me that day, in an instant, I told the surgeon to cancel everything—and that I wouldn't be coming back. There had to be another way.

How did I get here?

Throughout my life, I have always had an entrepreneurial spark. From starting a fruit stand in my yard when I wasn't quite ten years old to countless "inventions" and ideas of grandeur, working for someone else never seemed like it was that great of an idea.

Through high school and into college, I started a few small businesses, enough to pay for school and a car, or two or three, and all of the other necessities (read: party supplies) of a well-rounded life in your early twenties.

Sitting in University business courses, I listened to lectures from many who only spoke in theory, having never actually run a business themselves. I was agitated, antsy, and just wanted to return to whatever new venture I had underway.

For the majority of my college career, I ran two companies. One sold a performance car part I had developed for the fourth-generation VW worldwide, and one was a wholesale home and car audio cabling company. It was "work from home" long before that idea was everyday language. I was also a bit of a pool shark and played far too much blackjack at Windsor Casino in Canada. With a legal age of nineteen just over the border, and the uncanny ability to count cards, I found a routine making the short forty-five-minute drive a few times a week. There was plenty of trouble to get into—stories for another day.

Still squarely in the middle of running those businesses and a fresh college grad, I moved to Charleston, South Carolina.

Warm weather and palm trees! A far cry from my home in Michigan.

At twenty-one (I started college at seventeen if you're piecing timelines together), I purchased my first home, which would later become my first rental property and would lead to a real estate and home-building career that would define my twenties and thirties. In the mornings, I would walk through the small neighborhood park and into the woods behind my new place. I loved it. I've always been a hiker, and long walks are typically what grounds me and allow me to do my best thinking.

Then, one day, the woods were gone.

It seemed as though it happened overnight. Poof. Gone. Decimated. Like one of those old-timey videos where the bomb goes off, and you see it lay all the trees down flat. Gone gone. And in the wake of the destruction, a home development full of shiny new vinyl-sided McMansions popped up. A builder had destroyed my little sanctuary. What do I do now?

Work for them, of course! Deep sigh...

The neighborhood grew, chewing away at my beloved woods one treeless homesite at a time. Then, one fateful day, I stopped in to see how much one of these places would fetch. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em, right? In the front doorway of that model home, I met Lane, who would become both a colleague and a lifelong friend.

Fast forward a year later, and I'm living in one of those new homes, renting my old place, and selling those same McMansions to giddy buyers as a New Home Sales Counselor for this Fortune 100 builder.

I was still selling a few car parts and cables here and there, but that was quickly put aside in favor of first-class sales trips, benefits packages, 401(k) matches, and company stock. Due to my natural sales ability, I killed it in this role. Awards upon awards, trips out to the CEO's house in Santa Barbara, dinners with celebrities and professional athletes, you name it. I was living the dream!

There were more zeros on my paychecks than I thought possible at my age. My "hourly rate," when calculated, was laughable.

And I hated my life.

I was miserable. My relationship at the time suffered as I became less emotionally available. Being around me wasn't fun for anyone. I had debilitating back pain, and despite having made more money than I knew what to do with, I was on the verge of bankruptcy as I bought meaningless garbage to try and fill the ever-widening, inexhaustible hole inside of me. Every day waking up to a crushing is-this-all-there-is feeling.

This shouldn't be happening. This shouldn't be me. This shouldn't be my life, I thought.

Tony Robbins, Deepak Chopra, Carl Jung, Emerson, Thoreau, Rumi, Lao Tzu, Victor Frankel, Wayne Dyer... these authors

adorned my bookshelves for many years. “I’m a student of life and human behavior,” I repeated to myself, but now I couldn’t figure it out *for* myself. What had I done wrong to find myself here?

To summarize what came to light at the tail end of some exceedingly painful soul-searching, my values were not central to my actions. I chased the money. I had moved away from who I was as a person and so desperately far away from my WHY that I thought it would just be better to end it all.

Fortunately, something, someone, some higher power told me to stop before I made a life-changing decision.

What I would later learn, thanks primarily to the work of Dr. John Sarno—which could, and does, fill a book all its own³—is that often, our bodies will create physical pain to help us avoid extreme mental distress. It’s why many who go through with back surgery find that they now have a problem with their neck, etc. This is by no means all cases or intended to diminish people with actual physical ailments. I share this to point out that many times, we can heal our bodies with our minds. I am one of those cases—nearly twenty years later, writing these words with zero back pain and zero fused discs.

That day at the hospital, one of the most pivotal of my life, I decided I needed to make *massive* changes. I also knew I needed the confidence to be sure that the decisions were “right” and that I would have the conviction to follow through.

3 SimplySarno. “Simplysarno.” SimplySarno. <https://simplysarno.com/>.

Diving deep into the books I had previously looked to for guidance, I searched for where I needed to improve. I could never allow this to happen again. I needed a system, but not someone else's system. I needed *my* system. So I put together the bits and pieces of these tomes that worked for me, and I dug myself out of my hole. I left the corporate world, started a new company, and never looked back at those dark days again. This book outlines much of what I learned in those trying times and beyond.

While it wasn't easy, that day I decided to honor myself, my values, and who I *really* am. I still waver, but I catch myself far quicker and have the tools at my disposal to make massive, quick, confident changes in my life when I feel myself veering off track. Never again will I be in that desperate place, wondering why I should live another day, and it all started with deeply understanding my WHY.



You're Not Alone

You likely can remember a time when sharing a story like this would be taboo. Keeping the “fake it till you make it” vibe alive. Those very same feelings kept me from adding it to the book in the first place, despite it being one of the most defining moments of my life. I don't think it would be a stretch to assume you've likely had some of those same feelings at some point. It's important, however, that you know you're not alone.

“It should come as little surprise that entrepreneurs experience more anxiety than employees. Thirty-four percent of entrepreneurs reported they were worried. And forty-five percent of entrepreneurs said they were stressed,” a recent INC Magazine article shared⁴. “Entrepreneurs often juggle many roles and face countless setbacks--lost customers, disputes with partners, increased competition, staffing problems--all while struggling to make payroll. ‘There are traumatic events all the way along the line,’ says psychiatrist and former entrepreneur Michael A. Freeman, who is researching mental health and entrepreneurship.”

“But it may be more than a stressful job that pushes some founders over the edge. According to researchers, many entrepreneurs share innate character traits that make them more vulnerable to mood swings. ‘People who are on the

⁴ Bruder, Jessica. “The Psychological Price of Entrepreneurship | Inc.Com.” Inc.com. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://www.inc.com/magazine/201309/jessica-bruder/psychological-price-of-entrepreneurship.html>.

energetic, motivated, and creative side are both more likely to be entrepreneurial and more likely to have strong emotional states,' says Freeman. Those states may include depression, despair, hopelessness, worthlessness, loss of motivation, and suicidal thinking.”

For many of us, and especially for those who are self-employed, having a coach, mentor, or mastermind group is crucial to our well-being. It provides an avenue to express your ideas, goals, struggles, and concerns in a healthy way with others that understand your unique language. Simply knowing that everyone who has walked, or is walking, in your shoes has been through the same ups and downs is sometimes all the encouragement we need.

Regularly engaging with your peers in an authentic, open space can be life-changing. It certainly has been for me. Imagine having a group of ten to twenty others just like you to lean on. When you share a new plan, they understand. When you express a concern about your business, they “get” you at the deepest levels. Each week in Million Dollar Mastermind, I’m consistently amazed at what comes from our time together.

Learning from others that are near your level in business and in life helps ground us. It helps us find our “enough.” It helps us define success in a real way that we are never shown in our celebrity-driven, 24-hour news cycle world.

A Deeper Vision

“Few of us have thoughtfully considered the mainstream conception of success before we have pursued it,” John Coleman writes in *Harvard Business Review*⁵ “We may be thoughtful about selecting a job or career by thinking about what we’re good at or the paths of those we admire, but over time, that job may dominate other meaningful parts of our lives (we all can relate to the struggles of work-life balance), or we may lose sight of what makes that career purposeful in the first place. Our default, then, is often to chase material progress without truly asking why.”

As psychologist Martin Seligman put it, “True flourishing involves some element of accomplishment, certainly, but also involves meaning, positive emotions, engagement, and relationships. Reflecting on this more profound definition of success challenges us to adopt a fundamentally different path than the one championed in popular culture. And doing it early—and often—allows us to craft a life that is more consistently filled with meaning.”

In Coleman’s book *The HBR Guide to Crafting Your Purpose*, he proposes that a well-lived life, one in which you flourish, includes many components, most of which fall outside of work.

5 Coleman, John. “Finding Success Starts with Finding Your Purpose.” *Harvard Business Review*, January 11, 2022. <https://hbr.org/2022/01/finding-success-starts-with-finding-your-purpose>.

MILLION DOLLAR FLIP FLOPS

- meaningful love (positive relationships),
- avocations
- beauty
- occupation (good work)
- religious or philosophical beliefs
- service to others

As we work towards developing your WHY, and deepening our vision of success, ask yourself these questions:

- How can I better understand the core purpose of my work and the impact it has on the world? Moreover, how can I focus on this purpose and integrate it into my daily tasks for greater fulfillment?
- How can I identify the important relationships in my life, whether they are personal or professional, and find ways to strengthen and enhance those connections?
- Reflecting on who I serve both in my professional and personal life, how can I expand my impact in my workplace, community, and home?
- Every day, how can I make a conscious effort to better myself in both my personal and professional pursuits. How can I engage in endeavors that enhance my skill set but at the same time hold significance?

Many individuals who wait until later in life to contemplate these important questions often realize that their ability to

achieve true success has been diminished by years of following a less fulfilling path. Achieving an aligned business and life is possible for you today. It may require altering your perspective on work or investing more in meaningful relationships. You may opt to deepen your commitment to helping others or pursue new and meaningful hobbies, or make bigger changes such as starting a new business altogether, relocating, or changing your lifestyle. Regardless, it involves taking a serious inventory of your current life and reflecting deeply on whether your current path aligns with your desired destination.

Zen and The Art of Hot Rod Building

Growing up south of Detroit, Michigan, it was hard *not* to be into cars when I was a kid. Car clubs abound. Car shows every weekend. Entire families worked for Ford, Jeep, or GM. I caught the modification bug early, lining up parts for my first car before I had a license to drive.

Twenty-five years and some fifty cars later, the bug never left.

These days I find more pleasure in keeping the classics alive than hitting the race track or drag way. My current stable of vehicles ranges from a '32 "Deuce Coupe" to a brand new truck, and all of them, at all times, require something to keep motoring down the road. Building, restoring, maintaining, and driving classic cars is incredibly fun. The shop is also where, these days, I do my best thinking.

I'm fortunate to have a home near the world-renowned Blue Ridge Parkway. If you're unfamiliar, the BRP is a nearly

five-hundred-mile road spanning North Carolina and Virginia. Commercial traffic is banned, the speed limit is thirty-five mph in most places, and you're encouraged to stop and take in yet another glorious vista every mile or so. Hitting the road in a ninety-year-old vehicle and spending a few hundred miles taking in the scenery is an experience like no other.

It's also an incredible amount of frustration, time, money, energy, and the proverbial "blood, sweat, and tears."

So why do I do it? There are easier ways to get from point A to point B, right?

What is my WHY behind owning classic cars?

Is it the frantic waves and smiles from passers-by? Is it being stopped at every fill-up and told what a "cool car" you have? Is it nearly getting sideswiped at least ten times every outing as someone tries to take a photo and drive? Is it watching a little crowd form around your pride and joy at a weekend car show? Is it the potential profit to be made from selling a restored classic?

Remember, money or fame can't be your WHY, in business, in life, or in hobbies! A potential profit and a few happy onlookers won't sustain what it takes to keep these cars on the road.

There are many fulfilling intangibles in this hobby. Connection with other like-minded people. Exercising patience both to find parts and to install them. Those are a few.

The satisfaction of building something with your own two hands. The never-ending process of learning. Expressing your creativity. After all, there is as much art to hot rodding as mechanical know-how. Those would make the list too.

It could be the gratification of watching a young boy or girl's face light up when they are introduced to their first classic and they become fascinated with an old car for the first time. Or knowing you're inspiring the next generation to carry the craft forward in some small way. It could be preserving the history of these vehicles as a significant piece of the American experience for future generations to enjoy in more than just a picture.

Do you see what I'm driving at here? Pun intended.

Boiled down to its component parts, it's in the act of the maintenance and building itself that I find my joy, my flow state, my peace, my renewed energy. That harmonious place where time stands still. The driving, the car shows, the happy smiles—those are just the end result.

These things keep me going when the part doesn't fit or when I break down on the side of the road. These things are my big WHY. And we are just talking about a hobby here!

Your business and life are no different. It's this WHY that keeps you moving forward when things aren't going your way. Taking a deeper look at the things you enjoy doing in your spare time can give you clues that will help develop your WHY as a person or business owner as well.

The Journey

Starting a new business, at least for me, is one of the most exciting activities I can imagine. When a business is new, there is endless possibility. You grow every day with every new challenge. It's magic.

But what is it that fuels you?

Every venture I have been a part of filled some perceived need, the core tenet of any business. Sometimes I *knew* I could and would do it better than the next guy. For others, I had a unique product that was less expensive than my competition.

Despite the inevitable momentary lapses, I've done my square best never to sway from my values when deciding to take that next step into startup mode. It's also important to note that my WHY and the Values that are its foundation will look very different from yours and, in turn, yours from anyone else's.

In fact, I named my construction company after just that premise: Dharma, which means "your path," as clearly *someone* thought I should be a custom home builder. Dharma made \$50,000 in its first year. By year three, we were quickly on pace to become an eight-figure concern. See what happens when you follow your path?

We'll talk more about that particular business later, as it provided unimaginable highs, lows, and lessons about people and life that still affect my decisions today. Bridging the gap between what is needed in the marketplace and what you have

to offer can be very profitable, but it is very, very different from your WHY.

What's important is that you take *real* time, scheduling it if you have to, to identify these things. On paper. To be reviewed. Often.

Constant Review

It is important to remember that we are just getting started here. We are building a framework that will help you develop these tools. For many of you, it will be the first time you've thought at length about these topics.

Engagement with your passions and the behind-the-scenes things that drive you should be an ongoing process. As entrepreneurs, we must constantly evaluate our purpose and ensure it still serves us as often as we review our financials—something they don't emphasize enough, if at all, in business school.

Your WHY, Values, and SOP: They are living, breathing things. They can and will change as you change. Change and flexibility in your process is where the E in The WAVES Method™ comes in—Exploration.

I find in my practice that as we near the completion of the model, where we build your SOP, your WHY and Values will shift. You're almost guaranteed to make two complete cycles before you start to feel content with your SOP.

We explore why this happens and why it's a necessary and welcomed part of the process in later sections.

In the future, while reviewing your SOP, you may find that what you want as a human being is no longer being served by your work. There have been many times that I simply lost my drive. There have been times when I lost confidence in the product I was able to deliver. More often, I was involved with a business that no longer fed my soul as I evolved on my own journey. At those times, I made the conscious and confident decision to shift course.

Remember that thriving construction company I started? Thanks to this system of constant evaluation—not only of the business's health but also my health as the owner of that business—I shut it down. Confidently. And at its peak. Most importantly, I did so with no regrets.

The word to note here is confidence. That's what we are after in this book. That's what we are building. Everything we put in place here is designed to give you a map, a North Star, an up to the minute list of who you are, who you want to be, and a future vision of a life and business that supports that, along with the tools to implement the changes needed to get there.

Simple right!?

Passion Alone

“But I'm really passionate about 'X'! That's why I do it!”

Your passion for your project will both motivate your first steps and later guide you through the inevitable hardships of entrepreneurial life.

But that's not your WHY.

When beginning a new project or starting up a new business, it is essential to ask yourself what you are passionate about. "Do what you love, and the money will come!" We've all heard that old chestnut. Cliches exist because, you guessed it, there is some truth there.

Entrepreneurs with a passion behind their business can use it as starting fluid, but it's not the fuel in the tank. Developing your WHY is the next step in maintaining that passion past the honeymoon phase.

Tammy Danan, a writer for Success Magazine, put it this way⁶, "When building your business or really, anything, most people will tell you, 'Never let that passion die!' 'Always remember why you started!' 'Always make sure that your love for what you do is burning bright!'

People will remind you repeatedly to keep pushing forward and to stay as dedicated as you were on day one. Of course, when you're on the first few days of your project, you're wildly motivated, as if nothing could go wrong. You know you're strong enough, and you believe that you can do it.

⁶ Danan, Tammy. "What to Do When Your Passion Isn't Enough." SUCCESS, November 13, 2021. <https://www.success.com/what-to-do-when-your-passion-isnt-enough/>.

And you probably can.

But sometimes, the reality is that you realize no matter how passionate you are, it doesn't seem to be enough. When this realization hits you, what do you do?

Passion isn't the only thing that pushed you to start on your project. There is strength and love and dedication and wisdom and grit. So many other things got you where you are today. In times when it feels like your passion is withering, don't let it overshadow everything else that makes you powerful. Draw strength from your grit and wisdom, and dedication. You are filled with potential."

This is where a well-developed WHY swoops in to save the day. Your own personal superhero!

A new business is like a new relationship. It's fun and fast-moving; there is nothing but passion and excitement. But unlike your favorite romantic comedy, the enthusiasm fades. What's left in its place is the opportunity to dive deeper into a more intimate and lasting partnership.

If the only WHY behind your relationship is great sex and fancy dinners, the relationship usually dies. If you take the time to develop a strong WHY for being with your partner, the relationship grows, deepens, and can withstand hardship. It's the same for your business or any other area of your life.

Fast and Furious

On its face, it is a straightforward process. Identify who I am and what drives me, figure out my WHY, build a mission statement, and ride off into the sunset like John Wayne or those slow-motion action movie endings where the victorious team is strutting away while the world burns behind them. Boom. Done. “Living life a quarter mile at a time,” as Vin Diesel or my good friend Maggie would say.



I'm here to tell you this is difficult work. Clients *regularly* break down into tears during our initial values exercises. Don't worry; they are good tears! They are breakthrough tears. They are the overwhelming emotions that come to the surface as someone's eyes open for the first time.

If you're keeping score at home: Working with people through this transformation and seeing its power is part of *my* WHY.

More than Money or Fame

For many, this is the first time they've examined these things. They might be thirty, forty, or fifty years into their life, and they've never *really* taken the time to discover what genuinely drives them. That might be you as well.

Whether you're just starting on your entrepreneurial journey or are a few years into your business and we are developing a plan to scale or exit, your answer to the question has to be something that sustains you. Can you see yourself continuing to do what you're doing now for five, ten, or even twenty years?

Fame and, yes, even making piles of money are both fleeting.

It's rare that businesses, or at least those that succeed long-term, are born from a paycheck. They're born from a passion and develop into something more profound. Any money that comes along is a function of the value you're adding to your fellow human beings' lives, and there is rarely an exception to that rule.

Businesses built only to make a buck eventually sputter and die because once you have a few of those bucks, there is no more fuel in the tank to overcome the next hill. And there is always a next hill. Businesses built on sex and fancy dinners cannot thrive. Okay, Las Vegas notwithstanding!

Starting a business or taking a new job is relatively easy. Growing and sustaining a company or finding a fulfilling position that also grows and sustains you as a person is hard. “Master the middle!” Alex Hormozi says. We all love to start, we all love to exit, we don’t all love the work in between. The next hill will take a lot of work to climb. Your WHY is your fuel. Your WHY is the reason you don’t give up and coast back to the bottom.

The Happiness Intersection

Let’s give you something to noodle on as we drive forward, shall we?

Your WHY is ultimately based on your values both as a human being and as a business. Where those not-always-similar values groups intersect is where the magic happens. I like to call it The Happiness Intersection™.

However, before we get to those, here are a few questions to ponder as we motor on. Write them in your journal, or on the next page, I’ll leave it blank:

- What does my ideal customer look like?
- How does a perfect day in my business unfold?
- What kind of mark do I want to leave on my team, my clients, and the world?
- What makes me happy? *Really* happy.
Authentically happy.

You didn't stop.

Stop reading. Take a few minutes and work on this. It will help you later!

Remember, most entrepreneurs start because they want freedom, financial success, or to solve some problem in the world. These motivators will get you moving and allow you to take that first step, but your WHY will bridge the gap between that motivation and the ultimate success of your venture, all while grounding you in the reality of running a business.

Serving the most people possible, no matter your industry, starts with serving yourself. You can't fill another cup if yours is empty, right?

Your WHY will elevate you to the status not just of Business Owner but HAPPY Business Owner. It's possible. I've lived it. And you will too.

It is crucial to understand that your current life's mission does not have to be final. While it is significant and can transform your life when pursued with intention, it is likely to evolve as time passes. Starting out, it should be enjoyable, and it should be the driving force behind your business beyond just making money quickly.

Remember, you aren't supposed to be leaving this section with your forever WHY. We are just getting started. The following sections will all help to solidify your WHY, and you'll learn the reason why we will end up circling right back to where we started.

Okay. The hammering is over. I hope you could explain to a stranger on the street why their WHY is so essential, and if you're a little crazy like me, you will!

The Real You

Something I've found all successful people to have in common is that they aren't afraid to take responsibility for their actions, lives, and business. There is nobody to blame for your failures or success. Not Angela in HR or that snarky sales rep Brian. It all falls on you.

If your business isn't working, it's your fault. If your business isn't serving you, it's your fault. If you don't wake up every day excited to go to "work," it's your fault.

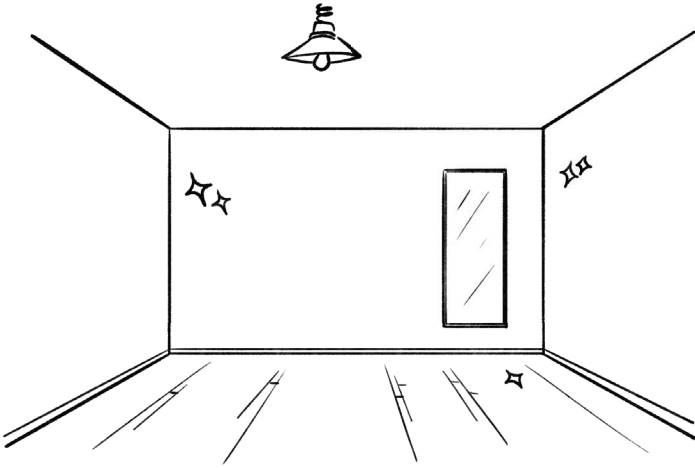
That's the bad news. The good news is that you can have a conversation right now with the boss about changing it all for the better without getting out of your jammies. The power of being human, the power of conscious choice.

Your WHY is very, very personal.

As an entrepreneur, you will often be your only cheerleader, so it doesn't matter what mom or dad or your spouse or a professor or drinking buddy or anyone else on the face of this planet wants. It only matters what YOU want from both your life and your business.

Here is a room full of all the people who pay your bills and live your life. I encourage you to make your decisions based on their input.

FINDING YOUR WHY



Developing your WHY, examining your Values, and building your SOP is a deeply reflective process. It only works if you're honest with yourself. And that's where many of us go astray...