MO(MEN)TUM

The operating system for men who weren't given one

OLLIE CHICK

For the man who told me I saved him.

He saved me.

How to Use This Book

When I was a kid I was angry. I had all these feelings and no idea what to do with any of them. Nobody gave me a manual. So, over about ten years, I wrote one.

This book is that manual. It works in three steps.

1. Name the word. When something fires inside you, stop and ask: what is this actually? Not "stressed". Not "fine". The precise word.

2. Know the feeling. Every feeling is a signal with a job. Sadness means you can't see an option. Anxiety means you have too many. Fear is an imagined future. Anger means a line has been crossed.

3. Do the action. Every signal has one action that answers it. Create one option. Decide. Act now. Hold the line. When you do the right thing, the feeling has done its job and it goes quiet.

That's the whole system. The rest of the book is how I learned it, why it works, and how to practise it until you don't need the book.

How to read it. Part One is my story. Part Two is the manual. Chapter 7, the Dictionary, is the one to dog-ear. Part Three is the 5 B's, which is where you practise. Parts Four and Five go deeper. Every chapter ends with a box called *Use it today*: one word, one feeling, one action you can do before bed. At the back, *The Words* puts the whole manual on a few pages. Photograph it and keep it on your phone.

What this book isn't. I'm not a doctor or a therapist. This sits alongside professional help, never instead of it. If you're in danger right now, stop reading and call Samaritans on 116 123. There are more numbers at the back.

Where the money goes. Every penny of profit from this book goes to Movember, for men's health. More on that at the back.

Read it with a pen. Argue with it. Then do one thing.

Ollie

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Prologue: Six Words

"You stopped me from killing myself."

A man said that to me in a park in Bath while I was tying a set of gymnastic rings to a tree branch.

I didn't know his name. He'd been coming to our free sessions for about two months. Quiet. Shy. Always near the back. That day he turned up early, which he'd never done, and walked across the wet grass with a look on his face like he'd been rehearsing something all week. He stopped two metres away, said it, and walked off to warm up.

I stood there. Kiera looked at me. I looked at her. Neither of us said a word for a long time.

We hadn't done anything. We'd thrown some rings over a branch and told anyone who'd listen to come and move with us. We weren't therapists. We weren't running a mental health programme. We were two people in a park doing pull-ups. And somehow that had kept a man alive.

What he didn't know was what those words did to me.

Until that afternoon I'd been building my life on one idea: that none of it mattered. That we're all dust waiting to settle. That helping people was a nice hobby in a universe heading for cold, dark nothing. I'd believed it since I was eighteen.

Six words and it fell over.

If throwing rings over a tree could stop a man from dying, then everything matters. Every conversation. Every session. Every time you turn up for someone without knowing you're doing it. The small things aren't small.

Everything I've done since is downstream of that afternoon. The gym. The coaching. Giving up my wage and handing the gym back to the community as a CIC, a community interest company, because it was never really mine. This book.

I know him now. We're friends. He's one of the strongest people I've ever met, and I don't mean on the rings.

This book exists because of him. If one accidental community in a park, with no funding, no plan and no strategy, could give one man enough reason to stay, what happens when you do it on purpose? When you write it down? When you hand it to every man who's drowning and say: here. This is the map. I drew it in the dark. It isn't perfect. But it got me out.

To understand why those words hit me the way they did, you need to know where I was before them. The distance between the kid in Chapter 1 and the man tying rings to a tree is the whole point.

So let me take you there.

PART ONE

The Wake-Up

CHAPTER 1

Nothing Matters

I was eighteen and I believed that sentence completely. Not the way teenagers say it at parties to sound deep. I believed it the way you believe the floor is under your feet.

Nothing matters. We all die. Who gives a shit.

I walked past the bathroom mirror with my eyes on the door handle. The scales were under a pile of clothes I hadn't washed in weeks. My bedroom was a cave: curtains shut at midday, two monitors glowing, empty cans on the desk, plates crusted with whatever I'd eaten at 2am. That was my world, and I chose it every single day.

Downstairs, my parents were arguing again. I could track it by volume alone: kitchen voices rising through the hallway, a door slamming hard enough to shake the light in my room, then a silence that was worse than the shouting. I'd turn up whatever I was watching and disappear into it.

I was addicted to everything and committed to nothing.

I know what you're thinking. Classic origin story. Goggins had it worse. Everyone's had it worse. Some lad reading this is going through something that makes my teenage years look like a bad holiday. I'm not claiming a medal.

But comparison doesn't help when you're drowning. The water doesn't care how deep someone else's pool is.

THE PHILOSOPHY

The nihilism wasn't a phase. It was a philosophy, and I had good arguments for it. We live on a rock spinning through nothing. Every civilisation that ever existed has collapsed. Everyone who has ever loved someone has watched them die or died first. The universe is expanding into the cold and one day there won't even be light. Next to that, getting a job and paying rent and caring about your credit score felt mathematically insane.

I'd lie in bed at four in the morning with the screen lighting my face and run the thought experiment. What if I just disappeared? Who would notice? Mum and Dad would be sad for a while. My mates would post something on Facebook. Then the world would keep spinning. Same speed. Same direction. Same nothing.

I wasn't suicidal. Not exactly. But I wasn't far off.

There's a zone between wanting to die and wanting to live where you just exist, like a rock at the bottom of a river. The water moves over you and you don't move at all. You watch your own life as if it belongs to someone else. It's like riding a horse that's sprinting towards a cliff: you can feel the reins in your hands and you don't pull them.

That's what I was. A passenger.

The horse was my habits. It did whatever it wanted. Wake up late. Eat shit. Watch porn. Stay up till sunrise. Repeat. I wasn't choosing any of it. I was watching.

THE ANGRY KID

Underneath the numbness was anger. I'd been an angry kid for as long as I could remember. Angry at the house, angry at school, angry at myself, angry at nothing in particular. My dad was angry

too. We were two angry people in the same house, performing father and son without ever really being it.

I had the words. Angry. Sad. Bored. Hate. I just had no idea what any of them were asking me to do. Nobody had told me a feeling was a message. So when one arrived I did the only thing I knew. I made it go away as fast as possible.

THE LOOP

Food was the main one. It embarrasses me most, so I'll tell you about it first.

Every day Mum made me a packed lunch. Sandwiches, fruit, crisps. She handed it to me at the door. She took me to the gym on Saturdays. She took me to the doctor. She weighed me. She changed the cupboards so I'd have a chance. She did everything she could.

And I'd eat her lunch. All of it. Then I'd buy a full KFC. Then a full pizza. Then four bars of chocolate. Not fun-size. Dairy Milk, Galaxy, the big ones. I smuggled Oreos into the gym in the side pocket of my bag, under a towel, hiding biscuits from people who could see perfectly well that I didn't need them.

I stole money from my parents to pay for it.

They weren't poor, but they weren't flush. Dad was up at 3am doing his post round so the family could eat. There were times they needed every penny. And I looked them in the eye and lied. I got good at it, because the habit demanded it. Every time I got away with it the shame doubled, and the shame sent me straight back to the food, because food was the only thing that made the shame shut up for five minutes.

When they found out, they didn't throw me out. They didn't scream. They kept turning up. They kept trying to help their son. I

think about that now and it breaks me in a different way, the kind of breaking that's really gratitude.

I made myself sick. I starved myself for days. Then I binged until I couldn't move. Binge, purge, starve, repeat. Nobody talks about this in men. Eating disorders are meant to be a women's problem, so men with exactly the same patterns carry them in silence.

Nobody stages an intervention for a fat kid. Nobody sends you to rehab for chocolate. The substance is socially acceptable, so the addiction is invisible, so the suffering happens in private, and it gets worse.

Food was one hit. I used everything.

Gaming: thousands of hours. My mates and I played League till 3am. I wasn't playing for fun. I was playing because the real world felt unbearable and the game world did what I told it. Kill a boss, get a reward. Clear a level, feel something.

Porn: hours of it, every day. It's the one everyone does and nobody mentions. I didn't even enjoy it. It was just the fastest, cheapest way to change how I felt. Bored? Porn. Anxious? Porn. Angry? Porn. Sad? Porn. The feeling arrives, the hand reaches for the phone, and within thirty seconds the original feeling is swapped for something artificial that doesn't last and leaves you emptier than before.

And the internet: YouTube rabbit holes at 3am, hours of scrolling through nothing, because the scrolling was the anaesthetic.

The mechanism was identical every time. A feeling arrives. You can't sit with it. You reach for whatever changes how you feel fastest. You get relief, then a deeper emptiness, then a stronger feeling, so you reach again. The baseline drops. You need more to feel the

same. Real life gets harder to reach because the fake version has warped what you expect.

The substance doesn't matter. Food, porn, games, scrolling, drink. The loop is the same.

The lying held it all together. Mum and Dad would ask where the money had gone and I'd have a story ready. I always had a story ready. The habit didn't just teach me to eat or watch or play. It taught me to perform: to build a believable explanation on the spot and manage what other people saw, so I could keep using in peace.

Every lie that worked tightened the loop. The shame of the lie sent me to the food. The food made me lie about the food. Round and round. You can see the walls. You just can't find the door.

I STILL HAVE THE WIRING

I'll be honest with you. I still deal with this. The wiring hasn't changed. It's just pointed somewhere else.

Maybe running a thousand miles is just another hit. Maybe building a business till 2am is the same loop with a more respectable substance. Maybe the gym itself is a fix.

But the direction is different. The difference between destruction and creation isn't the intensity. It's the direction. Same engine, the same obsessive, can't-stop engine, pointed at something that builds instead of something that breaks.

I don't know if that makes me recovered or just better at choosing what I'm addicted to. Some days I'm not sure there's a difference. But the version of me running at 5am is closer to the man I want to be than the one hiding Oreos in a gym bag. For now, that's enough.

If you're in a loop right now, whether it's food, porn, gaming, drink or your phone, listen. The loop isn't a character flaw. It's a

mechanism. The feeling underneath it is real. You're just answering it with the wrong action. The fix isn't willpower or shame or a browser blocker. The fix is learning to read the signal and give it what it's actually asking for.

That's what the whole book is about. But I had to name all of it first: the food, the porn, the gaming, the lying. These are the ones men carry in silence and never mention, even when they're being honest about everything else.

FURNITURE IN THE SAME ROOM

I resented everything. I had no idea what I was doing with my future. I was doing what the adults told me to do, because they had it all worked out, right? Go to school. Get your grades. Get a job. Follow the path. A path that nobody on it seemed particularly happy to be walking.

My mates were in similar places. Not all of them. Some had jobs, girlfriends, plans. But enough of us were floating that it felt normal. We'd play till 3am and talk about nothing and laugh at nothing and feel nothing, and that was friendship. Nobody asked how you were. Nobody said, "Mate, I think we might be in trouble."

We sat next to each other like furniture in the same room.

We weren't bad friends. We were doing our best with the tools we had, and the tools were silence, avoidance and distraction: the same tools every man in this country is handed by default. Nobody showed us you could say "I'm struggling" and still be a man. So we did what men do. We sat next to each other in the dark and pretended the dark was normal.

The nihilism made me see the worst in everyone. My parents didn't love each other; they were too scared to leave. My friends

didn't care; they were bored and I was there. My teachers didn't believe in me; they were collecting a salary. The adult world was a performance and everyone was faking it.

It was airtight. And it was completely wrong, in the way a locked room is wrong: from the inside it feels like the whole world. My parents loved me. They were two people under huge pressure doing everything they could, and the kid upstairs with his headphones on was too far gone to see it.

The shame was the worst part. Somewhere under the weight and the excuses I knew I was capable of more. That made it harder, not easier. If I'd really been stupid or broken, the nihilism would have been easy to keep up. But I knew I was choosing this. I just couldn't work out how to choose something else.

A TUESDAY

People talk about rock bottom like it's one dramatic moment. You collapse in the shower. You crash the car. You get the diagnosis.

My rock bottom was a Tuesday in November that looked exactly like the Monday before it.

Nothing happened. That was the point. Nothing was happening, and nothing was going to happen. And in the part of my brain that still worked, I knew that unless something changed, nothing ever would.

Dad stood in my doorway and said, "Get up. We're going."

I was too tired to argue. Too tired to keep not going.

I'd been dragged to the gym before and hated every minute. This time, for no reason I could have explained, I kept going back.

I did some half-arsed sets. I could barely bench the bar. I looked at the men around me, lean and tattooed, moving through their

routines like they owned the place, and I felt like a zoo animal that had wandered into the wrong enclosure.

But I went back. Not the next day. Maybe three days later. Then again.

I remember things from those first weeks that probably mean nothing to anyone else, but I carry them like coins in a pocket.

The smell: rubber mats, old sweat, and cleaning spray that wasn't quite winning. I hated it at first. Then I got used to it. Then I started to link it with something I couldn't name yet.

The sound of other people's effort. Grunting, breathing, plates clanging, the thud of someone on a treadmill. In my bedroom the loudest sound was my own thoughts. In the gym the loudest sound was other people working. Being surrounded by people choosing discomfort on purpose made my own discomfort feel less lonely.

And the first person who spoke to me. A woman in her fifties, doing curls with two-kilo dumbbells, who looked over between sets and said, "First time?"

I said yeah.

She said, "Good for you."

Three words and a nod. I thought about them for the rest of the day, because they held something I hadn't had in months. She wasn't sizing me up. She wasn't judging. She saw me. I was there, and that was good.

Something cracked. A hairline crack in the wall I'd built, so small I almost missed it.

I didn't know what it meant. I wouldn't know for years. But cracks, if you're paying attention, don't close on their own.

USE IT TODAY

The word: *Loop*. Name yours. What do you reach for when a feeling arrives? Food, porn, drink, the phone, work.

The feeling: Whatever comes just before the reach. Bored, anxious, angry, sad. That's the real message.

The action: Next time you reach, stop for ten seconds and say the feeling out loud. "I'm bored." "I'm angry." You don't have to fix it yet. Just name it before you feed it.

CHAPTER 2

Rings Over a Tree

The park in Bath has a name, Victoria Park, but nobody calls it that. It's just "the park": students on the grass in summer, dog walkers going round the edge in winter, and nothing remarkable ever happening.

Except once.

It was 2021. Lockdown had ended but nobody felt normal. You could see it in the way people walked round each other on the pavement, that six-foot swerve, eyes down. Everyone had been alone for months and it had done something to them. You could feel it in the queues at Tesco where nobody made eye contact, in group chats that had gone quiet and never come back, in people walking down Milsom Street in the same space but in separate worlds.

During lockdown, with every gym in the country shut, Kiera and I had started running free online classes. Bodyweight work. Calisthenics. Anyone could join. We gave away loads for free, workouts, tutorials, progressions, and slowly a little community built up online. People weren't there for the exercises. They were there because someone turned up live every day and said, "Let's go."

When the rules lifted, we took it outside. We'd sling a set of rings over a branch in Victoria Park and train in the open air. Then

we started inviting anyone who wanted to come. Free. Turn up, move, be around other humans. That was the whole pitch.

Kiera would text a few people. I'd post in a Bath community group: "We're training in the park on Sunday. 3pm. Free. Just turn up."

Every week. Same tree, same branch, same rings. We'd lug everything over, the rings, the parallettes, the spike ball, and stop for food on the way so we could have a bit of a picnic even though we were skint. Then we'd lug it all back. When it rained. When nobody came. When it was freezing and the grass was soaked and anyone sane would have stayed in.

It was the best time of my life.

And people came. Three at first, then eight, then twelve. Sometimes twenty. All ages, all levels. A woman in her fifties who'd never done a day of exercise. A teenager trying muscle-ups and failing brilliantly. A bloke just out of a divorce who didn't know where else to go.

Some could barely hang for ten seconds. It didn't matter. Nobody cared. You turned up, and that was enough.

Nobody was selling anything. We were just people in a park, hanging off rings, falling off and laughing about it.

SIDE BY SIDE

In that space, something happened that never happens in a meeting room. People relaxed. Not straight away, but over the weeks the act dropped and the real people came out.

The confident guy turned out to be deeply lonely. The shy woman turned out to be fiercely funny once she was comfortable. The teenager who barely spoke became the best athlete in the group. He'd arrive early, stay late, and never say a word about it.

Researchers say men tend to connect side by side rather than face to face. I didn't need a study. I watched it. Put men shoulder to shoulder, give them something hard to do together, and the walls come down on their own.

Nobody had to say, "Let's talk about our feelings." The talking just happened, between sets and after sessions, everyone too tired to keep up the performance.

I saw it so often I could predict it. Someone three or four weeks in. A casual question after a session. And the answer that came back was real. Not "fine". Fine is the most British word in the language: one syllable that shuts a conversation down before it starts. But after a hard session the script breaks. "Actually, my wife and I are struggling." "Honestly, I've been drinking too much." "I haven't felt like myself in months."

Those admissions never happened over coffee. They happened after a hard session, sweat still on their shirts. The body had opened a door the mind had kept locked.

Brené Brown says vulnerability is the gateway to connection. I'd add one thing: you can't force it. You build the conditions for it. And the conditions are shared physical effort, in a group that holds both support and a standard, for long enough that trust builds up.

That's what CaliUnity became, the gym Kiera and I built after the park. A place where the hardest part isn't the training. It's letting someone see you struggle. Letting someone watch you fail a rep and hearing yourself say "next time" instead of pretending you weren't trying.

I needed that too. A man builds the community he needs and ends up helping other men find theirs.

THE AFTERNOON

There was a guy who started coming about two months in. Quiet. Shy. Stayed near the back. He'd arrive on time, do his thing and leave. I knew his face but not his name.

I remember the afternoon because of the cold. One of those English autumn days where the air has a bite and your fingers go numb on the rings in minutes. The grass was wet. The sky was the grey that Bath does better than anywhere, like someone had painted the ceiling.

Kiera and I had got there early to set up. The rings take a minute: get the height right, adjust the straps, test the hang. We were doing that when I saw him walking across the park towards us.

He was early. That was the first thing I noticed. He'd never been early. And he had a look on his face. Nervous. Like he'd rehearsed something and was trying to remember the lines.

I straightened up and said something like, "Alright mate, you're keen." Something meaningless. He didn't smile.

He stopped about two metres away. Kiera was behind me, tying off a strap. The rings swung between us.

And he said:

"Hey man, I just wanted to say. You don't know who I am. I'm quite shy. These events are quite quiet. But thanks to these meetups and thanks to you guys, you stopped me from killing myself."

He didn't explain. He didn't cry. He didn't wait for a reply. He said it flat, almost rehearsed, like he'd been carrying it in his chest for weeks and needed to put it down. Then he walked to his usual spot at the edge of the group and started warming up.

I stood there.

Kiera looked at me. I looked at her. Neither of us spoke for a long time.

I'd love to tell you I was wise in that moment, that the path ahead lit up like a runway. It didn't. What happened was that the ground moved. I'd been standing on something I thought was solid, the nothing-matters certainty, and his words had punched a hole through it, and I could see all the way down.

We hadn't done anything. We hadn't started a charity or a campaign. We hadn't trained as counsellors. We'd just turned up, every week, in a park, and said: come and move with us.

And that stupid, tiny thing had kept a man alive.

How do you go back to believing nothing matters after that?

You don't.

THE SLOW DEATH OF NOTHING

The nihilism didn't die that afternoon. It died over the months that followed, while I turned his sentence over and over like a stone in a river.

If throwing rings over a tree could do that, what could we build on purpose? If an accidental community could give one man a reason to stay, what could a gym do? A system? A book?

And another question kept me up at night. He was one person who said it out loud. How many others were there? How many people came to the park, or joined the gym later, or saw a post online, and something shifted for them, and they never said a word?

We used to give handwritten cards to people when they joined. We sent flowers when someone's relative died. We gave free memberships to people going through hard times and ran scholarships for people who couldn't afford it. None of that was strategy. It just

felt right. How many of those people did we help without ever knowing?

I still try to smile at people. To say thank you. To give little gifts. Because you never know.

SELFISH TO USEFUL

Looking back, I can trace the arc now: from "I want" to "how can I help". It happened so slowly I didn't notice until it was done.

At eighteen every thought started with I. I want to feel better. I want to escape. I want to eat. Even the nihilism was about me. I'm in pain. I don't matter. The universe doesn't care about me. I, I, I.

During lockdown something shifted. I'd been thinking, "I want to quit engineering." I started thinking, "How can I be useful?" I hadn't become a saint. I'd just run out of things the "I want" loop could give me. I'd eaten every KFC, watched every video, played every game, scrolled every feed, and all of it left me exactly where it found me.

So I turned outwards. Honestly, out of exhaustion. And that's when the rings went over the tree.

I see the same arc in everyone I've watched change. They arrive thinking about themselves: I want to lose weight, I want to feel better, I want to look good. That's exactly where they should start. You put your own oxygen mask on first.

But if the environment is right, the focus shifts. They stop counting their own reps and start counting someone else's. They stop thinking about their own transformation and start helping someone else begin theirs. The thing that was eating them alive, the endless loop of I, gets interrupted by something stronger.

Someone else's need.

And in meeting it, they find what they were looking for in every takeaway and every bottle and every 3am scroll: meaning. Not the cosmic kind. The quiet, human kind. Being the reason someone's day was slightly better. Mattering to someone who isn't you.

It was enough for me. It's enough for anyone.

Over the years, every man who walked into the gym broken and walked out a bit less broken was a vote against the nothing-matters idea. Every one was evidence that effort adds up, that meaning exists, and that the world, whatever it is, answers when you act.

Until one day I reached for that old certainty and it wasn't there.

He'd taken it with him. The man in the park, with his six words, his nervous walk and his courage.

USE IT TODAY

The word: *Useful.*

The feeling: The pull inwards, the "I, I, I" loop. It usually feels like heaviness or numbness.

The action: Do one small useful thing for someone else before bed. Text a mate who's gone quiet. Thank someone by name, and mean it. Help with one thing nobody asked you to help with. Notice what happens to the heaviness.

CHAPTER 3

Where the Words Came From

The manual in this book wasn't built in a library. It was built across a desk, in thousands of conversations with people deciding whether to change their lives.

Most of those conversations were sales.

I know how that sounds. "Sales" makes people think of dodgy car dealers and LinkedIn robots with too many emojis. That's not what I mean. I never manipulated anyone. I'd sit across from someone and think: this is the most obvious decision in the world. It's a risk-free challenge. We get the best results in Bath. Why aren't they joining?

And slowly I realised it had nothing to do with me. It had everything to do with the person in front of me. So I got obsessed with why people do what they do. Why they decide. Why they don't. What they give their power to.

THE SHELF

I read everything I could find. Psychology, cognitive behavioural therapy, neuroscience, behaviour change. Alex Hormozi. Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Robert Cialdini's *Influence*. James Clear's *Atomic Habits*. Jim Kwik. Nietzsche. I went deep into the Stoics: Seneca, Epictetus, Zeno, Marcus Aurelius, and

Epicurus, who wasn't one but belongs on the same shelf. Recovery literature. CBT textbooks. Anything I could get my hands on.

I wasn't smart enough to work any of this out on my own. What follows is my combination of their work, tested on real people. I'm adding my book to their shelf, and I'll credit them where I've taken something directly.

Three lines in particular changed everything. I first heard the first two from Hormozi on a podcast and loved them so much I kept them:

Sadness is a lack of options. Create one.

Anxiety is too many options. Decide.

And a third, which the Stoics would recognise:

Fear is an imagined future. Act now.

Over a thousand sales conversations and years of coaching, these patterns repeated so reliably that they stopped being stories and hardened into rules.

"I'M LAZY"

Someone sits down and says, "I'm lazy."

I say, "Cool. What do you actually do that makes you lazy?"

They start listing. I stay in bed till noon. I don't go to the gym. I have a takeaway every night.

And you realise "lazy" isn't a thing. It's a bundle of behaviours wrapped in a label. Change two of the behaviours and you're suddenly not lazy any more. Nobody had told them that. They thought lazy was who they were. It isn't. It's what they do, and what you do can change.

That was the first time I saw it clearly. Most people aren't stuck because of who they are. They're stuck because of the words they use to describe themselves.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN?"

The question I've asked more than any other is four words long: "What do you mean?"

Not confrontational. Curious. A man says, "I'm stressed." I say, "What do you mean by that?"

The pause that follows is almost always the most useful moment in the conversation. Nobody has ever asked him to define it. He's been told to manage it, reduce it, breathe through it. Nobody has said: before we manage it, can we work out what it is?

When he tries, the feeling reclassifies itself. "I'm stressed" becomes "I'm overwhelmed", which becomes "I've got three deadlines and I can't work out which one to do first". That isn't vague stress any more. That's too many options. Anxiety. And anxiety has a clear action: pick one, do it, then do the next.

"Stressed" is a useless word. It contains no instruction. "Too many options and no decision" is precise, and precision creates action.

"I NEED TO THINK ABOUT IT"

In sales, the most common thing people say at the end is, "I need to think about it."

When you're new, that sentence makes you panic. Later you learn to get curious instead. "Yeah, of course. What are you thinking about? Is it the money? Is it the time?"

And the fog clears. Every time. Because "I need to think about it" is almost never thinking. It's a feeling dressed up as a reason.

I started doing the same thing with my own head. When anxiety turns up, I go: cool, what are you scared of? Literally what? Talk to me. Money? How are we doing for money? OK. What else? That

thing? Fine, what is it exactly? The second I zoom in, really get the binoculars out and look at it, it fades.

Then I started doing it with my mates. A mate calls and says he's not in the mood to train. I don't say, "Get your arse up." I say, "No way. What changed since yesterday?" Or, "What would your future self want?" Same skill. Same curiosity. It works on the sales floor, at the gym, on the phone to a mate and inside your own head, because it's all the same thing: helping someone see a feeling clearly enough to act on it.

People will tell you to "feel your feelings". I've never known what that means. Sit there and notice whether it's in your stomach or your chest? Then what? Sometimes the more power you give these things, the bigger they get. What works for me is simpler. Don't judge the feeling. Interview it. Huh, that's interesting, why is that? Then go one level deeper.

THE SHADOWS BECAME THE TOOLS

Here's the strange part. The skills I use in those conversations came from the worst years of my life.

Lying is the hardest one to admit. The exact skills I built hiding my habits are the skills that make me a decent coach and a good salesman. I learned to read people because I had to: body language, tone, the tiny signals that tell you someone is hiding something or about to shut down. I know how men think when they're in pain because I've been that man, running the same scripts and telling the same lies. When a client says, "Yeah, I'm fine, just a bit tired," I know exactly what's under that sentence, because I said it a thousand times. The deception became perception.

Gaming taught me to sit with one problem for fourteen hours until I solved it. Systems thinking. Levelling up. Years later, the

way we track progress at CaliUnity, with coach levels and a skill map where you can see every movement you've unlocked, came straight out of thousands of hours of games.

And the internet, the thing that nearly killed me, is where I found Goggins, Hormozi, Ross Edgley, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius. Same device I watched porn on at 3am. The internet is like money. It builds hospitals or it builds bombs. Same tool. The difference is what you point it at.

Same brain, same wiring, same intensity. The direction changed.

If you hate yourself for the things you've done, know this. Those traits don't disappear, but they can be redirected. The obsession becomes focus. The lying becomes perception. They won't redirect themselves, though. You have to do it.

WHO AM I TO WRITE THIS?

The thing that nearly stopped me writing this book was this book.

Who am I to write it? I'm twenty-seven. I don't have a PhD. I've never worked in mental health. That voice, *who am I to*, kills more dreams than failure ever will.

Fear is an imagined future. My brain was projecting a version of tomorrow where I got laughed at. That projection wasn't real.

What was real: when I asked "who am I to run free meetups?", the answer was the person whose meetups stopped a man from killing himself. When I asked "who am I to write about behaviour change?", the answer was the person who'd sat across from hundreds of men in sales calls, consultations and private conversations. Some of them I was quite literally talking off the edge. Men who'd given up. Men whose habits had got so bad they had no hope. Men heading for prison. These principles have been through

the fire. They aren't perfect. But they helped me and they helped a lot of other people.

So this is for the lads like me: the engineering brain, the all-or-nothing type, maybe wired a bit differently. If it doesn't help you, that's fine. But I'm not going to let fear stop me being useful to someone who needs it.

Some people will be offended by bits of this book. People told us we were hurting the trees by hanging rings from them. People said I was too young to own a gym. I'd rather hang rings from a tree and help save someone's life than not hang them at all.

My sister taught me something about offence. She's been through her own mental health journey, and she read a book about something called the Diamond Process that said all triggers are treasures. If you're in good shape and someone calls you fat, you don't flinch. If you're out of shape and you know it, it lands. The word is the same. You give it the meaning.

That's a scary thought. It's also the most freeing one I've ever had, because it means you're in charge. I'd much rather live in a world where how I feel and what I do next are my responsibility than hand that power to everyone else.

So be open while you read this. If you read a book just to have read it, you'll get nothing. Read it with a question in mind. When a definition annoys you, don't say "no, that's wrong". "No" is the laziest shortcut your brain has; it saves it from thinking. Try "huh" instead. Try "when did I first feel that?" Give it thirty seconds before you decide.

And if you still disagree, email me. If you're right, I'll change the book. It's a living thing. I want it to become a manual for men, built by men. I don't care about being right. I care about getting closer to the truth.

USE IT TODAY

The word: Pick the label you use about yourself most. *Lazy. Stressed. Useless. Not a morning person.*

The feeling: Whatever sits under the label. Ask yourself, "What do I mean by that?" until you hit something specific.

The action: Write down the three behaviours that make up the label. Change one of them tomorrow.

CHAPTER 4

The Map They Never Gave You

Around 125 people take their own lives in the UK every week. About three in every four of them are men.

That's roughly one every eighty minutes. By the time you finish this chapter, statistically, someone in this country will have died by suicide. Most likely a man.

Researchers once asked 251 men who had survived a suicide attempt which words best described how they'd felt beforehand. The most common answer was "useless or worthless".

Useless. Worthless. Men don't usually reach that point because they feel too much. They reach it because the story in their head says they have nothing to offer. That the world would be better off without them. That they're a net negative.

That story is always wrong. It just doesn't feel wrong from inside.

THE AVALANCHE

Here's what keeps me up at night. We're entering a time when AI can write your emails, build your website, answer your customers and run your marketing faster and cheaper than you can. The jobs that gave men their identity, their answer to "so what do you do?", are disappearing. Not in fifty years. Now.

If the feeling that drives men to the edge is "useless and worthless", and the thing that's coming makes men feel more useless than they've ever felt, we're not looking at a mental health problem. We're looking at an avalanche.

When work stops being the answer to "what do you do?", what will men be tied to?

Each other. Their bodies. Being useful to other people. Community. The things a machine can't do, and the things this book is about.

The men who come through it won't be the ones with the best CV. They'll be the ones who know who they are when the job title is gone: a body that works, people who know their name, beliefs they've examined, behaviours they've chosen, and something they've built that matters to someone else.

"TALK TO SOMEONE"

These aren't weak men. Someone reading this is already thinking, "That wouldn't be me," or, "Those guys had other problems," or the classic, "They should have talked to someone."

Talked to someone, and said what, exactly?

Telling men to "talk about it" without giving them words for what they feel is like handing someone a map with no labels. Off you go. Find your way. Every road is blank, and you've been told asking for directions makes you weak, so you drive in circles until you run out of fuel.

The instructions men get are useless.

"Man up."

Man up and do what?

"Don't be sad."

OK. What should I be instead, and how do I get there?

"Stop overthinking."

With what? Which lever do I pull? Where's the off switch?

Those aren't instructions. They're orders with no manual. It's like telling a drowning man to "just swim" without ever teaching him the stroke.

FINE

At CaliUnity I'd sit across from a new member at their consultation and ask how they were doing. Almost every time, the answer was some version of "fine".

Fine is the most dangerous word in the English language when a man says it.

Fine means: I don't have the words for what I'm feeling, I don't have permission to find out, and even if I had the words I wouldn't know what to do with them, so let's talk about sets and reps and whether I should eat more protein.

I've had thousands of these conversations. Sales calls, consultations, check-ins, and the chats between sets when a man's guard is down. Every time, under the training goals and the "I just want to feel better", there's a feeling he can't name.

He feels it. God, he feels it. It sits on his chest. It wakes him at 3am. It makes him snap at his kids and drink too much on a Friday and scroll until his eyes burn.

But he can't name it. And because he can't name it, he can't change it.

That's the thing nobody told me and the thing this whole book is about. You can't fix what you can't define, and the definitions most men are working with are broken.

EVERY SELF-DESTRUCTION IS AN ATTEMPT AT CONTROL

Every destructive behaviour I've seen, in myself, my clients and the men I've coached, starts the same way. A man feels something. He can't name it. He reaches for the nearest thing that changes how he feels. Drink. Porn. Anger. Silence. Work.

The man who drinks himself unconscious is trying to control what's going on inside him. The man who punches a wall is trying to let out the pressure. The man who works eighty hours a week is trying to control the fear of what happens when he stops. Even a man at the very end of every coping method he knows is still, at the core, trying to make an unbearable feeling stop.

I don't say that to make any of it sound OK. I say it because until you understand that most behaviour is an attempt to manage what's going on inside, you won't understand why people do what they do, and you won't know how to help them stop.

The answer isn't "be stronger". It's better tools.

THE MIXED SIGNALS

And look at what a man is told when he does try.

He's told to be more vulnerable, then told to man up when he cries. Don't approach women because you're a creep; also, men are weak because they don't approach women. Express your feelings; also, stop being so emotional.

What the fuck is a man supposed to do?

Every direction is a double-edged sword. So most men do nothing. They shut down. They go quiet. They say "I'm fine". And we lose them.

WHERE THIS SITS NEXT TO PROFESSIONAL HELP

Before we go further, the mental health bit needs saying clearly.

If you're in crisis right now, if you're reading this and you've got a plan to hurt yourself, put the book down and get help now. Call Samaritans on 116 123, any time, day or night. Text SHOUT to 85258. Call 999 or go to A&E if you're in danger. The book will be here when you get back.

Therapy works. Medication works. I believe in both. I'd be a fool not to.

But most men who are struggling aren't in a clinical emergency. They're having normal emotional reactions to normal situations, and nobody ever showed them what to do with them.

They don't need a diagnosis. They need a dictionary.

They don't need to "talk to someone" in the vague, poster-on-the-wall sense. They need to know exactly what they're feeling and exactly what to do about it.

This book fills the gap alongside therapy and medication: before them, after them and between appointments. On the nights when the therapist isn't available and the feelings are loud and you need something to do right now. It's the 3am tool. The "I can't afford therapy but I need to do something" tool. And when you do talk to a professional, it gives you something more useful to say than "I'm not great".

My sister has lived with bipolar disorder for about fourteen years. I've watched medication help her stabilise. I've watched her try to come off it and struggle. I believe in medication. I also believe it works best when it isn't the only thing in the kit: when there's a framework alongside it, a community, and skills that give you some control alongside the chemistry that gives you stability.

It's like Ozempic. I've watched people use it, get in great shape, and then lose it all within six months, because the drug did the work and the person didn't change. If it kick-starts you into chan-

ging your habits, brilliant. It's like melatonin for sleep. It might help tonight. But coffee at 8pm isn't helping, the phone in bed till midnight isn't helping, and having no bedtime isn't helping. The pill treats the symptom. The behaviour treats the cause. You need both.

ONE ACTION

The men we're losing aren't a different species from you. They're dads, brothers, mates, colleagues. The bloke who makes your coffee every morning. The man next to you on the train.

They looked fine. They said fine. And then one day they weren't.

The gap between "fine" and gone isn't as wide as you'd think. The bridge across it isn't as complicated as it's often made to look. The bridge is a man who can read his own signal, match it to the right behaviour and take one action.

Create one option. Make one decision. Take one step.

Without a map, a man stands at a crossroads with no signs and picks the worst road because it's the only one he recognises.

So give him signs. Give him a map. Give him the words.

That's what the rest of this book is. It's rough, and it's definitely not the final word on anything. But it's useful, and useful is enough.

USE IT TODAY

The word: *Fine.* Catch yourself saying it.

The feeling: Whatever "fine" is covering. Tired, anxious, lonely, angry.

The action: The next time someone asks how you are, give one honest sentence instead of "fine". "Honestly, a bit flat this week." That's it. One true sentence to one person.

PART TWO

The Manual

Every feeling in this part comes with an action: something you can do right now when you feel that thing. Most men don't have a problem feeling things. They feel everything. The problem is: what the fuck do I do about it?

Think of a tumble dryer. When a feeling stays inside you it spins round and round and gets hotter and louder. Put that energy into something, an action, a conversation, a person, and the dryer stops. A problem shared is a problem halved. This part tells you where to put the energy.

CHAPTER 5

Emotions Are Signals

This might sound obvious once you hear it, but nobody in my life ever said it to me.

Your emotions are not your enemies. They're information: your body telling you what's going on and what to do about it.

Every emotion is energy moving through you, trying to get you to do something.

I think most of us have it backwards. We assume the feeling arrives on its own, like weather. I think it's the other way round. The thing happens first, the situation, the event, the conversation, and then the body turns it into a feeling. The feeling is the body's way of getting you to deal with the thing. It's a signal, and it comes with an instruction.

Sadness says: create an option. Anxiety says: make a decision. Fear says: act now. Anger says: hold the line.

When you do the right thing, the signal has done its job, and it goes quiet.

THANK YOU, BODY

People sometimes think I'm a psychopath. Or autistic. Or just wired differently. When something bad happens I don't spiral and I don't rage. I go quiet for a second, and then I move.

They look at me like something's missing. Like I should be more upset.

I feel it. I just read it now. My reaction to a wave of stress or anger or sadness isn't "God, what's wrong with me?" It's "Thank you. I didn't even realise I was out of balance."

Your emotions are a gift. Stress and burnout are your body saying, "Mate, you've been going too hard in the wrong direction, and if I don't make you feel terrible now, you'll keep pushing until something actually breaks." Without that signal you'd drive yourself into the ground and never know why. The discomfort is what forces the change.

If everything felt good all the time, you'd never change anything. You'd stay in the wrong relationship, keep running the failing business, keep eating the food that's slowly killing you. Why would you change? It feels fine.

Pleasure and pain are the two levers. Every decision you've ever made was moving towards one or away from the other. The people who learn to read their pain as information instead of punishment are the ones who actually change.

THE OPEN LOOP

We were never taught this. We were taught that emotions are weather passing through. So men treat them as background noise. Wait for it to pass. Push it down. Drink, scroll, train, work, anything to avoid sitting with it long enough to ask: what is this actually telling me?

And when the feeling doesn't go away, because it can't without the right action, it stacks. Today's on top of yesterday's on top of last week's. The signal gets louder. The energy gets desperate. Eventually the man snaps, or shuts down, or does something de-

structive to let the pressure out, because nobody taught him to read the warning light.

The loop is simple. A feeling arrives. You answer it with the right action. It resolves. Done.

When you avoid the action, or pick the wrong one, the loop stays open. The energy has nowhere to go. It warps into something you don't recognise: depression, rage, numbness, or all three at once.

And then you end up across a desk from me, saying you're fine.

Here are the main ones, as I lived them.

SADNESS: CONCRETE IN THE CHEST

Sadness hit me hardest at eighteen. I didn't cry. Crying would have been a relief. Sadness felt like concrete, as if someone had poured it into my chest and it had set overnight and now I had to carry it everywhere.

I'd wake up and the first thought wasn't breakfast or school. It was: what's the point? That thought was so heavy that getting out of bed felt like benching a weight I'd never trained for.

I called it depression. The internet called it a chemical imbalance. My parents could see something was wrong and didn't know how to fix it, so they did the one thing they knew: they kept turning up. Years later, I can see exactly what it was.

I had no options.

Sadness is your mind scanning your life and finding no way forward. It's the feeling of being trapped.

And I was trapped. Living at home. No job. No skills. No money. No direction. Parents going through the hardest stretch of their lives. A body I hated. Habits that controlled me. Every time I

ran the sum, "What can I do to change this?", the answer was nothing.

The action that answers sadness is the simplest in this book and the hardest: create one option. Just one. Go and find one thing you can do. That's what the energy is for. It's telling you to move.

For me it was the gym. One thing I could do. One act of choice in a life that felt completely passive.

Sadness doesn't need a grand solution. It needs evidence that a solution exists. Even a shit one.

ANXIETY: TOO MANY TABS

Anxiety came later, in my mid-twenties. CaliUnity was growing. I was coaching, learning to sell, learning to market, learning to manage people. Every new skill opened three doors, every door led to ten problems, and suddenly so many things were pulling at me that I couldn't sleep.

Most men get this one wrong. They think anxiety is stress, or overwork, or caring too much.

Anxiety is too many options.

Your brain is running every possible path at once. Marketing or product? This client or that one? Raise prices or cut costs? Each decision is a fork. Your brain won't walk past a fork without glancing down both roads, and now you've got forty-seven roads in the corner of your eye and you can't commit to any of them in case you pick wrong.

Too many tabs open. The processor's overheating.

The fix: decide. Pick one. Close the other tabs. The decision doesn't need to be perfect. Anxiety can't survive commitment. The moment you commit, the simulations stop.

Here's a fact I love. The word "priority" came into English meaning one thing: the thing that comes first. For hundreds of years there was no plural. We invented "priorities" so we could pretend to have five number-one things at once. You can't.

Gary Keller's *The One Thing* asks: what's the one thing you can do that makes everything else easier or unnecessary? That question changed how I think.

I had seven things competing for my attention. I cut them to three. The anxiety dropped within hours. Not days. Hours.

FEAR: THE IMAGINED FUTURE

Fear is the one I'm most grateful to understand.

The Stoics got there first. Marcus Aurelius, Seneca and Epictetus were blokes who lived two thousand years ago and worked out something most modern self-help still hasn't caught up with: we suffer more in imagination than in reality.

Fear is your brain picturing something bad that hasn't happened and reacting as if it has. The exam isn't hurting you. Your simulation of failing it is. The sales call isn't the problem. Your simulation of being rejected on it is.

I found Seneca at twenty-one, in a park in Bath, on my phone, between sets. YouTube sent me a video about Stoicism and I fell down the rabbit hole. One idea stuck, and I'm paraphrasing: the man who anticipates every misfortune suffers every misfortune he anticipates, and the man who waits for reality usually finds it manageable.

The fix for fear: act now. Fear lives in the future tense, in the gap between now and later. The moment you act, the gap closes and you're in the present. What you find there is almost always less scary than what you imagined.

I've made thousands of cold calls. The first second of every one felt like stepping off a cliff. By the third second it was just a conversation. Every time.

Tim Ferriss calls one of his tools fear-setting. You play the worst case out to the end. Don't stop halfway. What's the actual worst thing that happens?

I know what my worst case looks like, because I've lived it.

Kiera and me, sleeping on the gym floor. Mats in the spare cupboard at the side of the building. Cold. Damp. Twenty trains going over our heads every night; I can still tell you the times they came. We had to get in by 10pm to miss the cleaner and be up by 4am to miss the morning class. We were completely skint. Everything was failing. Nobody believed in us.

And every night I looked at her and said, "We win because we're willing to go through this."

Seneca talks about practising poverty: doing the thing you're most afraid of, then noticing you're still alive. Was this really what I was so scared of? It's fine.

Play it out. Your brain's scared? OK, what happens next? And then? It usually comes down to "I'll die" or "I'll be alone". We're all going to die anyway, and being alone is temporary if you choose to change it. Seen that way, the fear loses its teeth.

We've had hard conversations at the gym. We had to raise prices. The choice was simple: have a hard conversation with our members now, or a harder one with our landlord later. Same with staff changes: the difficult talk today or the impossible one in three months. Not choosing is still a choice. If you don't decide, life decides for you.

If you really want to shrink fear, try this. Sleep on the floor for a week. Live on beans on toast. Wear the same clothes every day.

After a week you'll notice you're still alive, and that the things that matter, your people, the sun in the morning, that first coffee, were there all along under everything you thought you needed.

One more honest thing. Fear as fuel fades. When I started, everything ran on fear, proving people wrong, anger, even hatred. Now I barely think about the doubters. The people who doubted you shrink into your shadow, and the only way they win is if you keep thinking about them. What pulls me now is being useful. It's a quieter fuel and harder to reach on bad days, but it doesn't burn out the way anger does.

DEPRESSION: THE LONG HIDE

The one that nearly finished me was different.

For years I thought depression was sadness that had got too heavy. The way I lived it, depression came from one thing: hiding.

I wasn't letting myself be me.

At eighteen, nineteen, twenty, I performed a version of myself I thought people wanted. The funny one. Easy-going. No opinions on anything that mattered, because opinions meant you could be wrong, and being wrong meant people could hurt you.

So I hid. Behind jokes. Behind nihilism. Behind a screen. Behind a body so big nobody could see the person inside it.

The way I understand it now, depression is what happens when you suppress yourself for long enough. The gap between who you are and who you're pretending to be gets so wide your brain can't hold it, and it shuts down. You're not broken. You're exhausted from the performance.

To be clear: clinical depression is real, and if you've been flat for weeks, see your GP. This is my experience of it, not a diagnosis of yours.

The fix I found wasn't "be yourself". God, I hate that phrase. It was smaller than that: say one real thing, out loud, to another person. One honest sentence.

The first time I did it was in a gym, to a coach I barely knew. I said, "I don't actually know what I'm doing with my life and I think about it every day."

He looked at me and said, "Yeah, mate. Same."

We both sort of laughed. The relief was so physical I felt it in my shoulders. My body understood something before my mind caught up.

Hiding takes energy. Truth gives it back.

THE WAY OUT IS OUTWARDS

It's very hard to sink when you're thinking about someone else.

Careful here: I'm not saying people who are suicidal are selfish. I'm saying that, in my own life and in years of watching others, suffering tends to orbit the word "I". I'm in pain. I can't cope. I'm worthless. My problems. My failure. My shame.

When you're drowning, the world shrinks to one person. The water fills your vision, and the only voice you can hear is the one in your head, which usually isn't kind.

But the moment the focus shifts outwards, even slightly, light gets in. Someone else's problem. Someone else's need.

That happened to me in the park. I stopped thinking about my own misery and started thinking about other people's bodies. How to get this woman her first pull-up. How to adapt this exercise for that bloke's dodgy knee. How to welcome the nervous lad who'd just turned up. Small acts of usefulness that, over months, turned my attention from inwards to outwards.

It doesn't erase the pain, but it puts it in context. Your suffering is real, other people are suffering too, and you might be able to help one of them. Being useful to someone is proof that you matter.

And mattering is the opposite of useless and worthless.

IN THE ROOM

I found all of these in my own mess first. They got sharper through coaching.

A man came to me anxious about his career. We talked for an hour. Underneath it all, he had three job offers and couldn't choose. The anxiety wasn't about the jobs. It was about the choice. We picked one. The anxiety was gone before he left the room.

A woman told me she was depressed. I asked, "What part of yourself are you not showing anyone?" Long silence. Then: "I hate my marriage, and I've never said that out loud." Something in her face changed. Relief. The relief of not pretending any more.

A teenager was terrified of performing at a calisthenics event. I asked what exactly he was scared of. Falling off the bar, the crowd watching, the embarrassment. "Has that ever happened?" No. "Have you practised the routine?" Fifty times. "So you're scared of something that's never happened, and you've trained fifty times to stop it." He laughed. He did the routine. He nailed it.

Every time, the pattern held. Name the feeling correctly. Match it to the right action. Watch the loop close.

LONELINESS: THE VOLUME KNOB

One more, and it ties the others together.

Loneliness is different. It works like a volume knob that makes every other feeling louder.

When you're lonely, sadness hits harder because there's nobody to find options with. Anxiety gets worse because there's nobody to help you decide. Fear grows because you face it alone. Anger turns inwards because there's nobody to tell.

The same setback that a connected man gets over in an afternoon, a lonely man carries for weeks.

And men are lonelier than they've been in a long time. Surveys keep finding that men have fewer close friends than they used to. Social media gives you the feeling of connection without the substance. The pandemic sped all of it up.

The fix is the same as for sadness, applied to people: create one connection. One conversation, with one person, where you say one real thing.

Belonging is the second of the 5 B's for exactly this reason. Without it, everything else is harder.

ENGINEERING, NOT MAGIC

This isn't magic. It's closer to engineering. And like engineering, it works whether or not you believe in it. You don't need to believe in gravity for it to hold you to the floor.

USE IT TODAY

The word: Whatever you're feeling right now. Pick the most honest word you can.

The feeling: Ask what it's telling you. No options? Too many? Something you're dreading? A line crossed? Hiding something?

The action: Do the matching one. Create one option. Decide one thing. Do the scary thing now. Say what's not OK. Say one true sentence to someone.

CHAPTER 6

Words Are Levers

Most men think words are just noise. Interchangeable. Close enough.

They're wrong, and it's costing them.

Words shape how you see things. How you see things shapes what you do. What you do builds your life. The words you use for what's going on inside you are the code your whole life runs on.

When a man says "I'm depressed" and means "I'm sad", he gives himself the wrong instruction. In everyday use, "depressed" suggests a medical condition, something that needs medication, therapy, maybe years of work. For some people that's exactly what it is, and they need professional help.

But for a lot of men, what they're actually feeling is sadness. A lack of options. Feeling trapped. And the action for sadness isn't a prescription. It's creating one option.

Label it wrong and you reach for the wrong tool. It's like trying to fix a flat tyre with a hammer.

I see this constantly. A man tells me he has anxiety. I ask him to describe it, and he says he can't stop worrying about one particular thing. That isn't anxiety. That's fear. Anxiety is too many things; fear is one thing, imagined. The action for anxiety is "decide". The action for fear is "act now". Follow the wrong one and he'll cut

things out of his life that didn't need cutting and still lie awake worrying about the one thing he hasn't faced.

Precision matters.

THE LADDER OF A FEELING

There are five levels to this.

Noise. Raw sensation. Something happening in your body that you can't label yet. Tight chest. Hot face. A pit in your stomach. Static on the radio.

Word. You put a label on it. "I'm anxious." "I'm angry." "I'm stressed." Most people stop here and think they're done. They aren't.

Definition. What does the word actually mean? Not the dictionary meaning. The working one: what is this feeling telling me to do?

Action. The specific thing the feeling is asking for.

Skill. Do it enough times and the whole sequence becomes automatic, like driving. You stop thinking about the clutch.

Most men are stuck at level two. A label with no instruction. A map with no roads.

A simple test helps you climb. Ask: if someone were watching me, what would they actually see? Sadness isn't a vibe. You can see it: withdrawal, going quiet, staring at the past, no forward movement. If you can describe what it looks like, you can define it. If you can define it, you can change it.

"I AM" VERSUS "I FEEL"

There's a difference between "I am anxious" and "I feel anxious."

It's a tiny difference, almost just grammar. But the gap between those two sentences is the gap between identity and information.

"I am anxious" is an identity statement. It says anxiety is who you are: baked in, permanent. When you say "I am" something, your brain files it under identity, so it hunts for evidence that it's true and ignores evidence that it isn't.

"I feel anxious" is information. Right now, in this moment, I'm having a feeling called anxiety. It's temporary. Data, not destiny.

Swap one word and your whole relationship with the feeling changes.

I coach men to stop using "I am" for emotional states. You're not depressed; you feel low right now. You're not angry; you feel angry about this specific thing. The shift from identity to information is the first step towards having some control.

There's a line often credited to Viktor Frankl, the psychiatrist who survived Auschwitz: "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response."

Words are the space. The words you use to interpret what's happening to you sit between the thing and your reaction to it. Get the words wrong and the reaction is wrong. Get them right and it's right.

TERRIFIED OR EXCITED

Two men feel the same thing before giving a speech. Same racing heart, same sweat, same churning stomach.

One says, "I'm terrified."

The other says, "I'm excited."

Same body. Different word. Completely different experience. The terrified man wants to run. The excited man wants to perform. The word chose the reaction.

This isn't playing with words. It's how language drives behaviour. The word is a fork in the road, and most people take it

without noticing there was a choice.

WHO'S IN CHARGE

Listen to how a man talks about his own anger.

"I can't control my anger." That man is trapped. The sentence puts the anger in charge and makes him its victim.

"My anger is telling me a line's been crossed." That man is reading his own system. Same feeling, completely different frame, completely different outcome. One sentence leaves him at the mercy of the feeling. The other hands him the action: say what the line is, and hold it.

That was me as a kid. I had the word "angry". I didn't have the second sentence. Nobody told me anger was a message with an action attached, so the anger ran me.

APPROXIMATELY WHAT YOU WANT

Most of what we say to each other is approximate. "How are you?" "Fine." "Good day?" "Not bad." For small talk, that's fine.

But for what's going on inside you, the thing that drives your decisions, your relationships and your whole life, approximation will slowly ruin you.

Approximate words lead to approximate understanding. Approximate understanding leads to approximate action. Approximate action gets approximate results. So you spend your life getting approximately what you want, which isn't what you want at all.

"I need to get my life together" is approximate.

"I need to decide whether to stay in this job or start my business, and I've avoided deciding for six months because I'm scared of choosing wrong" is precise.

Only the second one can change anything.

I learned this in sales. The people who gave me vague problems got vague results. The ones who could say exactly what was wrong, what they felt and where they were stuck improved fast.

Precision doesn't come naturally. Your brain prefers vague, because vague is safe. If you never define the problem, you never have to face the answer. Vagueness is a defence mechanism.

SAME WORD, DIFFERENT RIVER

Heraclitus said you can't step into the same river twice. The water that was there a moment ago has gone. It looks the same, but it's different.

Words are like that. "Anxiety" in a psychiatrist's office means something different from "anxiety" between two mates in the pub. But we hear "I'm anxious" and reach for the scariest meaning, the one that says something is wrong with the person rather than with their situation.

What if anxiety wasn't a diagnosis but a data point? What if it simply meant: this person has too many open loops and needs to close some?

I'm not dismissing clinical anxiety. Some people need medication and therapy, and they should get it. But many men aren't clinically anxious. They're overloaded. The difference between those two is the difference between a medical condition and a behaviour problem. One needs a doctor. The other needs a decision.

THE TUBE MAP

People will say I'm oversimplifying. They're probably right. A neuroscientist could read my definitions and find seventeen things I've got wrong.

But look at the London Tube map. It bears almost no relationship to the real geography of London. The distances are wrong. The directions are wrong. And it's one of the most useful documents ever made, because it tells you which train to get on.

The man drowning at 3am doesn't need a textbook. He needs a Tube map: you're here, the exit is there, get on this train.

I'd rather give someone a simple tool they'll use than a perfect theory that sits on a shelf. The definitions in the next chapter will change as I learn more. Test them. If they don't fit, change them, and tell me why. But start with them, because something beats nothing, and nothing is what most men have right now.

TONIGHT'S TEST

The next time you feel something, don't grab the first word that comes. Pause and ask: what is this, actually?

If there's a weight in your chest, don't say "I'm depressed." Ask: do I feel trapped? Am I out of options? Am I hiding something?

If you feel scattered, don't say "I'm stressed." Ask: have I got too many things competing for my attention? Am I avoiding a decision? Am I being pulled two ways?

If you're dreading tomorrow, don't say "I'm nervous." Ask: what exactly am I picturing? Is it one thing?

Asking "what is this, actually?" is the core skill of the whole manual. Everything else builds on it.

The dictionary in the next chapter is a language upgrade for the part of your brain that reads its own signals. Change the words and the reading changes. Change the reading and the behaviour changes. Change the behaviour and the outcome changes.

It starts with a word.

USE IT TODAY

The word: Swap “I am” for “I feel” every time you describe a mood today.

The feeling: Notice how temporary it sounds once it’s “I feel”.

The action: Run tonight’s test on one feeling. Write the honest word on a scrap of paper and the one action next to it.

CHAPTER 7

The Dictionary

This chapter is the manual.

When you start feeling something, find it here. Each entry tells you what the feeling is, what it looks like, and the one action that answers it. The action puts the energy somewhere useful.

Dog-ear it. Bend the spine. Come back to it at 3am when your head is loud and you can't work out what's going on.

One tip before you start: paper. Post-it notes, A4 sheets, the back of an envelope. Kiera gets annoyed at how much paper I go through, but getting it out of your head and in front of your eyes changes everything. Some people need to see it, some need to say it, some need to write it. Whatever works for you, get it out.

THE ALARMS

These fire fast and loud. Your brain was built for the savannah, and it can't tell the difference between a lion and a difficult email. So learn to read the alarm instead of just reacting to it.

Fear

What it is: Your brain imagining something bad that hasn't happened yet, and reacting as if it has.

What it looks like: Avoidance. Procrastination. Overthinking that feels productive and produces nothing. The job that's sat on your list for weeks while you do seventeen easier things around it.
The action: Do it. Now. Jocko Willink puts it best: just do. Find the smallest piece you can do and do it. Fear collapses when you step into reality, because reality is almost always smaller than the simulation.

Procrastination is usually fear in disguise. And if a task feels impossible to start, you probably haven't broken it down far enough.

My mum makes all the CaliUnity t-shirts. When I first gave her the job, I wrote her a big to-do list. I came back a week later and nothing was done. I thought, here she is being lazy. Then I went round to the house and she said, "Ollie, I don't know how to turn the laptop on."

So I broke it down. Press this button. This is the password. Move the mouse to the bottom left. Click. Type "Cricut". Click on Cricut. Here's the email and password. That cured it on the spot. She knew exactly what to do, and she did it.

Maybe your procrastination isn't laziness. Maybe the first step just isn't small enough yet.
Carry this: Make the first step embarrassingly easy.

Stress

What it is: Two forces pulling you in opposite directions. Often your actions pointing one way while your values point another.
What it looks like: Tight shoulders. Short temper. Feeling pulled apart. Working harder and harder and going backwards.
The action: Align or choose. Every choice costs something else. The stress comes from pretending you can avoid the cost.

When we opened our first gym we had to find thirty grand in two days. That was stressful. But the bigger stress was this: Kiera had two dreams. She wanted a gym, and she wanted to travel the world. Those two pulled her apart. I wanted the gym too, and I wanted to make her dreams happen. So we chose both, and we paid for it.

We booked flights to Canada for May. We opened the gym in October. That gave us six months to make it work and make it run without us. We burnt the boats. We raised the money in two days and paid the bill, and the stress dropped.

Choosing both meant no going out. No drinking. Saving every penny. No eating out. Sleeping on the gym floor. Eighty-hour weeks. I could have chosen one thing and worked forty hours. I chose two and worked eighty. There's always a trade-off. You just have to choose it on purpose.

Carry this: Pick one, or knowingly pay for both.

Anxiety

What it is: Too many options. Too many open loops. Too many decisions you haven't made.

What it looks like: A background hum. Can't sit still. Can't focus. Starting things and not finishing them. Waking at 4am with a head full of things you haven't done.

The action: Decide. Pick one. Close the other tabs.

As I write this I've got three big things on: qualifying personal trainers through CaliAcademy, building online coaching, and supporting Kiera with the gym. I still get overwhelmed. I still get the hum. When it shows up, I grab a sheet of A4 and write down everything I need to do. Then I circle the one thing that will move

the needle most. I do that. Then I come back to the rest. The anxiety goes every time.

People say they're good at multitasking. Usually it means they aren't working on the one thing that would actually make a difference.

Anxiety and fear are different. Fear is about one specific thing. Anxiety is about everything at once. The man who can't sleep because of tomorrow's conversation has fear. The man who can't sleep because forty-seven things are fighting for his attention has anxiety. Different problem, different fix. Treat anxiety like fear and the tools won't work, and you'll think the tools are broken when you've just got the diagnosis wrong.

Carry this: Anxiety isn't caring too much. It's deciding too little.

Sadness

What it is: No options. Your mind scanning your life and finding no way forward.

What it looks like: Flatness. Heaviness. The colour draining out of things. Not wanting to get up, not because you're tired but because there's nothing worth getting up for. *What's the point?*

I think sadness often comes down to losing faith: the belief that the future can get better. When that goes, everything goes grey.

The action: Create one option. One door. Apply for one job. Send one message. Go for one walk. Not a solution, just proof that a solution could exist.

Carry this: Sadness lifts when you find a door, even one you don't walk through yet.

Anger

What it is: A line being crossed. Something you value is being threatened.

What it looks like: Heat. Volume. The urge to break something or dominate someone. Clenched jaw. When it's pushed down: cold resentment, sulking, sarcasm, withdrawal.

I was a very angry kid. And because every feeling in this chapter gets treated as bad, I want to say this: anger isn't bad. Is anger bad if it stops someone hurting your family? Is fear bad if it stops you stepping into traffic? Your body is trying to protect you.

The problem is that the alarm sometimes fires when there's no real threat. Your brain can't always tell a real line being crossed from someone cutting you up at a roundabout.

The action: Hold the line. Say what happened. Say what you need. "That's not OK. Here's what needs to change." Anger that's said clearly resolves. Anger that's swallowed turns into resentment. Anger that's let loose without aim does damage.

If you can't say it calmly yet, move first. Walk, run, hit a bag, then say it.

Carry this: Anger is self-respect. The problem is never the anger. It's where you aim it.

Disgust

What it is: Running into something that breaks your standards. Often it's something you did yourself.

What it looks like: Recoil. The urge to pull away. A curl of the lip at someone else, or a sick feeling at yourself after a binge, a lie, a night you'd rather forget.

The action: Set or raise the standard. If it's aimed at yourself, use it as fuel to change the behaviour, not as a reason to hate yourself. If it's aimed outwards, set the boundary or leave the room.
Carry this: Self-disgust is the part of you that still has standards, trying to pull you back to them.

THE PULLS

These pull you forwards. They don't need fixing. They need feeding.

Desire

What it is: Wanting something you don't have yet. The pull towards a future.
What it looks like: Restlessness with a direction. You can't stop thinking about the thing. Planning, researching, imagining.
The action: Take the first concrete step. Desire that stays in your head becomes fantasy. Desire that touches reality becomes ambition.
Carry this: Desire without action is daydreaming.

Excitement

What it is: High-energy anticipation. Your body getting ready for something that's both hard and rewarding.
What it looks like: Can't sit still, in a good way. Talking fast. Butterflies that don't feel like fear.
The action: Point it somewhere. Start the project, make the call, begin the session. Excitement left with nowhere to go burns out as anxiety.

Carry this: Excitement and anxiety feel the same in the body. The difference is whether you trust yourself to handle what's coming.

Hope

What it is: Believing a better future is possible, even when you can't see the path yet.
What it looks like: A lightness in the chest. The first crack in despair. Willing to try one more time.
The action: Protect it. Hope is fragile. It needs small, repeated evidence: one good day, one small win, one person who sees you.
Carry this: Hope isn't naive. It's the minimum belief you need to take the next step.

Faith

What it is: Trusting a process you can't fully see.
What it looks like: Turning up when you can't see results. Training for months without visible change. Building through the silent stretch where nothing seems to grow.

Faith is a messy word, so let me be specific. If you're reading this book, some part of you believes things can get better. That belief, however faint and however buried under cynicism and pain, is faith. Everyone has it, even atheists, even nihilists. The man who says he believes in nothing still has enough belief to eat breakfast, walk outside and take another breath.

You can't join the dots looking forwards. You can only join them looking back. So you follow your curiosity and your gut, and you trust that the dots will line up.

When I mention God in this book, and I will a couple of times, this is what I mean: the word we put on the things we don't under-

stand. Whatever makes flowers grow, wounds heal and broken people rebuild. Call it God, the universe or dumb luck. The label doesn't matter. The faith does.

The action: Keep going. Faith is a behaviour, not a feeling. You don't feel faithful and then carry on. You carry on, and the faith follows.

Carry this: Faith is what you have when the effort's been spent and the evidence hasn't arrived yet.

Curiosity

What it is: Meeting something you don't understand and feeling pulled towards it instead of away.

What it looks like: Questions. Reading, asking, testing.

The action: Follow it. Curiosity is your brain saying "this matters". Everything good I've built started with a question I couldn't let go of.

Carry this: Curiosity comes before mastery. Every expert started curious about one thing.

THE BLOCKS

These stop you. They're signals you haven't dealt with yet. They pile up when loops stay open, and they clear when you do the work.

Guilt

What it is: You did something and you know it was below your standard.

What it looks like: Heaviness. Avoiding the person. Lying awake replaying it.

The action: Fix it, face it, move forward. Apologise if you owe one. Change the behaviour if it was wrong. Call it attempt number one; none of us is perfect. Take the lesson and make sure it doesn't happen again. That's the biggest gift you can give the person you wronged. Sitting in guilt without acting is just going round in circles.

Carry this: Guilt says "I did something bad." Shame says "I am bad." One leads to repair. The other leads to hiding.

Shame

What it is: Believing something is deeply wrong with you. That you are the bad thing.

What it looks like: Withdrawal. Silence. Can't make eye contact. The certainty that if people really knew you, they'd leave.

Shame only lives in the dark.

The action: Tell one true thing to one safe person. Shame can't survive being seen. Say "this is who I actually am" out loud to someone who doesn't leave.

Carry this: Shame tells you you're the only one. You never are.

Regret

What it is: Wishing you'd chosen differently. Stuck looking back at a moment you can't change.

What it looks like: Replaying it. "If only I'd…" Torturing yourself with the other version.

The action: Same as guilt. Take the lesson, commit to the correction, let the moment go. Living in regret feels productive, but nothing changes.

Carry this: Regret has one job: to teach you. Once it has, show it the door.

Resentment

What it is: Anger that was never said. A line crossed and never held.

What it looks like: Bitterness. Keeping score. Snide comments. Thinking about someone else's behaviour more than your own.

There's an old saying: resentment is drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. Some people don't want to be helped, and that's OK. Thank them for what they taught you about yourself and move on. You don't have to save everyone.

The action: Say what you need to say. Or accept that this person can't give you what you want, and let it go.

Carry this: Resentment punishes you while they get on with their day.

Apathy

What it is: Shutdown. No motivation, no interest, no desire. Dead-battery quiet.

What it looks like: Nothing matters. Can't be bothered. Scrolling without seeing. Eating without tasting. My whole life at eighteen.

The action: Do one tiny thing. Make the bed. Walk for ten minutes. Text one person. Apathy doesn't respond to big plans. Tiny actions give tiny feedback, and tiny feedback is enough to restart the engine.

Carry this: Apathy isn't the absence of feeling. It's the fuse blowing after too much for too long.

Burnout

What it is: Effort that no longer brings any reward. The thing that used to feel good now feels empty.
What it looks like: Tiredness that sleep doesn't fix. Cynicism about work you used to love. Going through the motions.

I burnt out doing consultations for the gym. One of my best traits, and one of my worst, is that I believe in people more than they believe in themselves. I knew my own story. I knew the system worked. So every time someone didn't join, I took it as my fault. I need to get better. I need to learn more. That drive is what led to this book. It also burnt me out.

I stopped believing in the product, even though we were the top-rated gym in the area, because all I saw was rejection. The people who signed up went off to the coaches and changed their lives, and I never saw it. I wasn't on the gym floor. I wasn't reading the reviews. All I saw was the "no", never what happened after the "yes".

We had to build a sales team so I could step back. The lesson: make sure you can see that what you do is working. Otherwise you'll burn out wondering why you bother.
The action: Change the reward. Burnout is a reward problem more than an effort problem. Get novelty, rest, or a new way of seeing your impact. Build yourself a feedback loop.
Carry this: Burnout is a machine running without maintenance.

Loneliness

What it is: Having nobody who knows how you're really doing.
What it looks like: Every other feeling, louder. Evenings that stretch. Group chats you read and don't reply to. Being in a room

full of people and still alone.
The action: Create one connection. One conversation, one person, one real thing said. Then turn up somewhere regularly, the same place at the same time, until people know your name.
Carry this: Loneliness is the volume knob. Turn it down and everything else gets quieter.

Depression (as I've lived it)

What it is: For me it was hiding: the gap between who I was and who I was pretending to be, held so long that I ran out of energy.
What it looks like: Lights off inside. Heavy, flat, numb, for weeks rather than days.
The action: Say one real thing out loud to another person. And if it's lasted weeks, or you've had thoughts of not being here, see your GP or call one of the numbers at the back of this book. That isn't weakness. That's the action.
Carry this: Hiding takes energy. Truth gives it back.

THE STRENGTHS

These are what you build towards. They aren't destinations. They're practices.

Confidence

What it is: A stack of receipts. You look back at what you've done and think: if I project that forwards, I can probably do this too.

The word comes from the Latin for "with trust". Confidence is trusting yourself because you've got evidence you're trustworthy. Confidence without competence is delusion.

What it looks like: Calm. Speaking without hedging. Moving without hesitating.
The action: Make a promise to yourself. Keep it. Repeat. The score goes up every time you do what you said you'd do, and down every time you don't.
Carry this: Confidence isn't a personality trait. It's a stack of receipts.

Meta-confidence

What it is: Confidence that you can build confidence. Knowing that even if you lose everything, you know how to rebuild.
What it looks like: The man who fails and starts again without spiralling.
The action: Look back at your rebuild history. Every time you started from nothing and made something.
Carry this: A man who's been broken and rebuilt is harder to stop than a man who's never been tested.

Courage

What it is: Acting while you're afraid. The fear is still there. You move anyway.

You aren't brave and then act. You act, and then people call you brave. The doing comes first.
What it looks like: Doing the thing with shaking hands. Having the conversation with a wobbly voice.
The action: Start before you're ready.
Carry this: You're never brave before the moment. You become brave by going through it.

Discipline

What it is: Doing what you said you'd do, especially when you don't want to.

I don't buy most of the willpower talk. I set my environment up so I can't fail. I get up at 4am, and have done for years. How? My alarm lives downstairs and I sleep upstairs. By the time I've walked down to turn it off, I'm up. I've got a bedtime alarm too. It's not heroic. It's engineering.

People say, "I really want to get into running." Cool. Book the run club and tell your mate you'll see him there tomorrow. "I want to get fit." OK, buy ten sessions with a personal trainer right now and pay for them. Otherwise you're just talking.

The action: Remove the decision. Book it, pay for it, tell someone. Make not doing it harder than doing it.

Carry this: Discipline isn't punishment. It's what sets you free.

Patience

What it is: Keeping going without an immediate reward. Waiting for things to compound.

What it looks like: Months of training with nothing to show yet. Posting into the void. Trusting the reps.

Hormozi says patience is what you do in the meantime. If you're reading this, you're being patient while your investments grow. You're not pulling the money out early. You're compounding.

The action: Track inputs, not outputs. Did you turn up? Did you do the work? Then you're winning, even if the scoreboard hasn't caught up.

Carry this: Patience isn't sitting still. It's compounding.

Gratitude

What it is: Seeing the value of what you already have.
What it looks like: Pausing. Noticing. Cold water on your face in the morning. The first sip of coffee. A mate who checked in. A body that works.

A trick that works every time: imagine your eighty-five-year-old self waking up right now, in this exact moment. Your knees don't hurt. Your back works. The person you love is next to you. It's an ordinary Tuesday morning. And old you is crying, because it's so beautiful and he'd give anything to be back here.

You only know what you've got when you lose it. So imagine losing it all, then realise you still have it.
The action: Name three things each morning, and make them specific. "My knee didn't hurt on yesterday's run." "I'm grateful for my health" is a platitude and does nothing.
Carry this: Gratitude and misery can't sit in the same moment. Pick one.

Humility

What it is: Knowing what you're good at and knowing what you're bad at.

The word comes from *humus*, the earth: feet on the ground, head in the sky. If you ever think you've finished learning, you have.
What it looks like: Asking when you could pretend to know. Admitting you were wrong without falling apart.
The action: Find rooms where you're the least experienced person there.
Carry this: Ego and growth can't share a room.

Mental toughness

What it is: Keeping your effort and your decisions good when you're uncomfortable, tired or up against it. It's a skill, built by repetition.

What it looks like: The same quality at mile eighty as at mile one. The quitting thoughts are still there; you act anyway.

The action: Do hard things when you don't have to. Cold showers. Early alarms. The extra set. The conversation you're avoiding. Each one is a rep.

Carry this: Mental toughness isn't genetic. It's a callus, and you build it by choosing discomfort when comfort is available.

Happiness

What it is: Moments when what you're doing, what you value and where you are line up.

When I chased happiness I never found it. When I stopped chasing and started doing the things that made me happy, I was happy. Simple as that.

Hormozi tells a story about an old boss who said to him: "You came in on Monday looking really happy. I'm pretty sure happiness is just stringing together as many of those days as possible." That landed. When am I happiest? I worked it out, then did more of it, hour by hour, day by day.

The action: Work out which hours of your day make you happy. Do more of those and cut the ones that don't.

Carry this: The happiest men I know aren't the richest or the leanest. They're the most aligned.

Flow

What it is: Total absorption. You disappear into the work.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi wrote the book on it. Flow shows up when the stakes are real and the challenge is just past your current skill. You can set it up without risking your life.

What it looks like: Three hours that feel like thirty minutes. No running commentary in your head. Just the work.

The action: Match the challenge to your skill. Too easy and you're bored. Too hard and you're anxious. Just past what you can do now, within reach if you stretch: that's where flow lives.

Carry this: Set the conditions and flow turns up.

Focus

What it is: Getting rid of the alternatives.

Think of a marriage: you're ruling out every other partner. Think of a laser: scattered light pulled into one beam that cuts steel. Focus is commitment.

What it looks like: One task. Deep work. Time disappearing. Saying no to everything that isn't the priority.

The action: Choose the one thing. Phone in another room. Door shut. One tab open.

Carry this: What you pay attention to becomes your life.

HOW I ACTUALLY USE IT

I don't sit down with this chapter and scroll through it. The dictionary has to become reflex, the way a boxer doesn't think about slipping a punch.

Something fires. I feel the tightness, the heat, whatever it is. And the question comes automatically: what's the signal?

Tight chest and trapped: sadness. Create an option.

Buzzing, scattered, can't sit still: anxiety. Decide something.

Specific dread about one thing: fear. Do the thing.

Heat and the urge to shout: anger. A line's been crossed. Say it and hold it.

It takes seconds. The action follows. The loop closes.

I'm not perfect at it. Some days I'm too deep in it to step back. Some days the old patterns win, the scrolling and the distraction. Then I come back to it with curiosity, not shame. What happened? Which signal did I miss? Where did the loop break?

It isn't a cure. It's a practice, like the gym. Some days the signals are clear and the actions flow. Some days you're a mess and the dictionary feels useless.

It works. Come back to it.

These definitions are version one. They'll sharpen as I learn more, coach more and live more. But the principle underneath won't change: every feeling is a signal, every signal has an action, and when you match them, the feeling resolves.

USE IT TODAY

The word: Find the entry closest to how you feel right now.

The feeling: Read the "what it is" line out loud. Does it fit? If not, try the next closest.

The action: Do the action listed, today, in its smallest possible form.

PART THREE

The 5 B's

The 5 B's were invented on a run, and the origin story isn't very dignified.

I was running through Bath at about 6am, still dark. Wet tarmac, cold air, my breath fogging in front of me. Hormozi's podcast was in my ears. He was talking about frameworks, and how the best ideas can be squashed into something simple enough to remember without writing it down. My brain started playing a game: B-words.

Business was obvious. Behaviour. Brotherhood. Belonging, which felt right, because it's what makes people stick around. Then I needed one for the physical side, the thing that started everything for me. Body arrived mid-stride, somewhere near the canal path, while I was out of breath and running too fast, because I always run too fast when I'm thinking.

The whole thing came together in about fifteen minutes. Five B's. Five areas a man needs to get right, roughly in this order:

Body. Control yourself. **Belonging.** Control your environment. **Belief.** Control your story. **Behaviour.** Control your actions. **Building.** Control your future.

I said them out loud, gasping, to nobody. By the time I got home I'd mapped out this whole part of the book.

The manual in Part Two tells you what each feeling is asking for. The 5 B's are where you practise answering it.

CHAPTER 8

Body: Control Yourself

Before anything else, there's the body.

It's the first place you can test whether what you do actually matters. Push a weight and it moves. Run a mile and you finish. The feedback is instant and honest. Your body doesn't lie to you the way your brain does.

I was the heaviest I'd ever been when my parents dragged me to the gym. Mum every Saturday. Dad whenever he could after his post round. They refused to give up on me when I'd given up on myself. I couldn't bench the bar. I couldn't do a single pull-up. I got out of breath on the stairs. My body was a monument to years of choosing the easy option: the takeaway over the kitchen, the sofa over the park, the screen over the sun.

It was the first honest mirror I ever looked into. People lie. Your ego lies. Your excuses lie. The mirror, the barbell, the scales and the pull-up bar don't. They show you exactly where you are, with no spin.

When Dad stood in my doorway and said, "Get up, we're going," he didn't know he was starting a chain reaction. He thought he was doing what he always did: providing. The same way he provided by walking through the rain at 3am to deliver post. The same way he taught me press-ups and every sport I ever played. What he was really doing was putting me in the one place

where the link between effort and result is immediate and impossible to argue with.

You lift the weight or you don't. You finish the rep or you fail. Gravity doesn't care about your backstory.

I was terrible for months, the kind of terrible where people look away out of pity. My form was wrong, my breathing was wrong, and I had no programme. I'd do random machines in a random order and call it a workout.

But I kept going, and my parents kept refusing to let me quit. Somewhere in the chaos, something was happening that I couldn't name.

My body was responding. Slowly. A rep I couldn't do last week, I could do this week. A weight that had been impossible became just hard.

Each of those tiny changes was a receipt. A receipt of control. Proof that what I did mattered and the world answered my effort, after years of believing it didn't.

That's the first thing the body teaches: you're not a passenger. You're not on a horse you can't steer. You have reins, and when you pull them, something happens.

My parents saved my life with the gym. Not with words, and not with heart-to-hearts. That was never them. They were two people under huge strain who struggled to show love in the usual ways. But they believed in me, and their belief took the form of action: get up, go, you're capable of more than this. They put me in the one place where my body could start teaching me what my mind wasn't ready to hear.

THE FASTEST FEEDBACK IN YOUR LIFE

The gym is the simplest version of the behaviour loop: act, get feedback, adjust, repeat.

You squat. The mirror shows your form. Your coach says, "Knees out." You adjust. You squat again, better. The feedback is instant and the learning is fast.

Compare that with the rest of life. You make a business decision and the results show up in three months. The loop is so loose that most people can't connect what they did with what happened.

In the gym, the loop is two seconds. Every rep tells you something. You become a scientist of your own body.

I don't think it's ten thousand hours. I think it's ten thousand repetitions of the loop. And the fastest loop you have for training your mind is your body. That's why the body is the first B: you get more reps per hour there than anywhere else in your life.

I tell every man who walks into CaliUnity: "Your body is your first laboratory." Before you fix your mindset, your relationships, your career or your money, fix this. It's the fastest place to learn the skill of change.

MOVEMENT BEFORE MINDSET

You don't think your way into a new way of acting. You act your way into a new way of thinking. The body leads and the mind follows. In almost every case, the gap between feeling like shit and feeling OK is about thirty minutes of physical effort.

I've seen it hundreds of times. A man walks in looking like his world is ending: shoulders forward, eyes down, jaw clenched. He's had an awful day.

But he's here, so he warms up. Then he's thinking about the rings, the handstand, the thing he's been working towards for

weeks. You can't overthink your life when you're upside down. The session asks something of him, and that's the therapy. It demands presence.

An hour later he's a different man. His problems aren't solved, but something inside has shifted. He walked in feeling powerless. He walks out having proved, physically, that he can do hard things, and that proof changes how he approaches everything else.

Different movement does different jobs. A heavy weights session when I need a pump. A long run with someone who gets it when I need to talk something through. A hard solo run when I need to be alone with it. Stretching when I need to slow down. It's a toolkit. Use the tool the day needs.

Chris Williamson puts it well: when you get a pump in the gym, you're seeing what you'll look like in three months. For twenty minutes, you meet the future you.

ONE REP

Four months into training, I still couldn't do a pull-up. Not one. I'd hang from the bar like a sack of rice and pull and nothing happened. My arms shook. My face went red. My feet stayed exactly where they were.

So I did negatives: jump to the top and lower myself as slowly as I could. At first it wasn't slow at all. It was a controlled fall. But I did them every session, three sets of whatever I could manage.

Weeks passed. The negatives got slower. Five seconds. Eight. Ten.

Then one day I grabbed the bar, pulled, and my chin went over the top.

One rep. One shitty, grinding, form-destroyed rep that probably looked embarrassing from the outside. From the inside, for a man

who'd spent eighteen years believing his body was a prison, it was a revolution.

My mind had said: you can't. You're too heavy. You're too weak.

My body said: watch me.

Three seconds. Eighteen years of belief, gone.

I carried that rep around like a trophy for weeks. It wasn't the physical achievement. It was the question it raised. My mind had made a prediction, and my body had proved it wrong. So how many other predictions was my mind making that were also wrong? How many things was I telling myself I couldn't do that I actually could?

I still ask that question at 4am when the alarm goes and the dark outside the window says stay in bed. Can I? My mind says no. My body says: we've been through this. We both know the answer. Get up.

PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD, FOR EVERYTHING

Today I train calisthenics at a level eighteen-year-old me would have called fantasy. Planche work. Front lever progressions. Muscle-ups on the rings. Handstands. I went from obese to ultramarathons, to powerlifting, to calisthenics, to teaching others. Every one of those started with a single rep I could barely do.

Progressive overload means asking a bit more of your body over time. It applies to everything. In business, it's one client, then three, then ten. In relationships, it's one honest conversation, then another. In courage, it's one small risk, then a slightly bigger one.

The body teaches this through experience, not theory. You feel the weight get heavier and your capacity grow, and that changes your relationship with effort everywhere else.

THE SCORE

Discipline is a funny word. Most people hear punishment. Gritted teeth. Forced compliance.

That's not what it is. Discipline is keeping a promise to yourself. You said you'd train today, so you train. You said you'd eat protein first, so you do. You said bed by ten, so it's bed by ten.

Each kept promise builds something besides muscle: trust in yourself. The slowly growing belief that you're someone who does what he says.

That belief, built up over months and years, is what people call confidence. It isn't a character trait. It's a score. Every kept promise adds a point. Every broken one takes a point away.

The gym is where the score starts, because it's the simplest place to make and keep a promise. "I'll train three times this week." Do it, and the score goes up. Don't, and it goes down.

Nobody needs to motivate you. Just watch the score, protect it, and don't let it drop.

WALKING IN FOR THE FIRST TIME

Here's something that stops a lot of men from starting: body shame.

Walking into a gym for the first time when you're overweight, when you've never lifted anything heavier than a remote, takes more courage than most fit people will ever understand. The lad curling in the mirror has no idea what it cost you to walk through the door.

I know because I was you. I wouldn't take my t-shirt off. I swam in a t-shirt because of my moobs. Every mirror was an enemy. Every fit person was a jury.

Nobody is watching, by the way. The lad curling is looking at himself. The woman on the treadmill is thinking about her own problems.

And the few who are looking? They're looking with respect, because they remember what it felt like to walk in for the first time. If you asked, every one of them would say the same thing: "Fair play, mate. Welcome."

And if someone does take the piss, that's their insecurity talking. You'll never meet someone doing better than you who wants to tear you down.

ONE SYSTEM

Your body isn't separate from your mind. The split between physical and mental health is mostly a convenience for a health system that needed different departments in different buildings.

When you don't sleep, your ability to handle feelings collapses. When you eat badly, your mood drops. When you don't move, anxiety rises.

The neuroscientist Antonio Damasio studied patients with damage to the part of the brain that links emotion and decision-making. Their reasoning was fine. Their IQ was fine. But they couldn't decide. One could spend half an hour weighing up two dates for an appointment.

Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am." It's closer to: I feel, therefore I decide. Feelings aren't noise in the decision-making system. They are the system.

So looking after your body is the fastest way to look after your mind. The body responds predictably. Sleep more and you feel better. Eat well and you think more clearly. Train hard and you handle things more easily.

The body doesn't lie and it doesn't negotiate. That's why it's the first B.

USE IT TODAY

The word: *Receipt*.

The feeling: Powerless. "Nothing I do makes a difference."

The action: Get one receipt before bed. Ten press-ups, or five, or one. A ten-minute walk round the block. Then write down what you did. That's evidence your effort changes something.

CHAPTER 9

Belonging: Control Your Environment

Humans don't become themselves alone. They become themselves around other people. Get the people wrong and you'll get yourself wrong.

This is one of the most consistent findings in psychology: who you spend time with shapes who you become. Your brain adapts, constantly and automatically, to the norms of your tribe. The accent shifts. The vocabulary shifts. The priorities shift. It happens so gradually that it feels like your own choice.

It isn't. Or rather, the choice isn't whether you adapt to your tribe. That happens regardless. The choice is which tribe you put yourself in.

TWO TRIBES

At eighteen, my tribe was a group of lads who stayed up till 4am gaming, eating takeaways and slowly falling apart. None of us would have said we were falling apart. We were having fun. But the direction was downwards, and I went down with it, matching the group's level of effort, ambition and health, because that's what the group modelled.

Nobody trained, so I didn't. Nobody talked about feelings, so I didn't. Nobody had plans or any sense that tomorrow could be different, so neither did I.

Then I started going to the gym, and slowly my tribe changed.

The gym lads had different norms. They turned up early. They trained hard. They tracked their food. They had goals. Nobody lectured me. Behaviour is contagious, and the strongest signal in any room is what people are actually doing.

Within six months I was training consistently. Within a year I was eating better. Within two years I was coaching. My environment changed, that changed my behaviour, and that changed who I was.

I didn't plan any of it. I didn't sit down and write "I will change my peer group to improve my outcomes." I just went to the gym, the gym had different people, and the different people had different norms.

Your environment is shaping you right now, towards something. The lads drinking every Friday are making a habit normal. The colleague moaning about management every lunchtime is installing a belief in everyone who listens. The question is: towards what? And did you choose it?

A BELONGING MACHINE

When Kiera and I started CaliUnity we didn't have a business plan. We had a tree branch, some rings, and a belief that people needed somewhere to go. What grew out of those park sessions and into a building was a belonging machine.

A place where the normal behaviour was movement, effort, honesty and turning up. Where the rules were: you train, you struggle, you ask for help, you help others, you come back tomor-

row. Where men who'd never talked about their inner lives found themselves talking, because the tribe had made it normal.

The man in the park was saved by belonging. By having somewhere to go every week where people knew his face, where his absence would be noticed and his presence mattered, even if nobody said so. The calisthenics was a side effect. The community did the work.

Isolation bends reality. When you're truly alone, your inner voice runs unchecked. The negative thoughts loop. The shame grows. The fear inflates. And nobody's there to say, "Mate, it's not as bad as you think."

Isolation is a hall of mirrors where every reflection is you, warped and amplified. Community is the way out: a messy, imperfect group of people who turn up.

"I BECOME THE MEN I STAND BESIDE"

I wrote that on a whiteboard in the gym and I've never wiped it off.

The single biggest decision you can make is who you stand beside. Physically, regularly, in a room where real behaviour is visible. That's the input. Your health, your mindset and your ambition all follow from it.

I still run with a club almost every day. Even on hundred-mile weeks I rarely run alone. I've got a calisthenics coach and a business coach, and I've had coaches for years. I pay in time or money, always.

Your environment shows how committed you really are. If you really wanted to learn French, you'd move to France. If you really wanted Olympic gold, you'd give up everything else for it. The question isn't how much you want it. It's what you're willing to

give up. Commitment is the giving up, and your surroundings tell you the answer whether you like it or not.

Where you're born predicts a huge amount about how your life turns out before you've chosen anything at all. That's how strong environment is. Which means choosing your environment on purpose is one of the most powerful things you'll ever do.

SUPPORT AND STANDARD

A community that only tells you you're great is useless. A group that says everything you do is fine will keep you exactly where you are.

The communities that change people hold a standard. Gently sometimes, firmly often, consistently always. They expect effort. They notice when you slip, and they say so.

CaliUnity works because it's both. It's warm and welcoming, and also: get on the bar. Do the reps. Come back tomorrow. We'll help you, but we won't carry you. You have to move your own body. We're just here to make sure you don't do it alone.

Support without a standard is a comfort zone. A standard without support is a pressure cooker. Put them together and growth becomes almost inevitable.

Everyone cheers at the start, and everyone cheers at the finish. The people who need help are seventy per cent of the way in, when the novelty's dead and the finish isn't close enough to pull them through. That's where I try to be.

IT'S NOT JUST NICE. IT'S SURVIVAL.

Researchers who pulled together data on hundreds of thousands of people found that weak social ties are as bad for your lifespan as

smoking about fifteen cigarettes a day, and that loneliness raises the risk of dying early by around a quarter.

Men are dying of loneliness. Not all by suicide. Some by heart disease. Some by addiction. Some by the slow decline that comes from having nobody who knows how they're really doing.

And the fix is almost embarrassingly simple.

Find a group that does the thing you want to do. Go. Regularly. Even if it's awkward. Even if you feel like an outsider. Even if you want to leave halfway through the first session. Go back, and again.

Proximity does the work. Being near people who train makes training normal. Being near people who eat well makes eating well normal. Being near people who are honest makes honesty normal.

You don't need to change your character. You need to change your coordinates.

The right group also makes the wrong behaviour harder. If your Saturday mornings are spent with people who know your name and expect you, staying in bed till noon costs you something. Your absence is visible, and visibility creates accountability.

THE PERSON BESIDE YOU

Kiera. My partner. She threw the rings over the tree with me and has been there for every step since.

I'm not the self-made man the origin story might suggest. I'm the man who was lucky enough to find someone who believed in the same thing and was willing to build it with me. She saw things I couldn't. She held standards I wasn't holding.

Belonging isn't just about groups. It's about the person who stands closest to you, the one who sees you without the performance. If you have that person, protect that relationship like it's the

most important thing in your life, because it probably is. If you don't have them yet, start with the group. That's where those people are found.

MARCUS

A note first. I'm telling you what I used to do on consultations with gym clients. We'd talk about health and fitness, but really I was trying to understand their behaviour. This book is where that went.

I'll call him Marcus. It isn't his name, and the details are changed enough to protect him but true enough to matter.

Marcus was a software developer. Thirty-four. Worked from home. He hadn't left his flat for more than food shopping in about eight months. He told me on his consultation call, flatly, like a weather report: "Yeah, I just sort of stopped going out."

His reasons were polished. People are exhausting. Social situations are fake. He was an introvert. He needed his space. They sounded rehearsed.

Underneath all of them was one belief he'd never examined: I don't belong anywhere.

That belief had been installed in childhood and reinforced by years of experiences he'd read through that lens. Every awkward interaction confirmed it. Every friendship that faded confirmed it. A closed loop.

So we didn't start with belief. We started with the body.

Come to the gym. Just once. You don't have to talk to anyone. Just move. Put your body in a room with other bodies.

He came. He was terrified. He told me later he sat in his car for twenty minutes before he walked in. But he walked in.

Over the weeks, the belief started to crack. Nobody said anything clever. His body was in a room with other bodies, the other bodies didn't reject him, and for Marcus that absence of rejection was the most important evidence he'd ever had.

Week four, someone said "nice work" after a set. Week six, he stayed for a coffee afterwards. Week ten, he was training four mornings a week. Week fourteen, he told me CaliUnity was the only place he felt normal.

We didn't change his belief directly. We changed his environment, which gave his body new data, which gave his brain new evidence, which updated the belief on its own.

Body, then Belonging, then Belief. The order matters.

Marcus still trains four times a week and helps coach beginners on Saturdays. His flat is still his base, but it isn't his prison any more. "I don't belong anywhere" was never argued with. It was overwritten by a thousand small experiences that said otherwise.

USE IT TODAY

The word: *Lonely.* Say it to yourself if it's true. Most men never do.

The feeling: Everything else feeling louder than it should.

The action: Find one group that meets in person, every week, doing something physical: a run club, a gym class, a five-a-side, a park session. Book it or put it in your calendar now. Then text one mate one real sentence.

CHAPTER 10

Belief: Control Your Story

Your beliefs are running your life, and you didn't write most of them.

The story you tell yourself about who you are, what you can do, what you're worth and where you're going was mostly installed by other people: parents, teachers, mates, the culture, the internet. Now you're running on that code, making decisions based on beliefs you've never looked at.

Identity is a story you tell yourself so often that it starts to feel like a fact. "I'm not a morning person." "I'm rubbish with money." "I'm not the kind of bloke who goes to the gym." You've said them so many times they've set hard.

And unexamined certainty is one of the most dangerous things there is.

"I'm not confident" becomes self-fulfilling. You avoid situations that need confidence. Avoiding them gives you no evidence of confidence. No evidence confirms the belief. Round you go, in a loop so tight it feels like who you are.

But it's software, and software can be updated.

WE'LL SEE

There's an old Taoist story about a farmer.

His son gets a horse. The village says, “Good fortune.” The farmer says, “We’ll see.”

The son falls off the horse and breaks his leg. The village says, “Bad fortune.” The farmer says, “We’ll see.”

The army comes through, taking every young man off to war. They pass over the son because of his broken leg. The village says, “Good fortune.”

The farmer says, “We’ll see.”

Steve Jobs said you can only join the dots looking backwards. Shakespeare had Hamlet say, “There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.” The Stoics built a whole philosophy on the idea that we don’t control events, only how we read them.

The farmer says it more simply. You don’t know. The thing you’re calling a disaster might be the best thing that ever happened to you, and you won’t see it for years.

So stop labelling events and start using them. Don’t ask whether this is good or bad. Ask: “What would it take for this to be the best thing that’s ever happened to me?”

It’s an engineering question. Given what’s happened, and what can’t un-happen, what’s the most useful thing I can build from it?

That’s harder than “look on the bright side”. It’s a real search for the reading that produces the most useful behaviour.

I’ve lived this. The nihilism that nearly finished me became the foundation of a method that now helps other men. The habits that wrecked my teenage years gave me the skills I coach with. The hard years my family went through taught me more about blame, love and forgiveness than any book.

Was any of it good? Was it bad?

We’ll see.

MY OLD SOFTWARE

I was a nihilist. That was my software. Nothing matters. People are rubbish. The world is meaningless.

That belief controlled everything: my eating, my training, my relationships, my willingness to try. Why get in shape if we all die? Why build anything if it'll all fall down?

And I had evidence. That's what made it so hard to shake. I could point to the stress in our house, to friends who'd let me down. The evidence was real. The interpretation was the problem.

Because the evidence for the opposite story was just as real. Parents who believed in me enough to keep turning up, in the middle of their own mess. Friends who turned up, imperfectly, but turned up.

Both stories were available. Both had evidence. I was choosing one and ignoring the other. That was a habit of interpretation, and habits can be changed.

EVERY ACTION IS A VOTE

James Clear writes about identity-based habits. Most people try to change behaviour directly: I'll go to the gym three times this week. That works for a while. But underneath, you're still a person-who-doesn't-go-to-the-gym forcing himself to go, and in the long run identity wins.

So change the identity: "I'm someone who trains."

How? Not by sticking quotes on the mirror. By action. Every action is a vote for the person you want to become. Go to the gym: one vote for "I train." Eat protein first: one vote for "I look after myself." Turn up when you said you would: one vote for "I keep my word."

Cast enough votes and you win the election. Not all at once. Vote by vote, rep by rep, until one day you notice you're not forcing yourself to train any more. You just train, because that's who you are.

That's how I went from nihilist to builder. Not one big revelation. Thousands of tiny actions, until the weight of evidence buried the old story.

DO, BE, HAVE

Most people run on Be, Do, Have: "Once I *am* confident, I'll *do* the hard things, and then I'll *have* the results." They wait to feel confident before they take the risk.

They'll wait forever.

It works the other way. You *do* the thing. You turn up, take the risk, make the call. Then you *become* the person who does that. Then you *have* the results.

Action comes before identity. Always.

YOUR BRAIN'S FILTER

There's a popular idea, manifestation, that most sensible people roll their eyes at. Visualise what you want, believe hard enough, and the universe delivers.

Bollocks. The universe doesn't know you exist, and it definitely doesn't have a postal service.

But underneath the bollocks there's something real. Your brain has a filtering system, the reticular activating system, that decides which bits of the flood of information around you reach your conscious mind.

You're in a loud room with hundreds of conversations going on. You can't follow any of them. Then someone across the room says

your name, and your attention snaps straight to them. You heard it through the noise because your brain is permanently tuned to it.

Spend time thinking about what you want, planning it, writing it down, and your brain starts tuning in to things related to it. Opportunities you'd have walked past, you now notice. They were always there.

Belief sets the filter. Believe you're worthless and you'll find evidence everywhere. Believe you can change and you'll start spotting doors you walked past a hundred times.

So "control your story" doesn't mean lie to yourself. It means: look at the beliefs you're running, ask where they came from, test them against the evidence, and if they aren't serving you, update them on purpose, through action.

"I'M NOT QUALIFIED"

One belief nearly stopped me building CaliUnity.

"I'm not qualified."

That sentence ran like a screensaver in my head for months. Every time someone asked me to coach them. Every time I thought about opening the gym. And it felt true, because I didn't have a coaching qualification at the time.

But the belief was doing a job. It was protecting me from failure. If I never try, I can never fail. If I never call myself a coach, I can never be exposed as a fraud. It was a safety mechanism dressed up as humility.

I see this in men all the time. "I'm not ready." "I don't know enough." "I need another qualification." "I need to get in shape first." Each one sounds reasonable. Each one is fear wearing a sensible jacket.

The test is simple. Ask: "If I knew I couldn't fail, would I still need this?" If the answer is no, the belief is a shield, not a truth.

I started coaching without a qualification, and I was honest about it: "I don't have a certificate. I do have five hundred hours of training and a hundred conversations that taught me what works." People responded to the honesty. Honesty is its own kind of qualification.

I've since qualified, Active IQ Level 2 and Level 3, because qualifications matter. But if I'd believed I needed them before I could start, that belief would have killed CaliUnity before it was born.

How many things in your life are being killed by a belief you've never examined?

THE BELIEF AUDIT

Theory without practice is just entertainment, so here's the tool.

Once a month, or whenever you feel stuck, sit down with a sheet of paper and write the sentences you say about yourself most often. The scripts that run on loop. "I'm not good enough." "I'm not clever enough." "People like me don't get to do things like that."

Write them all down. Don't filter.

Next to each one, write where it came from. Who said it first? A parent? A teacher? A bully? A coach who gave up on you? An ex who said something in anger that you filed away as fact?

The source usually surprises people. The belief they thought was a fact turns out to be one sentence, said once, by one person, that they never questioned, and it's been running their life for ten or twenty years.

You wouldn't run your business on software from 2004. Why are you running your life on beliefs from Year 8?

Test each belief against your actual life now. If the evidence doesn't back it up, delete it. Then install the new one the only way that works: by doing the thing the old belief said you couldn't.

It takes twenty minutes. It might find the belief that's held you in place for a decade.

USE IT TODAY

The word: The sentence you say about yourself most. Write it down word for word.

The feeling: Usually shame or fear, dressed up as a fact.

The action: Write where it came from. Then do one small thing tonight that votes against it.

CHAPTER 11

Behaviour: Control Your Actions

Every real change in my life came from the same place: a conversation.

A conversation between me and another person, where something got said that shifted how I saw myself or my situation. That shift produced an action, and the action produced a result.

That's why sales changed my life. Strip a sales conversation back to its bones and it's one person helping another see something they can't see on their own, then helping them take an action they wouldn't take alone.

That's coaching. That's therapy. That's parenting. That's leadership. That's friendship, when it's working.

EVERY OBJECTION IS A FEELING IN DISGUISE

I've sat across from men and heard every version of the same few sentences.

"I don't have time." That's avoidance. "I can't afford it." That's no options: sadness by another name. "I need to think about it." That's too many options: anxiety in a sensible jumper. "My partner wouldn't like it." That's fear, pointed at someone else. "I've tried before and it didn't work." That's regret pretending to be logic.

Every objection is a feeling dressed up as a reason.

"I don't have time" sounds like a diary problem. It isn't. You found two hours to scroll Instagram yesterday. The time exists. What doesn't exist is permission to put yourself first, and that's a shame problem, not a calendar problem.

Over the years I've found that objections fall into three groups.

Blaming the circumstances. "The timing's not right." "My schedule won't allow it." Test it against reality. When will the timing be right? What exactly needs to change?

Handing the decision to someone else. "I need to ask my partner." "My mate tried this and it didn't work for him." Hand the decision back. Would your partner want you to keep struggling, or to get help?

Doubting yourself. "I'm not sure it's for me." "I've never stuck at anything." This is the hardest to spot. Ask what specifically makes them unsure, and deal with that.

The man blaming circumstances is usually afraid. The man handing it off is usually anxious. The man doubting himself is usually ashamed. Read the feeling, answer the feeling, and the objection dissolves.

This works on your own excuses too. Next time you hear yourself say one, ask which group it's in, and which feeling is wearing it.

THE ONE THING YOU CONTROL

You can't control your feelings directly. You can't control other people. You can control exactly one thing: what you do. And what you do decides every outcome in your life.

The worst moment is almost always the second before. The second before you press send. The second before you walk into the

room. The second before you dial. I've made thousands of cold calls, walked into rooms where I knew nobody, and felt my heart racing and my voice threatening to crack. Every time, the worst part was the second before. Every time, the thing itself was fine.

Act, and you're in the present. The simulation stops and reality starts, and reality is almost always more manageable.

EVERYONE IS MANAGING HOW THEY FEEL

Here's what sales taught me that I've never heard anyone else say.

Every person you meet is trying to manage how they feel. The angry customer. The client who won't commit. The passive-aggressive colleague. The man who won't talk about his feelings. The teenager scrolling for hours. All of them are doing the same job: trying to feel OK. The methods vary. The job doesn't.

See people through that lens, not as difficult or broken or wrong but as humans trying to manage what's going on inside with the tools they've got, and everything changes. Empathy comes easily. Patience gets easier.

I don't think anybody is truly bad. I think a lot of people are ignorant, in the plain sense of the word: they can't see.

I know that sounds naive, or like something a twenty-seven-year-old would say. But try this. Think of someone you can't stand. Now imagine seeing their whole life from birth: every influence, every wound, every time they were hurt, every time the world taught them the wrong lesson and they believed it because they had no reason not to.

Would you still hate them? Or would you understand them? I'm not saying approve. I'm not saying forgive. Just understand: see how what went in produced what came out.

I don't think understanding and hatred can live in the same place. People do terrible things from narrow windows, where their own pain is all they can see. Widen the window and the behaviour changes. That's what this book is trying to do for you: widen the window on your own inside, which widens it on everyone else's.

BEHAVIOURAL VOLUME

The number of conscious choices you make in a day sets the speed of your change.

Most people make very few. They run on autopilot: wake up the same way, eat the same things, react to the same triggers with the same reactions.

When you're running the manual, you might make twenty or thirty conscious choices a day. Notice the feeling. Name it. Pick the action. Do it. See what happens. Each one is a rep.

More reps, faster progress. Same maths as the gym.

"WE MISSED YOU TUESDAY"

Here's a real consultation.

A man books in. Forty-two. Works in finance. Hasn't trained in three years. His wife sent him. He doesn't want to be there.

I can see it before he speaks. Arms crossed. Leaning back. Eyes scanning the gym for the quickest way out.

I don't ask, "What are your goals?" He'd answer that on autopilot. I ask, "What made you book this today? What happened?"

Silence. Then: "My wife's worried about me. I've put on three stone since Covid. I don't sleep. I drink too much."

That's more honest than most first answers. So I stay quiet and let the silence work. After a few seconds he adds, "I think I'm depressed."

Now we're somewhere real. I ask what that feels like for him.

"Like nothing matters. I go through the motions at work, come home, sit on the sofa, drink wine, watch TV, and it's the same every day and I can't see it changing."

I hear it. Nothing matters. Can't see it changing. No options. I'm not a doctor and I don't diagnose anyone, but what he's describing sounds a lot like sadness: a man who can't see a single lever he can pull.

I ask what he's tried. "Bought a Peloton. Did it for two weeks. Joined a gym near work. Went three times. Tried dry January. Made it to the tenth."

He isn't lazy. He's tried plenty. Each attempt failed because the loop never closed. The Peloton was lonely. The gym was anonymous. Dry January had nothing to replace the drinking.

So I paint the picture. "Imagine it's three months from now. You're sleeping through the night. You've lost a stone. You've got a group of blokes you train with who actually know your name. The wine's down to weekends because you've got something you'd rather do with your evenings. What does that feel like?"

His arms uncross a little. "That sounds… good."

"That's what we do here. Not just training. A place to be. People who notice if you don't turn up."

He has two concerns: money and time. For money, I show him the cost per session next to the cost of his weekly wine. The numbers are embarrassing in our favour. For time, I show him the timetable and ask him to pick two sessions. He finds them straight away.

He joins. He comes twice a week. By month two it's three times. By month four the wine is weekends only, he's sleeping

through the night, he's lost eleven pounds, and his wife has stopped worrying.

He told me later that what changed him wasn't the exercise. It was that sentence: "People who notice if you don't turn up." For three years he'd been invisible. At work he was a face on a Zoom call. At home he was a shape on the sofa. Nobody missed him when he wasn't there.

The gym gave him visibility. His name on a whiteboard. His spot in the class. The nod from the coach when he walked in. And the message when he missed a session:

"Everything alright, mate? We missed you Tuesday."

Four words that changed the direction of a man's life. *We missed you Tuesday.* They made him feel seen. They turned him from a face in a crowd into a person with a name, a spot and a place.

One conversation. Twenty minutes. Sales, coaching and behaviour change are the same thing.

CLOSER

The structure of that conversation is what Hormozi calls CLOSER. When I first learned it, it changed how I saw every interaction.

Clarify why they're here. **Label** the problem. **Overview** what they've tried. **Sell** the destination, not the vehicle. **Explain** away the concerns. **Reinforce** the decision.

I use it on sales calls, in coaching, in conversations with my parents, in arguments with Kiera. And in my own head when I can't decide something. Why am I here? What's the actual problem? What have I already tried? What does it look like if I sort this? What's really stopping me? Am I making the right call?

It works everywhere because the mechanics are the same everywhere. Behaviour change is behaviour change, whether you're

choosing a gym or deciding whether to leave a job.

SELLING IS HELPING SOMEONE TAKE THEMSELVES SERIOUSLY

I used to be terrified of sales. Asking someone for money made me feel sick.

Then I saw it differently. Selling is giving someone something they need and asking them to invest in themselves. Buying is the first behaviour change: the first commitment, the first vote for the person they want to become.

The man who pays for coaching has made his first commitment. He's put money down, and you treat the things you've invested in differently. You turn up more. You try harder.

Selling someone coaching is helping them take themselves seriously.

That idea made me better at coaching, better at business and better in relationships, because the skill under all of them is the same: helping someone see what they can't see, then helping them act on it.

NAME THE GAP

Everyone you talk to has a gap between where they are and where they want to be, and most of what they're feeling comes from that gap.

Frustrated at work? That's the gap between the job you've got and the one you want. Angry with your partner? That's the gap between the relationship you have and the one you want.

Your job, as a coach, mate, partner or parent, is to make the gap visible, then help them build a bridge. You can't close someone else's gap for them. But most people feel the gap without seeing it.

They feel the distance without knowing what they're distant from. Help them see it clearly and you've given them more than most people ever get.

FEEDBACK IS THE OTHER HALF

Action without feedback is just movement. You're working hard with no idea whether it's the right direction.

The gym has the fastest feedback of anything I know. You lift, you feel it, the next rep adjusts itself. That's why beginners improve so quickly in the gym and so slowly everywhere else.

Business feedback takes weeks or months. Relationships are slower still: you change how you show up, and the other person might not notice for months.

That's why the body comes first: the feedback is instant. And it's why building comes last: the feedback is slowest, and you need years of practice on faster loops before that wait feels bearable.

More reps, tighter loops, faster progress. Gym, sales, marriage: same maths.

USE IT TODAY

The word: Your favourite excuse. Write it down exactly as you'd say it.

The feeling: Which group is it in, circumstances, someone else, or self-doubt? And which feeling is wearing it: fear, anxiety or shame?

The action: Answer the feeling, not the excuse. Then text one person who's gone quiet: "Everything alright, mate? Missed you." You might be someone's Tuesday.

CHAPTER 12

Building: Control Your Future

The first four B's are about you: Body, Belonging, Belief, Behaviour. Getting your own house in order.

The fifth is about everyone else.

Building is what happens when you've done enough work on yourself that your energy starts pointing outwards. You're out of survival mode. The fires are under control. Now you've got spare energy, attention, time and skill, and you need somewhere to put it.

Building is taking what you've learned and turning it into something that helps other people and outlasts you. It doesn't have to be a business. It can be a family, a Thursday-night running group, a kid you mentor who reminds you of you.

THE SAME ARC, THREE TIMES

Once you see the shape, you see it everywhere.

I first noticed it standing at a whiteboard one evening, mapping out a CaliUnity member's journey. A new member arrives: "I want to get in shape." I, I, I. That's exactly where they should start. They train for a few months. The body changes. The confidence grows. They start helping the person next to them: spotting a set, explaining a movement, making the new person welcome the way someone once welcomed them.

Six months in, they're helping coach the beginners at weekend sessions, giving away what they've learned. The language has completely changed. Now it's "How can I help this person?"

Then I saw it in my own life. "I want to quit engineering." I, I, I. Then: "How can I be useful during lockdown?" The rings over the tree, and everything after.

Then I saw it in CaliAcademy, the course we built for coaches, which has fifteen levels. Without my planning it, the structure follows the same arc. The first five levels are proof: get your own body right, get qualified, show you can do the thing. You can't teach what you haven't done. Levels six to ten are usefulness: coach, help, apply the proof to other people's problems. Levels eleven to fifteen are giving back: mentor other coaches, build things that work without you.

Proof. Usefulness. Giving back.

TO KEEP IT, GIVE IT AWAY

There's a principle from recovery programmes that rewired how I think: to keep something, you have to give it away.

In twelve-step groups it's the sponsor model: one man who's been through the fire walks alongside another man who's still in it. Not a professional, just someone who's lived it, passing on what he learned. CaliUnity does this. Coaching does this. This book is me doing it. The giving is what makes it real. Teaching is what fixes the learning in place.

Goggins ran 10K, then 20K, then a hundred miles, and then he told the world about it. The telling is part of the keeping. Share the lesson or it evaporates.

So, in practice: get your proof, be useful, give it away.

Proof first. Every client, every reader, every student is asking, "Why should I listen to you?" The answer can't be "because I read a book". It has to be "because I've done it". I went from obese to ultramarathons. From addicted to coaching other people through their habits. From nihilist to building a gym that won Best Business in Bath. Do the hard thing first and get your receipts.
Then be useful. Take the proof and apply it. Help one person, then another, until helping is a habit and being useful is who you are.
Then give it away. Teach others to do what you did. Build the thing that runs without you.

THE GYM WAS MY LABORATORY

I had to learn these skills somewhere, and the gym was where.

Think about it. If I couldn't get someone to join a gym with a risk-free guarantee and the best results in Bath, how was I ever going to talk a man off a ledge? If I couldn't help someone get in shape, how could I help someone want to stay alive? I had to get good at the small version before I could attempt the big one.

So I did that for years, and the whole time I was writing this book in my head.

Today the gym runs itself. I don't take a wage from it. We handed it back to the community as a CIC, a not-for-profit, because it was never really mine. Harvey runs the day-to-day, Kiera leads it, the coaches coach, and the members help each other. Through CaliAcademy we're qualifying coaches across the UK so they can bring what we built to their own towns.

TOM

The moment I understood what building really means was in 2023. CaliUnity had been open about two years, with maybe eighty

members. I was coaching a morning class of eight people when a new guy walked in halfway through: late twenties, nervous, clearly out of his comfort zone.

I welcomed him, showed him the basics, and paired him with a member who could keep an eye on him.

Then something happened that made me stop mid-sentence.

The member I'd paired him with, a guy called Tom who'd been with us about a year, started coaching the new lad. I hadn't asked him to. Twelve months earlier, Tom had been the nervous new guy, and he knew exactly what this man needed to hear.

I stood back and watched.

Tom said the right things. He showed the right movements. He gave off the calm that lets a beginner breathe. He didn't rush him and he didn't overwhelm him.

That's building. A man changed by a community, passing it on to a man who'd just walked in. Tom didn't need me in that moment. He'd absorbed the welcome, the patience, the standard and the support, and he was passing them on, like a cell dividing.

My favourite moment came later. I'd stepped back from the gym, came in for a session, and a member asked me, "So how long have you been working here?"

I'd built the place. That was the moment I knew it was working.

The test of real building is whether it needs you. If it dies when you stop, you built a job. If it grows when you step away, you built a system.

I BUILD THINGS THAT BUILD PEOPLE

I wrote that sentence on a whiteboard at 2am and I've never been able to improve on it.

I don't build for scale or exits or LinkedIn clout. I build because building is the biggest lever I've found for helping people. One conversation helps one person. One gym helps a community. One book can help thousands. A framework, if it's good enough, helps anyone who picks it up, for as long as they need it.

The practical side is unglamorous. Systems, spreadsheets and meetings. Things breaking, getting fixed and breaking again. Hiring the wrong person. Launching something nobody wants. Cash-flow worries at 6am and a crisis at midnight. The constant, gnawing question of whether any of it will work.

And I love it, because the mess is feedback. Every crisis tests everything in the first four B's. Can I handle pressure? Can I decide without all the information? Can I stay disciplined when the easy wins dry up?

If yes, keep building. If no, go back to the foundations: train, reconnect with your people, check your beliefs, practise the behaviour.

Building isn't an escape from the inner work. It's where the inner work gets tested.

RUSTY PIPE

I'm not religious in the church sense. But I believe there's a pattern bigger than any one life: the dots join up looking backwards even when they look random going forwards, and your worst chapter might be setting up your best.

Jordan Peterson describes God as whatever sits at the top of your hierarchy of values: the thing you organise your life around, whether you call it God or not. A mountaintop you'll never quite reach but spend your life climbing towards.

I think of myself as a rusty pipe. Whatever you want to call the force that flows through people when they're useful and putting others first, it flows through me when I'm useful. When I'm selfish, the pipe blocks.

Most mornings I say the Serenity Prayer: "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." I'm not saying it to a bearded man in the sky. I'm saying it to whatever keeps me moving. Help me be useful.

My natural setting is still eighteen-year-old Ollie: selfish, insecure, thinking only about me. Choosing the man who wants to give back takes effort every day. If I stop, I slide back. But every action in the right direction makes the next one a bit easier. Every action is a vote, and there's no standing still.

MONEY

Men have a complicated relationship with money and most won't admit it.

Money isn't evil. Wanting it isn't shallow. Making it isn't selfish. It's a tool, like a hammer: you can build a house with it or hurt someone with it. The hammer isn't the problem. The hand is.

The men with the healthiest relationship with money see it as a measure of value created: I earned this because I helped this many people this much. Bob Burg puts it simply in *The Go-Giver*: what you earn follows how many people you help and how deeply.

The men with the worst relationship with money either worship it or hate it. The worshippers give up everything for it and find it doesn't fill the hole. The haters refuse to chase it on principle, then resent the people who have it. Both are avoiding something.

Wealth isn't money anyway. It's leverage plus time freedom. Leverage is producing results out of proportion to your effort: writing a book, building a system, teaching a framework. Time freedom is choosing how you spend your hours. Build those two, and the money is a side effect.

LONG GAMES WITH LONG PEOPLE

Naval Ravikant says the biggest returns in life come from playing long-term games with long-term people. It's stuck with me like a tattoo on the inside of my skull.

Everything good I've built came from long games. CaliUnity exists because Kiera and I played the same game for years. The framework in this book exists because I stayed in the same conversations for a decade.

I'm not patient by nature. Ask anyone who's worked with me. But I've learned, painfully and expensively, that the short game is a lie. It promises speed and delivers nothing. The long game promises nothing and delivers everything.

Most people stay in jobs not for the money but for the predictability. They can see the next payslip coming. If everyone were guaranteed a decent result ten years from now, they'd all start something. It isn't the work that stops people. It's not knowing.

So build for the long term. Build things that compound. Build things that build people. And play the same game, with the same people, for as long as it's worth playing.

You start by fixing yourself. You end by fixing your corner of the world, one gym, one book, one run, one conversation at a time.

USE IT TODAY

The word: *Useful.*

The feeling: Restless, with energy and nowhere to put it. Or the flatness that comes from everything being about you.

The action: Give one thing away. Teach someone a skill you've got. Answer a question in a group chat in full instead of with a thumbs-up. Share the lesson from your last bad week with someone who's in one now.

PART FOUR

The Physics of Change

CHAPTER 13

The Mechanics

Here's the machinery underneath everything so far.

Control leads to prediction. Prediction leads to safety. Safety leads to peace.

Your nervous system wants control because control is how it predicts what's coming, and predicting what's coming is how it keeps you alive. Anxiety is too many predictions running at once and tangling. Confidence is when your predictions match what actually happens: you've done this before, so there's no gap and no panic.

Think about a job interview. If you've prepared, you know the company and you've done interviews before, you're nervous but steady, because you can predict roughly what will happen. Now picture being marched into a room you've never seen, to meet people you don't know, for a reason nobody's explained. Same body, same man, and now every alarm is going off. The room isn't more dangerous. It's less predictable, and to your nervous system those feel the same.

That's what the dictionary does. It's interview prep for your own inside. It makes your feelings predictable: when this happens I tend to feel that, and when I feel that, the action is this. A nervous system that can predict calms down, and when it calms down, the thinking part of your brain comes back online.

Calm first. Think second. Act third. Most people try to think their way out of a panic. You can't. When the alarm is firing, the rational brain is locked out.

Most people believe the sensible, planning part of the brain is driving and the monkey is strapped in the back. It's the other way round. The monkey is driving and always has been. You won't win a fight for the wheel. What you can do is hand the monkey a map.

WHY PEOPLE RESIST HELP

The prediction model explains something that confuses everyone who has ever tried to help someone: why people push help away.

You'd think a drowning man would grab the rope. But people cancel the appointment, stop replying, and say they'll start on Monday, and Monday never comes.

That isn't stupidity or ungratefulness. Your nervous system would rather have pain it can predict than pleasure it can't. Change is unpredictable by definition: new routines, new people, new feelings, new ways to fail. So the system defends the status quo, however miserable, because at least it knows what's coming. It's why people stay in bad relationships and go back to places that hurt them.

So the way through resistance isn't force or a better argument. It's predictability. Make the new path as predictable as you can. Here's day one. Here's what you'll feel. Here's what we'll do when you feel it. Here's week two. Every piece of predictability lowers the threat, until one quiet day the new path feels less scary than the old one.

I've watched men say "next week" for months. Then something small tips it, a photo they didn't like, a flight of stairs, a comment

from their kid, and they simply turn up, early, on a Tuesday. The wall they'd been pushing against turned out to be paper-thin.

Keep turning up to the wall. Not harder. Just consistently.

When prediction fails over and over, when nothing you do seems to change anything, the brain can give up altogether. Psychologists call this learned helplessness. The brain decides action is pointless and stops trying. The way back is small actions that produce predictable results, again and again, until the brain learns that the button works. That's why the body comes first, and why the actions in this book are so small.

Your nervous system also handles social threat much like physical threat. Being laughed at in a meeting can set off the same alarm as being chased. For most of history, being thrown out of the tribe meant dying. So the man who can't speak up in a meeting isn't weak, and the man terrified of walking into a gym isn't pathetic. His alarm is doing its job. Walk in, survive, and the alarm recalibrates. Evidence rewrites prediction.

PAIN AND SUFFERING

Pain is physical. Suffering is the story.

Your knee says: pain, six out of ten, left side, when I put weight on it. The narrator in your head says: you're done, you'll never recover, this is permanent.

The knee is honest. The narrator catastrophises.

I learned this on a long run. Mile thirty-something, everything hurting. I noticed for the first time that the pain itself was manageable. What was unbearable was the story: how am I going to do this for another twenty miles? What if it gets worse? When I dropped the story and just listened to my body, the pain was still there but the suffering halved.

Epictetus said it two thousand years ago: "It's not things that upset us, but our judgements about things."

A FEW LAWS

These are the rules I come back to at 4am when something's stuck. They aren't laws of physics. They're reliable enough to build on.

Feedback loops. A tight loop means fast learning. A loose loop means wasted effort. A broken loop means people give up. That's why the gym works, and why a six-month project with no signal in the middle is brutal.

Framing. Same event, different frame, completely different behaviour. Framing isn't positive thinking; positive thinking is lazy. Framing asks: what's the most useful way to read this?

Specificity. Vague goals produce vague behaviour. "I want to get healthier" produces nothing. "Two hundred grams of protein today" produces action. I've watched clients fail for years on the first sentence and succeed in six weeks on the second. Same person, different words.

Environment beats willpower. The man who changes isn't the one with the strongest will. He's the one who set things up so he rarely needs it. Stock the fridge. Lay out the gym kit. Delete the apps. Put the phone in another room. My alarm lives downstairs. Harvey knows I'm in bed by nine. Kiera clears the junk out of the kitchen before it turns into a negotiation. Willpower is for people who like losing fights.

Modelling. People learn far more from watching than from being told. You can tell someone what to do a thousand times, or show them once by doing it. That's why belonging changes behaviour faster than any book, this one included.

Accountability. Behaviour that's watched changes. Admitting to your training partner that you skipped Monday often hurts more than training on Monday. Use that. Tell someone what you're going to do, and let them watch.

Compounding. It isn't the maths that breaks people. It's the waiting. Small things done consistently produce results out of all proportion, but late: month twelve can give you more than the first eleven combined. Most people quit in month two because they expect straight-line returns from a curve. The results always lag the effort. Trust the gap. I still struggle with this one.

Minimum effective dose. When you're overwhelmed, do the smallest thing that counts. One press-up. One honest answer. One loop closed. Momentum is easier to keep going than to start, but you have to start it.

Failure is feedback. Success says keep going. Failure says adjust. The men who improve fastest in the gym are the ones who fail most often. Same in business. Same in marriage.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

In 1973, at Princeton, two psychologists, John Darley and Daniel Batson, set up an experiment with trainee priests. Each was asked to walk to another building to give a talk, some of them on the parable of the Good Samaritan. On the way they passed a man slumped in a doorway, clearly in trouble.

The thing that best predicted whether they stopped wasn't how religious they were or what their talk was about. It was whether they were in a hurry. Of those told they had time, 63 per cent stopped. Of those told they were late, 10 per cent did.

You can't pour from an empty cup. The selfish phase isn't optional. Fill your own cup first: body, money, mind, energy, until

there's some spare. Put your own oxygen mask on before you help anyone else.

But hold on to why you're doing it. The selfishness is the runway. The usefulness is the flight. The runway only exists so you can take off.

I learned this from Kiera. She wanted to do her first half Ironman, so I signed her up the next morning. I taught her to swim and did the race with her. I was thinking about her the whole way round. I got to the finish line and realised I'd just done a half Ironman myself, and it had felt easy, because I hadn't been thinking about me.

I've used that trick in every race since, every ultra and every Ironman. I don't care about my time. I think about getting someone who's struggling to the finish. The whole thing gets easier.

Life works the same way. We're all running the same race.

USE IT TODAY

The word: *Predictable.*

The feeling: Resistance. The "I'll start Monday" feeling.

The action: Make tomorrow predictable. Write the first three steps of the thing you're avoiding, with times. Lay out what you need tonight. Then you only have to follow the plan, not decide.

CHAPTER 14

The Trap of Power

This chapter makes people uncomfortable. Good.

Most men give their power away. They've been trained to.

Blame is how it happens. Every time you blame someone else for where you are, you make a trade: responsibility for comfort. The exchange rate is brutal. Every bit of blame you hand to someone else is a bit of control you lose over your own life.

If your boss is the reason you're unhappy, only your boss can make you happy. You've put the lever in someone else's hand.

If your parents are the reason you're broken, only your parents can fix you. They're probably not equipped to, so you've just guaranteed you stay broken.

The more you blame, the less control you have.

NOT YOUR FAULT, BUT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

"Life is not my fault, but it is my responsibility."

Fault looks backwards: who caused this? Responsibility looks forwards: who's going to fix it? They're completely different questions.

You can spend your life answering the first one. You can build an airtight case for why none of this is your fault, and you'd be right. The case would stand up in court.

But the court can't change your life. Only you can.

MISCALIBRATED, NOT POWERLESS

I had addictions. I got help. I studied everything I could get my hands on: the Stoics, Buddhism, recovery programmes, behavioural science, CBT.

I studied the twelve-step model closely. Its first step is admitting you're powerless, that your life has become unmanageable. I understand why it's there. It breaks through denial and stops the ego pretending everything's fine while the house is on fire.

Millions of people are alive because of those programmes, and anyone who found sobriety that way has my complete respect. But I think there's another place to start.

You're not powerless. You're miscalibrated.

Your feedback loops are broken, not your character. The man who drinks every night isn't a broken person who has to surrender before he can heal. He feels something, can't name it, and reaches for the nearest thing that changes how he feels. The drinking is a way of controlling a feeling. A bad one, a destructive one, but a mechanism with inputs and outputs you can identify.

And mechanisms can be reprogrammed.

It won't be quick. Rewiring takes as long as the original wiring took: years of wrong loops need years of right ones. It isn't fair and it isn't fast. But it works.

I've watched powerlessness as a starting point turn into powerlessness as an identity. Men sober for years who still define themselves by the thing they beat, still believing they're at the mercy of a force they can't control. The label becomes the ceiling.

"I'm struggling and I need help" is not the same sentence as "I'm powerless." The first is honest. The second is a belief, and beliefs tend to create the reality they describe.

THE RESPONSIBILITY LADDER

There's a ladder I take clients up.

Blame. "It's someone else's fault." Maximum comfort, zero power.

Justify. "It's not my fault, and here's why I can't change it either." Still no power.

Shame. "It's my fault, so I'm a bad person." Most people mistake this for progress, because it feels like owning it. It's a trap. Shame doesn't produce action. It produces hiding.

Awareness. "I can see the pattern." You haven't changed anything yet, but you can see the loop.

Ownership. "This is my responsibility, and I'm going to do something about it." This is the breakthrough rung. It looks forwards and produces action.

Creation. "I'm building something new from the wreckage." You've stopped managing the damage and started making the alternative.

Most men live on the bottom two rungs their whole lives. It's comfortable there, and it costs them everything.

THROUGH THE FLOOR

My parents got stuck in a blame loop. It happens to good people.

I grew up in a bedroom above the kitchen, listening to the arguments through the floor. Mum blamed Dad. Dad blamed Mum. Each had a case with real evidence. They were two people under huge pressure, in a hard situation, without the tools to handle it differently. And because each had put the solution in the other's hands, nothing could change. For years.

I absorbed the lesson without knowing I was learning it. If you blame someone else for your situation, you're stuck, because you've put the fix in their hands, and their hands aren't yours.

They separated eventually. Painful as it was, the separation gave each of them something the marriage hadn't: their power back.

I don't tell you this to blame them. They're the people who dragged me to the gym when I'd have stayed in bed forever. They did their best with what they had. I understand them completely, and I'm grateful.

But the lesson stands, and it's the hardest one in this book.

Your life is not your fault. But it is your responsibility.

You can hold both at once. You can admit bad things happened to you, that people failed you, that the hand you were dealt was worse than someone else's, *and* take full responsibility for what you do next.

The "and" is everything. Not "but". Not "however". And.

You were dealt a shit hand, and you're the one who plays it.

THE PATTERN FIRES

I see my dad in myself. His impatience. His habit of going quiet when he should speak. But also his strength, his stubbornness that looks a lot like loyalty, and a work ethic that borders on punishment.

I catch myself wanting to withdraw from Kiera when she needs me. Wanting to snap. Wanting to repeat patterns I soaked up as a kid. The impulse arrives, and I have to choose something different, every single day. Some days I fail. The pattern finishes before I catch it, I say the wrong thing in the wrong tone, I see her face change, and I know I've just repeated something I wish I hadn't.

Then I repair. Honestly. "That was the old pattern. I'm sorry. I'm working on it."

That's the manual at its least glamorous: a man in his kitchen catching a pattern three seconds after it fires and choosing, pain-

fully and imperfectly, to interrupt it.

A HUNDRED FATHERS

There's a sculpture I keep seeing in my head. I haven't made it. Maybe someone will.

A life-size father shouting at his son. You walk up to it and you judge the dad. What a prick. What kind of man shouts at his kid like that?

Then you walk round to the side. Behind that dad is another dad shouting at another son. Behind him, another. And another. A hundred figures deep: a hundred generations of fathers shouting at sons, each shaped by the one before, each passing down the only language he was ever taught.

And when you step back far enough, the hundred figures spell out three words.

Break the cycle.

Nobody in that line is a monster. Not my dad, not his dad, not the man reading this who sees his own father's worst habits coming out of his own mouth. It's upbringing shaping upbringing shaping upbringing, all the way back to a man nobody remembers who was probably doing his best too.

It's not your fault. But it is your responsibility.

You won't fix everything. The patterns run deep and some days they win. But anything you interrupt now makes life easier for the next generation, for the son or daughter who won't have to lie in bed listening through the floor because you decided, today, to do one thing differently from the man who raised you.

Dad gave me press-ups, stubbornness and a refusal to quit. He also gave me patterns I have to fight every day. Both are true. My

job isn't to judge him for the patterns. It's to keep the good ones, interrupt the harmful ones, and pass on something better.

That's what breaking the cycle means. Not erasing the past. Building from it.

MASCULINITY ISN'T THE PROBLEM

Masculinity isn't the problem. The suppression is: the stoicism with no outlet, "boys don't cry", the idea that being vulnerable means being weak. Those are add-ons, and they're killing men.

Take away the add-ons and the healthy core is still standing: discipline, courage, responsibility, protection, provision, service, and strength, including the strength to be honest about what you feel.

The man who walked across the park and told a near-stranger "you stopped me from killing myself" was deeply masculine. He did the hardest thing a man can do. He told the truth when everything in his upbringing told him to stay silent.

Real men read their emotions. Upgrade the code, and the core stays strong.

"WHO'S REALLY IN CONTROL HERE?"

I coached a man for three months who couldn't stop blaming his ex-wife for the state of his life. I understood. She'd done real things, real damage, and I'm not going to minimise that.

But he'd carried the grievance for four years. Four years of the same story. Four years of starting every conversation with "If she hadn't…" Four years of handing her, a woman probably not thinking about him at all, the keys to how he felt.

One day I asked him a question that made him angry with me for about a week.

"If everything you're saying about her is true, she's been controlling your life for four years without lifting a finger. She goes to work, picks up the kids, has dinner, goes to sleep. And you spend your evenings reliving 2022. Who's really in control here?"

He didn't speak to me for six days.

Then he came into the gym and said, "You're right, and I hate it."

We didn't work on forgiveness. We worked on taking his attention back: moving the hours he spent on blame into something that was his and that she couldn't touch. A training routine. A social group. A weekly plan. Something that belonged to the future instead of the past.

Within three months he'd stopped mentioning her. He hadn't forgiven her. He'd just put his energy somewhere else. The blame had been filling a gap where purpose should have been, and once something real filled the gap, the blame had no job left.

That's what blame does. It fills the gap. It gives you someone to be angry at and a story to repeat, and the story is comfortable because it asks nothing of you except repetition.

But that gap should be filled with building, with forward motion. No amount of blame ever built anything.

USE IT TODAY

The word: *Blame.* Where are you using it? Name the person or thing.

The feeling: Usually resentment, sometimes shame. The ladder rung you're standing on.

The action: Climb one rung. Write one sentence that starts "It's not my fault, and my responsibility is…" and finish it with one thing you'll do this week.

PART FIVE

Being

CHAPTER 15

Being

There's a sixth B beyond the five: Being.

Body. Belonging. Belief. Behaviour. Building. Then, once you've worked on the first five long enough: Being.

Being is when the system stops being a system and starts being you. The dictionary is in your bones. The loops close on their own. The skill disappears, and what's left is a man moving through the world, answering his signals without reaching for the manual.

Like driving. You stop thinking about the clutch.

I'm not there yet, and I want to be honest about that. I have moments of it. On the rings mid-session, when my body knows where to go and my mind goes quiet. In a coaching conversation where the words come without a script. Writing at 4am, when the sentences come faster than I can type.

Once, in Bali, I'd been up since four writing. The sun came up over the rice paddies and turned everything gold and green. The coffee had gone cold. And I realised, with no fanfare at all, that I was exactly where I wanted to be, doing exactly what I wanted to be doing, and the gap between what I was doing and what I wanted was zero. It lasted maybe twenty minutes before my brain started planning the next thing. But it was proof the endgame exists.

Think of a musician. When you're learning, every note is conscious: finger here, breath here, count the beat. You can hear the

thinking in the playing. After thousands of hours something shifts. The technique doesn't vanish, but it gets absorbed into something bigger, and what comes out isn't technique any more. It's music. Being is that shift, from running the system to being the system.

It isn't a place you arrive and stay. The 5 B's are a loop, not a ladder. Some days you're in Being. Some days you're back in Body, rebuilding a habit that slipped, or back in Belonging because the isolation crept in. That's fine. That's the work.

WANTING WHAT YOU DO

Doing whatever you want is how I lived at eighteen: scrolling, eating, avoiding, rotting. That isn't freedom. It's captivity with better marketing.

Real freedom is wanting whatever you do. It's when the action and the desire line up, and you don't have to force yourself because the thing you're doing is the thing you want to be doing. Discipline stops being a cage and becomes a structure you chose.

THE TRAP AT THE TOP

A warning. Chasing mastery can become its own trap.

Optimisation addiction. Endless tweaking. There's always another level, another skill, another system. I've fallen into it more than once: the body's good but could be better, the business works but could be bigger. You chase "better" so hard you forget to live in "good".

Being is the antidote. It says: enough, for now. Put the tools down. Be here.

Mid-set, when the muscles burn and the only things in the world are the bar, your hands and the effort. In a conversation,

when someone says something true and you feel it land. In the dark before the day starts, when everything is still possible.

You can't chase those moments. You can only set up the conditions and let them arrive.

YOU NEVER RETIRE

When I gave up my wage from the gym, I'd gone from being the coach, to the coach of coaches, to giving the whole thing back to the community. Suddenly my whole day was mine. And I was alone. Everything got stripped away.

What I learned is that a man never really retires. The moment he stops being useful, something in him starts to die. You keep giving back. You stay useful. That's what we're built for.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS TO BE USEFUL

That's my answer, after years of nihilism, years of searching and years of building. It's almost disappointingly simple, and simple things are usually the true ones.

Be useful to yourself first: get your body working, your mind steady, your behaviour under control. Then to the people around you. Then, if you choose, to the wider world, through building and giving.

When you're useful, the nihilism can't hold. Every person you help is proof that your existence matters. Usefulness is meaning, and meaning is the antidote to despair.

Viktor Frankl survived the camps and wrote about the men who didn't. He quoted Nietzsche: "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how."

The whys that collapse under pressure point back at you. I want to be rich. I want to look good. I want to be famous. They loop

back to I, and the I-loop is where despair lives. The why that holds is always outwards: someone is waiting for you to be useful.

YOUR ANCHOR

There's a question used in dialectical behaviour therapy, which Marsha Linehan developed for people in real crisis. Read this slowly. In its blunt form, the question is: "Why haven't you killed yourself yet?"

It isn't asking why you should. It's asking what has kept you here. Here's a gentler way to put it:

What has kept you here, through everything so far?

"My kids." "My dog." "My mum." "I haven't finished the thing." "Because fuck that."

Whatever your answer is, however small, however hard to explain, that's your anchor. It held you when everything else said let go, and it was enough.

Write it down. When the next dark wave comes, and life comes in waves, you'll have something to hold, in your own words. It might be the most important sentence you ever write.

If that question took you somewhere dark just now, don't sit there alone. Call Samaritans on 116 123. They're there all day and all night.

WHEN THE NEXT WAVE COMES

The point of this book isn't perfection. It isn't a six-pack and a cold plunge every morning.

The point is that when the next wave comes, and it will, you know what to do.

Read the signal. Name the feeling. Match it to the action. Do it. The loop closes, the wave passes, and you're still standing.

You're not invincible. You have a system, and the system works.

Because somewhere in a park in Bath, someone threw some rings over a tree. A man walked across wet grass. Six words were said.

And it turned out that mattered more than anything else in this whole story.

USE IT TODAY

The word: *Anchor.*

The feeling: Whatever comes up when you ask what has kept you here.

The action: Write your answer on a card or in your phone's notes, and keep it somewhere you'll see it. If the question took you somewhere dark, call Samaritans on 116 123 tonight.

CHAPTER 16

Momentum

Momentum isn't a feeling. It's a physics term. A body in motion tends to stay in motion.

That's the name, and that's the whole idea. Look at it: MO(MEN)TUM. It's about giving men momentum.

IN IT RIGHT NOW

Most podcasts and most books share lessons from men who are miles ahead. The billionaire, the champion, the guy who made it. Basically, here's my winning lottery ticket.

I love a lot of those people. Some of them changed my life. But when you're in it, at 3am, flat broke or newly single or three stone heavier than you want to be, a lottery ticket isn't much use. What helps is hearing from someone who's in it right now. A normal bloke from a similar background, going through the hard stuff today and sharing what's working and what isn't.

People learn best from people like them. You listen to someone and think: wow, he's just like me. Same kind of start, same kind of mess, and he's doing this. Or: that's a really good tip, thank you.

My whole working life is built on that idea. At CaliUnity and CaliAcademy, we help everyday people become coaches because their own story is what makes them good at it. MO(MEN)TUM is the same idea, pointed at men's mental health.

The main person sharing his story, to start with, is me. Then it's the men I sit down with: men with a story and a journey, sharing it now so it can help someone else. They don't have to be billionaires. They have to be honest.

There's a line from *The Dark Knight* I've carried for years. Bruce Wayne says, "As a man, I can be corrupted. I can be destroyed. But as a symbol, as a symbol I can be everlasting." I'm a flawed man and I'll keep getting things wrong. MO(MEN)TUM is meant to be bigger than me: something that belongs to every man who finds something useful in it.

WHY IT EXISTS

Around 125 people take their own lives in the UK every week, and about three in four of them are men. A lot of men are lonelier than they've ever been. AI is about to make a lot of men feel useless at work. I don't think we're doing nearly enough about any of it.

I've spent years watching what helps. Not campaigns or posters, but men moving together, men being seen, men with a few precise words for what they feel and one action to take.

So I set up MO(MEN)TUM as its own community interest company: Momentum Movement CIC. Its profits go to Movember, the charity that has been fighting for men's health for years.

Every November I've done something for men's mental health. I ran four miles every four hours for four days. I ran a half marathon every day for a week. I climbed a mountain in Vancouver eleven times in a row, 8,848 metres of climbing, the height of Everest, in sixteen hours. I ran 103 kilometres with five thousand metres of climbing in twenty-two and a half hours. All of it to raise money and awareness.

A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. Writing this book was mine.

DOING IT IN THE OPEN

While I was doing those challenges, I was studying the charities: what they do, how they work, what's missing. It's the same thing we did with t-shirts at the gym. We sold other people's first, learned what worked, then made our own. With MO(MEN)TUM, I'm raising money for an established charity first, learning what works, and asking men what they actually want by being in it with them.

I want every penny to be visible. Too many organisations aren't open enough about where the money goes. I want MO(MEN)TUM to show exactly what came in and exactly where it went.

If anything in this book landed, go to **mo-men-tum.com**. The manual is there in full, free, with no account needed: the dictionary, a daily check-in and the 5 B's. You can also sign up for Morning MO(MEN)TUM, a short email at 5am with something to start your day.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You don't need to wait for anyone.

Start with the body. Tomorrow morning, set an alarm thirty minutes earlier. Do ten press-ups, or five, or one. Walk round the block. Prove to yourself, through your body, that what you do changes how you feel.

Find your people. In person. A gym, a run club, a park session, any group that turns up and moves and doesn't judge you for being new or nervous.

Look at your beliefs. The stories you tell yourself about who you are. Ask where they came from, and give yourself permission to rewrite them through action.

Act. Now, not when you're ready. Readiness turns up while you're doing it.

Build. When your energy starts pointing outwards, make something that helps one person. Give away what you've learned. Somewhere, a man is waiting for his version of the rings over the tree, and you might be the one who throws them.

And if you're in it right now and you've got a story, I'd love to hear it. That's what MO(MEN)TUM is for.

Stay in motion. Through the bad days and the worse days, the days when the manual feels like it's failing, the feelings are loud and the progress is invisible.

Stay in motion, because it adds up. Every rep counts. Every kept promise adds to the score. Every day you turn up instead of shutting down is another vote for the man you're becoming.

USE IT TODAY

The word: *Momentum.* A body in motion stays in motion.

The feeling: Whatever's been keeping you still.

The action: Do one thing in the next ten minutes that moves you. Put the book down, put your shoes on and walk to the end of the road. That's momentum started.

Epilogue: For the Man Who Saved Me

This is for you.

You walked across wet grass on a cold afternoon and said six words that changed my life. You didn't know you were doing that. You thought you were thanking someone. But the gift went both ways. You gave me a purpose and a direction. You killed the lie that had been running my life for years and replaced it with something so simple and true that I've built everything since on it.

Small things save lives.

I don't know if you'll read this. Maybe it'll find its way to you through someone who knows us both, and you'll recognise yourself in these pages, and you'll know in your chest, the way I knew it in mine that afternoon, that your courage made all of this possible.

The gym. The community. The coaching. The manual. This book.

All of it started with you. With your willingness to say the hardest thing a person can say, out loud, to someone who barely knew you, in a park.

You could have warmed up quietly and done your reps and gone home.

But you spoke.

And speaking saved us both.

Most men would rather die than do what you did. Most men would rather suffer in silence and keep up the performance of being fine than say those words to a bloke they barely know in a park in Bath.

You weren't most men. And because you weren't, I'm not either.

• • •

This book is also for the man reading it right now and recognising something.

Maybe not the whole thing. Maybe one chapter, or one sentence. Maybe just knowing that someone else stood in the same dark and came out the other side.

If you're in it right now, if the water's rising, if the horse has bolted and you're hanging on with both hands and the reins are cutting into your palms:

You're not weak.

You're not broken.

You're not beyond repair.

You're not the only one.

You're a man running a system without a manual. A human being trying to manage a world inside you that nobody taught you to read, with tools nobody gave you, in a culture that told you the feelings were the problem instead of the signal.

The feelings aren't the problem. They're the data. This book, imperfect and human and probably full of things I'll want to rewrite in five years, is the manual.

Use it.

Name the word. Know the feeling. Do the action.

Then do it again tomorrow.

For the man in the park. For the men we lose every week. For the boy you were at sixteen, who needed someone to hand him a map and say: here, it gets better, I promise, because I walked this road and the other side exists.

Stay in motion.

For yourself.

Ollie

The Words

The whole manual on a few pages. Find the word, read what it means, do the action.

THE ALARMS

Fear. An imagined future treated as real. *Do the smallest piece now.*

Stress. Two forces pulling opposite ways. *Pick one, or knowingly pay for both.*

Anxiety. Too many options and open loops. *Write them all down, circle one, decide.*

Sadness. No options; no way forward. *Create one option. One door, one message, one walk.*

Anger. A line crossed. *Say what happened and what you need. Hold the line.*

Disgust. Something below your standard, often your own. *Set or raise the standard; use it as fuel, not as self-hatred.*

THE PULLS

Desire. Wanting something you don't have yet. *Take the first concrete step.*

Excitement. Energy before something hard and good. *Point it at a task straight away.*

Hope. A better future feels possible. *Protect it with small wins.*

Faith. Trusting a process you can't see. *Keep going; the faith follows the action.*

Curiosity. Pulled towards something you don't understand. *Follow it.*

THE BLOCKS

Guilt. "I did something below my standard." *Fix it, face it, move forward.*

Shame. "I am the bad thing." *Tell one true thing to one safe person.*

Regret. Stuck on a choice you can't change. *Take the lesson, then let it go.*

Resentment. Anger never said. *Say it, or let the debt go.*

Apathy. Shutdown, dead battery. *Do one tiny thing.*

Burnout. Effort with no reward. *Change the reward; build a feedback loop.*

Loneliness. Nobody knows how you really are. *One real sentence to one person. Then turn up somewhere every week.*

Depression (as I lived it). Hiding for so long you run out of energy. *Say one real thing out loud. If it's lasted weeks, see your GP.*

THE STRENGTHS

Confidence. A stack of receipts. *Make a promise to yourself and keep it.*

Meta-confidence. Knowing you can rebuild. *Remember every time you have.*

Courage. Acting while afraid. *Start before you're ready.*

Discipline. Doing what you said. *Remove the decision: book it, pay it, tell someone.*

Patience. Effort before reward. *Track inputs, not outputs.*

Gratitude. Seeing what you already have. *Name three specific things each morning.*

Humility. Knowing what you're good and bad at. *Find rooms where you're the beginner.*

Mental toughness. Steady effort under discomfort. *Do one hard thing you don't have to.*

Happiness. What you do, what you value and where you are, lined up. *Do more of the hours that make you happy.*

Flow. Total absorption. *Match the challenge to just past your skill.*

Focus. Getting rid of the alternatives. *One thing, phone in another room.*

THE METHOD

Name the word. What is this, actually? **Know the feeling.** What is it asking me to do? **Do the action.** The smallest version, now.

The 5 B's. Body: control yourself. Belonging: control your environment. Belief: control your story. Behaviour: control your actions. Building: control your future. Then Being.

The ladder. Blame, justify, shame, awareness, ownership, creation. Climb one rung.

Where the Money Goes

Every penny of profit from this book goes to Movember, through Momentum Movement CIC (company number 17156922), a community interest company I set up for men's mental health.

The ebook is 99p and the paperback is £9.99. After Amazon's cut and the cost of printing, what's left is the profit, and that's what goes to Movember.

I don't take a penny from it. I want every pound to be visible, so the totals raised will be published on mo-men-tum.com.

If this book helped you, the best thing you can do is pass it on to one man who needs it. An honest review on Amazon helps it reach more of them.

If You're Struggling Right Now

If you're in danger right now, call **999** or go to A&E.
Samaritans: call **116 123**, free, any time, day or night, every day of the year.
CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably): call **0800 58 58 58**, free, 5pm to midnight every day. Webchat at thecalmzone.net.
Shout: text **SHOUT** to **85258**, free, any time, day or night.
NHS 111: call **111** and choose the mental health option if you need urgent help that isn't an emergency.
Movember: movember.com has information and support on men's mental and physical health.
Outside the UK: in Australia, Lifeline on 13 11 14 and Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636. Anywhere else, findahelpline.com.

You're not alone. You're never alone.

Thank You

Years before this was a book, I had a picture in my head that I replayed like a film clip. I'm standing in front of Alex Hormozi, at some event or in some corridor backstage, holding a book. I hand it to him and say: you changed my life. This is yours. Use it. Don't even credit me. It's my gift back.

That picture kept me writing on the nights when the words wouldn't come and the voice in my head said nobody would read this. It probably won't happen. He's busy, and the world doesn't arrange itself around the scenes we rehearse. But the book is real, and so is the thank you.

To **Alex Hormozi**, who showed me that giving away the secrets is the most powerful thing you can do, and whose voice on a dark morning run in Bath started the 5 B's.

To **David Goggins**, whose voice in my headphones at 5am taught me that the mind lies and the body proves it wrong.

To **my parents**. You did your best, and it was more than enough. I understand you completely, and I thank you.

To **Kiera**, who threw the rings over the tree with me and has been beside me for every step since. Without you, none of this exists.

To **the man in the park**.

And to every man who has ever sat in the dark and wondered if it matters. It does.

Further Reading

Books

- Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*
- Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*
- Epictetus, *Discourses* and *Enchiridion*
- Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*
- James Clear, *Atomic Habits*
- Alex Hormozi, *$100M Offers*
- David Goggins, *Can't Hurt Me*
- Ross Edgley, *The World's Fittest Book*
- Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly*
- Ryan Holiday, *The Obstacle Is the Way*
- Gary Keller with Jay Papasan, *The One Thing*
- Greg McKeown, *Essentialism*
- Bob Burg and John David Mann, *The Go-Giver*
- Robert Cialdini, *Influence*
- Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*
- Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error*
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow*
- Marsha M. Linehan, *Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder*

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