

# Introduction

*“Only when we realize our potential to be a unique individual are we free. Thus, it lies in our freedom to achieve freedom; put another way, only when we actively strive towards freedom do we have some chance of attaining it.”*

- Rudolf Steiner (Wikipedia Reference)

Today’s news stories focus on job loss, layoffs, employment studies, worker satisfaction surveys, and happiness (unhappiness) surveys. People need to determine next steps in their career/life trajectory due to layoffs and/or job dissatisfaction. *Loss* is the keyword of the day and intense personal reflection is needed. As such, this book is about reclaiming freedoms lost. It is about discovering important truths about self, soul, and the life experience. It is about choosing right path. In short, it is about pursuing passion – ‘living’ your passion.

## **Freedom**

I wish to say a few words about freedom, but before I do let us first define what freedom means. The dictionary defines freedom as:

- The power to exercise choice without constraint from within or without
- The power to order one’s own actions; to stand alone
- A liberty taken

Let’s review each of these definitions in turn. Firstly, to be free represents a power to exercise choice without constraint from within or without. But, what does this mean exactly? There are some elements of this definition that jump out, most notably that: a) freedom equates to power and that b) to be free means to operate (i.e., live) without constraint. Both of these elements resonate with me in that freedom is indeed a power; a power to do what you love and love what you do; to take risks;

to change direction of your life quickly, decidedly. It is a power that all possess, but few exercise today. Further, to be free means to be unconstrained, in terms of how I feel, how I operate, and how I live. Practically speaking, this means that I am not conflicted on the ‘inside’ about who I am vs. who I want to be or where I am vs. where I want to be. I am getting what I want in life and from life throughout life. It also means that I am not controlled by external forces (e.g. my employer, my environment) such that I live a diminished life. Few people today feel unconstrained. Few people today operate unconstrained. Few people today live unconstrained.

To be free also means to possess power to order one’s own actions; *to stand alone*. What this means practically is that one is not dependent on others to exist; to live. For example, to work for yourself, to be an entrepreneur, is to be free as one ‘stands alone’ to determine and direct one’s actions and, therefore, one’s quality of life. Few people today ‘stand alone’. Most are dependent upon others (i.e., employer) for their livelihood which diminishes one’s freedom in that they, at best, can only partially control their destiny; only partially control their quality of life. To stand alone is to experience a form of freedom that comes only when one self directs one’s life.

Finally, to be free means a liberty taken. Specifically, and to incorporate previous discussion, this means one is a) exercising choice without constraint, is b) directing one’s own actions, and is c) standing alone. What this suggests is that it takes deliberate, explicit action ‘to be free’. In other words, one must not only choose freedom, one must act in the service of freedom; *make it happen*. This echoes back to the quote above which states “only when we actively strive towards freedom do we have some chance of attaining it”. While some people actively ‘choose freedom’, exercise certain liberties, the majority of people do not.

Personal freedom is an important theme in this book. In fact, personal freedom is the end to which this book is means. Freedom, as defined herein, is at once a goal, a feeling, a way of operating on the surface of life. The ‘freedoms’ of which I speak are: financial freedom, spiritual freedom, mental freedom, and most importantly the freedom to take risks. Contemporary living has stripped us of our freedoms. As such, in this book you will learn how to reclaim freedoms’ lost. You will learn what freedom looks like; what freedom feels like; and why we must be free. Why do we focus on personal freedom? It is because to lack freedom, that is, to lack power to exercise choice, to order one’s actions, to stand alone, or to take certain liberties is

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to live a diminished life. To be free is the goal. We yearn to be free. We desire to be free. We must be free.

Ronald Reagan once remarked “freedom is one of the deepest and noblest aspirations of the human spirit”. Freedom is an innate desire that is deeply rooted in the life experience. Having said this, most people do not become aware of this desire until much later in life. How do we become aware? We become aware when life does not play out as intended. To be more precise, we do not learn of (our) freedoms until they are taken from us. We live in a time of great suffering; where increasingly our freedoms are taken away. Because freedom is an innate desire we all share, when we lose freedoms it affects us profoundly. It affects our mental state, our spiritual state, and our physical state. When faced with such challenge, personal crisis, there are two ways to respond: 1) dig in, rise up and face such challenge, crisis head-on or 2) succumb, give up, accept defeat. By virtue of you reading this book, I know your response to any and all life challenges – you dig in, rise up, and get to work. Like you, I, too, respond in such manner. As such, when freedoms are taken from us, it becomes our immediate and obsessive goal to get freedoms back; to reclaim freedoms lost. Moreover, it inspires us to seek out the truth.

## **Truths**

Over time, we come to learn certain truths about our self, soul, and the life experience. How do we learn such truths? We learn such truths in proportion with our dissatisfaction with life. For example, losing one’s freedoms becomes for many the impetus, ‘launching pad’ to find one’s truth. When we wake up to our innate desires, to what we want in life and from life, we subsequently wake up to certain truths that define our life; that define who we are and were meant to be.

For most people, truths need to be discovered. For most people, finding one’s ‘truth’ can take years, decades. But, once found, for some people (myself included), there is no turning back on such truths. When we become aware, when our eyes are opened to the truth, there is no going back; for we are *altered* and, therefore, ALL future outcomes for our life are thus altered.

## **Two Paths**

When we learn of truths for self and life, we realize quite acutely that we have only two options, two paths in life. Path One is to pursue one's truth; to live one's passions; *to live free*. Path Two is to deny one's truth; to abandon passion; to live a diminished life. For many people, they choose (default onto) Path Two. There are many reasons why or how this occurs. For some, it is the result of current life situation (e.g. 'golden handcuffs') where pursuing one's passion or living one's truth is not economically feasible (at least not immediately) and so the dream of living one's truth or pursuing one's passion, in time, fades away. For some, fear of change or of taking certain risks forces one onto Path Two. And for some, a lack of willingness to pay-the-price for success forces one onto Path Two. Not long ago, I confronted such fork in the road. I was faced with two paths to choose from. One path offered 'life', the other 'slow death'. What did I do? I **chose** Path One – the path of deliberate intention; of deliberate living; of life. What was the result of following such path? It was the birth of a book.

## **Birth of a Book**

This book is the result of me finding my 'truth' and **not** being able or willing to 'let it go'. It is also the result of having observed countless others who were sharing same struggle, walking same path as me and wanting, feeling compelled, to help them live a more inspired, meaningful existence. This book was birthed by my desire to walk a more inspired path; to discover certain truths about self, soul, and the life experience; to cater to innate desire; and, most importantly, to live free.

Like many people today, I felt certain freedoms erode and it unsettled me to the point of mass anxiety, depression, and despair. Like you, I was not willing to settle for freedoms lost. Like you, I was not going to settle for a life diminished. Now, while my 'freedom walk' is not yet complete, with each day comes movement and with movement comes hope; a feeling that better days lie ahead; just around the corner.

## ***Birth of a Career***

Over the course of writing this book, I found myself more and more interested (obsessed really) with transitioning from helping companies improve their operations (my day job) to helping people improve their life (evening job). The more I immersed myself into my book, the more convinced I became that helping others is not only something I could do, it is something I **MUST** do. My hobby had become my passion which inspired new mission, new vision for my life!

What has resulted from that fateful day when I decided to pursue, ‘live’ my passion, is that I have:

- Published two books (‘Only1Shot’ and ‘Breaking Free’)
- Formed a company (Personal Strategy Institute)
- Launched a weekly self-help/personal growth podcast (‘A Strategy Driven Life’)
- Begun coaching others (1:1) on how they, too, can transform their life; how they, too, can ‘break free’

Now, while my transition is not yet complete, as I transition from who I am to who I want to be and where I am to where I want to be, in time and with faith, courage, and enthusiasm, I will reach the Promised Land. That is, I will be doing what I love and loving what I do. In short, I will be ‘living the dream’.

## ***Living the Dream***

Have you ever dissected the phrase ‘living the dream’? With adequate pause, one gains a sense for what this phrase really means. In the simplest of terms, ‘living the dream’ means ‘pursuing one’s passion’ (with dream equating to passion). Having defined the phrase, I ask, are you ‘living the dream?’ If you are like most people, the answer is a resounding NO. As such, I know why you have come (*a quest for freedom, a desire to live, a search for the truth*), as I have walked in your shoes, felt your pain, operated on your plane. For such freedom seekers, for such soul searchers, this book offers, delivers such things – freedom, life, and the truth. Moreover, you will learn

how to maximize the personal, professional, and financial potential that life offers. And what great things will come from that!

## **One Act, Four Parts**

In Part I, we establish needed foundation for the journey ahead. We do this in part by determining where you are mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically. In learning about where you are, it will provide needed insight, contrast to vision where you want to be. Then, we digress, in a search for the truth about self, soul, and the life experience. We do this to establish proper mental grounding for what lies ahead.

In Part II, we discuss aligning the inner soul with action. That is, we discuss the process and tools to bring soul to the surface of life via a personal strategy that reflects soul. We focus first on learning how to define inner soul goals (Personal Strategy Map). Then, we learn how to design a personal strategy (Personal Strategic Themes) to achieve each goal. Next, we build your personal strategy based on such learnings. Lastly, we discuss how to keep score. That is, we discuss how to monitor personal strategy to improve personal strategy.

In Part III, we discuss how to adapt and respond to changes occurring within and without, that is, within oneself and within one's environment. We discuss the stumbling blocks of personal strategy and how to eliminate, or minimally reduce, stumbling blocks from impeding personal strategy. We also discuss the process and tools to manage personal strategy, knowing that personal strategy is not static; as we change, as our environment changes, so, too, must our personal strategy change.

Finally, in Part IV, we discuss what it means to live 'A Strategy Driven Life'. We do this in part by bringing together all the tools, techniques, and methods that comprised our journey. We bring together the key elements and key actions that, together, enable total personal excellence. Lastly, we discuss how to increase leverage over the life experience and the need to maintain courage and steadfastness in the face of adversity as you journey beyond this book.

## ***How to Read This Book***

This book is adapted from seminar material. As such, it is best to view, think of this book as a ‘how-to-guide’ and/or ‘instruction manual’ for your life. Consequently, to get the most out of this book it will require you to occasionally ‘stop and do’ before ‘reading and continuing’. Throughout this book, there will be occasion when you will be asked to engage in hard thinking about your-self, your soul, and your life experience. Further, you will be asked to document your thoughts, goals, and life aspirations, among other things. Ultimately, you will be asked to create a ‘Personal Strategy’ for living. If you approach this book as a ‘passive reader’ rather than ‘active participant’ you will emerge from this book ill-equipped to transform your life. Therefore, ‘stop and do’ when asked to do so, as this will ensure you wring full benefit from your investment.

A Word of Warning: there is work ahead if you read this volume and I do ask much of you as the reader, but, as with most things in life that are worth paying-the-price, much good will be returned to you. “What good”, you ask? Most notably, those things you innately desire, privately hope for, and are constitutionally afforded: life, liberty, and happiness.

## ***My Ask of You***

Permit me to be blunt; I need your help. If after reading this book and applying the tools, techniques, methodology, and wisdom contained herein that you find it benefited you, please recommend this book to others. If you have family or friends who desire to make a dramatic life change, who want to change who they are and how they operate on the surface of life but are unsure of next steps consider purchasing this book for them as a gift. What better gift to offer someone than a NEW lease on life. Further, listen/subscribe to my free weekly podcast ‘A Strategy Driven Life’ as I provide valuable additional content to help you develop personal strategy, establish personal alignment, and maximize the life experience. Finally, consider supporting the Personal Strategy Institute ([www.personalstrategy.org](http://www.personalstrategy.org)) and its mission to enable

all people to maximize the personal, professional, and financial potential that life offers by making a donation.

Note to Reader: This book offers the path (i.e., wisdom) to live a happy life; a meaningful life; *a remarkable life*. All that is required of you is to make it to the other side. You hold the key to a better life. I repeat, you HOLD the KEY to a better life.

***All Now Rests with You!***