

## INTRODUCTION

I was waiting for the most important call of my life.

If everything panned out, my company would make just over a million dollars.

Then, the phone rang. It was my business partner. "We have a problem..."

As he began to explain what had happened, the blood drained from my face, and I felt a sharp pain pierce my stomach. We had been working on this deal for 18 months. I collapsed on the edge of my bed and buried my face in my hands. Was this really happening to me?

I'm not sure if I blacked out, but I don't remember anything else about that call.

I did know that it was going to change me forever. I now refer to that day as "The 2x4 Day" — the day I got hit upside the head with a 2x4. That's what it feels like when you lose \$3 million instead of making \$1 million.

Losing that much money — well, there's no way it could be good. But then my wife asked me, "Are we going to be okay?" I've never felt more shame than when I had to admit to the love of my life, "I don't think so." I couldn't help but wonder if she would leave me and take our two-year-old boy with her.

The weeks and months that followed the failed deal were the hardest. I had legal problems, to put it mildly. I lost my business, my savings, my house. But worst of all — I lost my confidence. I lay in bed for days, doing nothing but feeling the gravity of what I caused.

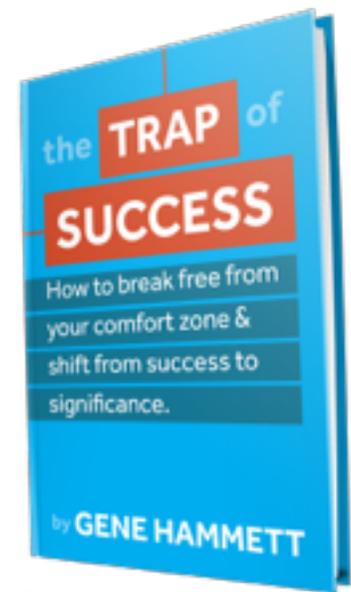
For five years after that, every time I stepped out of my house, I was worried that someone was going to run up to me and shoot me in the head. When I went for a jog, I wondered if someone was following behind me. My mind would wonder if today would be the day.

Yet I would never be where I am today without that traumatic experience.

When you lose everything, you are forced to change. The worst thing ever to happen to me would, in time, become the greatest gift I ever received. It set me on the path that has become my life's work: transcending a shallow view of success to discover the much more important dance between deeper success and — deepest of all — true significance.

In other words, losing it all gave me a chance to find out what really mattered and create a new life where I am fulfilled and living up to my fullest potential.

But let's look a little more closely at how I got here.



## **Starting My First Business**

In 2001, I started a service business with just an idea — to selling tickets and travel packages to corporate clients for the world's largest sporting events. By the end of my first full year of business, I had logged \$1 million in sales and built a team of employees. I traveled the world from Australia to Switzerland.

At the 2008 Beijing Olympics, we supplied tickets to more than 8,500 people, netting over \$1 million in profits for my partners and myself in one event. Buoyed by that success, I decided to go for the biggest deal of my life at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics.

Over the years, I had developed the contacts, partners, and skills to pull off a deal of the size. I had the industry reputation needed to put together a contract that big. I had worked six Olympics before, so I knew the ins and outs of events at that scale.

So I got to work.

## **Losing Everything**

On January 15th, 2010, more than a year of work was about to come to fruition. It started right after the Beijing Olympics. My partner and I negotiated a contract for Vancouver that documented all the terms of payment and delivery for thousands of tickets. I began offering these tickets for sale to my long-term clients and other ticket resellers in the industry. It was not easy to sell millions in tickets in the midst of the 2008–2009 downturn. However, I worked this opportunity like my life depended on it.

I moved my wife, son, and my whole office to Vancouver in December 2009 to set up for the Games. The demand for tickets continued to increase, and my position with tickets was solid. I had never received so many tickets for an event at one time, so I hired new employees and invested money in office space just to make this deal possible. I never doubted for a second that my partner would come through just as the contract stated.

In the final days before the Vancouver Games started, I negotiated the sale of a huge block of tickets so that I would have all the money needed to pick up the tickets. I was ready with the final payment.

As I waited for the call from my partner with the final details, I was in Vancouver with all the pieces of the business ready. You remember when I mentioned the “2x4 day”? This was that day—the day it all changed. My partner’s story began to unravel, and the untruths came out. I became obsessed with every name he shared with me and began to realize that what I believed to be true was in fact a huge set-up.

The tickets never showed up, and the \$3 million I had paid on the contract was gone.

It wasn’t just my money either. I had more than 10,000 clients who depended on me—who had paid for their tickets in advance based on the now-worthless contract I held in my hands.

Technically, the legal term for what happened is “breach of contract,” but I think of it as “the squeeze.” I was caught between one supplier and thousands of honest people I had made promises to in good faith.

The next few weeks were excruciating. For nearly four hours, I was questioned by the Secret Service—the only law-enforcement agency with international jurisdiction. Finally, they realized that I was a victim, not a perpetrator, of fraud; they began their investigation into the missing tickets and the breached contract. My legal team of James Moriarty, Filippo Marchino, and Damon Rogers stepped in to help, beginning a court battle that lasted almost five years. During the whole time that we tried to recover the money of the customers who had trusted me, my attorneys were like knights. They put up a fight when no one else would.

Still, shame and disappointment consumed me with every breath.

### **Coming Back from the Brink of Death**

The journey back was hard and riddled with uncertainty. In many ways, it did feel like my career and standing as a business person had died. I had no idea how I would pay my bills—not just legal fees, but for a place to lay my head, food to eat, and utilities to live.

I did know one thing: I wanted to work for myself again. I would work my own way back as an entrepreneur. But I also knew that I wanted a different kind of business, one that was based on truly serving people, not just on transactions and sales.

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did,  
but people will never forget how you made them feel."

—Maya Angelou, Award Winning Poet and Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipient

As I thought of how I would come back, I remembered Maya Angelou's quote above. The meaning behind the words made me realize the changes that needed to be made in my life—professionally and personally. Indeed, I wanted to make certain that my new professional direction aligned fully with who I wanted to be as a person.

Before the "2x4 Day", I lacked a real purpose. I had success, but it was shallow and lacking any personal significance. I look back now and realize that, even with all the money I was making, I was not taking action to create the life I wanted.

I was trapped in my success.

One way to see it is look at what kept me from taking new actions. I can look back and see I was stuck in the comfort zone, I didn't have the courage to create a different kind of business. I was constantly stressed and wasn't fulfilled with what I was doing.

Even though I had hated my business, it had always felt like I was making too much money to step away from it.

Then I remembered a time in my career when I had sought out a business coach who had helped me think through the strategies I used to build that multi-million-dollar ticket business. I thought about how rewarding it would be to do the same for someone else—but with the added dimension of helping people find not just surface-level business success, but deeper significance in their work.

It finally came to me that I should become a coach. It was my way to serve and contribute to the world and humanity, and a way for me to feel significant. I felt like coaching was aligned with my purpose and would fulfill me in many dimensions.

I was shifting inside, away from being a hardcore deal maker and toward being a more attentive caregiver. That shift set me on the path I'm still on, balancing the two sides of my work—success and significance—as needed by my clients.

I invested the last bit of my money to join a training program for coaches. At times, it felt selfish to spend money on education, given that my family and I struggled to pay the bills and we were losing our home. But that training is what I needed on a personal level to overcome my doubts and fears.

### **The Need to Forgive**

One part of that journey was about forgiveness. Six months after the breach of contract, I sought forgiveness from everyone involved in the ordeal. During my coach training, I started to see beyond the surface level of life. I got a new awareness of the struggle inside me that was necessary so I could the next stage in this journey. Forgiveness was a key part of that.

I wanted to move on and let go of the past. However, the pain was still fresh, and the daily struggle to make money and regain my confidence kept me stuck in thoughts of failure and revenge. I needed to adopt a different outlook, or I would never be free in my mind.

Here is where I was able to test the power of coaching against my own need to forgive, heal, and move on. My journey back could only begin by forgiving myself.

With my new coaching friends and mentors, I talked about letting go of the past to move forward. I watched as my friends dealt with their challenges and setbacks. It was a powerful realization that my struggle was not completely unique. Yes, I was the only one who was dealing with a financial loss of that magnitude. But I could see some of the other issues that my friends were navigating, and it helped me see that my next step had to be forgiveness.

### **Serving Others**

I found my way out in service. Since 2010, I have had the pleasure of helping leaders transform their thinking and strategies to build businesses beyond what they thought was possible. The founders, leaders, and CEOs I work with are already successful in business, but they also know there is more out there—that a real sense of significance awaits them. My aim is to help them get there by creating small shifts that lead to the biggest results.

From working one-on-one with clients to interviewing leaders on my podcast, *Leaders in the Trenches*, to sharing my message as a speaker about *The Trap of Success*, I am thrilled to be part of so many people's businesses and personal growth. This thrill is such a huge part of who I am now that it has become my purpose in life.

Losing everything is not the path I would recommend for shifting your life to a higher sense of purpose. But that's what it took for me to change at my core. The change has allowed me to help

thousands of business owners make more money, hire elite teams, and become more powerful leaders, while deepening their own sense that they have meaning in the world—that their work truly has significance. To be able to witness that growth in others has been an incredible reward for the resilience and courage it took over the past half-dozen years for me to get where I am today.

I hope you don't have to start over like me. But whatever your specific path, you can look forward to a journey of growth and learning that is sure to pay off if you are willing to embrace your own resilience and courage.

### Why this book?

My reason for writing *The Trap of Success* is simple: I hate to see people struggle in their lives because they are afraid to go after what they want. I've seen how the common approach to success can leave you empty and unfulfilled once you achieve traditional success. It is also common for high achievers to drift after they have “made it.” The idea that success can be a trap sparks a new conversation that is played out within this book. It also introduces how significance and success actually feed each other in your life's work.

Given my training, my mindset, and especially the experience of my own painful setbacks, it's easy for me to see what an amazing impact people can have when they show the courage to think differently and take resilient action toward a purpose-filled life—a life of significance. I have watched many individuals make that transformation, and I am heartbroken every time I see someone of talent and ability who won't make the commitment to do it for themselves.

I was one of those people—too afraid to let go of the shallow success I had to create a life of significance. I made tons of money in my international sports tour business, but my comfort with my income and lifestyle meant that I could never bring myself to leave an industry I actually hated.

Starting over at 39 and building a new kind of business pushed me to the edge of my comfort zone and beyond. I want to share my journey with you, which means sharing the joyful moments that helped me develop a new way of living, and of making a living. But I'll give you the painful parts, too, because sometimes pain is the most powerful path to growth.

Throughout this book, I include vignettes from clients I have personally witnessed make similar changes. I have also been lucky enough to interview hundreds of amazing entrepreneurs and visionary leaders, so I will include parts of their journeys, too. This will allow you to see a variety of transformational moments that you can relate back to your life and business.

I've worked hard to create this new business, and to keep pushing my own boundaries. The day-to-day world of entrepreneurship is filled with opportunities to go beyond our comfort zones, and we must take those chances whenever they come along.

All transformative success—including innovation, creativity, and personal growth—requires you to expand your boundaries of comfort. The things that scare you or cause you doubt are likely the very things that you must pursue to create the business and life you want.

This book is all about how to break free from the comfort zone of shallow success so you can find your way to the place where deep success dances with true significance.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE FEELING OF SIGNIFICANCE

"Take risks now and do something bold. You won't regret it."  
—Elon Musk, Entrepreneurial Pioneer and Business Magnate

Before we can even talk about success—we have to talk about the real goal, the bigger goal, for your work, your career, and your life: significance. If I've discovered anything through my own setbacks in life, it's that aiming for anything less than significance guarantees that you'll fall short of the fulfillment and satisfaction you crave and deserve. And that's true no matter how "successful" you become. So we may as well start by getting clear on the bigger picture of what we're pursuing.

Waking up every day to live a life of significance might be more like a dream for you. I understand that completely, because it certainly didn't seem possible for me.

Simply gunning for success takes up so much of your time and energy. There is so much to do. There are so many opportunities: people to meet, deals to close, money to make. Heck, even hundreds of emails to plow through every day. You're pulled in all directions. But most of these things, if you're really honest with yourself, are distracting you from what is most important.

There can be a different way. In fact, there needs to be a different way.

Imagine getting out of bed every morning filled with a sense of purpose, knowing that your work is making an impact. You have an abundant sense that you matter. You are living your calling.

You are stepping into your potential—your real potential.

Think of the impacts on your work. When you make decisions throughout the day, you no longer make them because of the money you will earn or the fame that will shine down on you. You make decisions based on the difference it will make, and the people you are here to serve.

Significance makes every Monday a joy as you get to start anew by using your talents for the betterment of humankind.

Now you've reached a point that allows you to be generous, with no concern for what comes back in return. You give to charities, you give to people, and you give to yourself.

You have freedom to do the work that inspires you, leaving the other stuff for someone else.

You are living your life the way it was meant to be lived. You are living your mission.

How does that version of life feel for you?

## **I Wanted More**

If you'd asked me that question ten years ago, I would have said that it felt great to imagine it... but that it was really just a pipe dream. No matter how much I may have wanted to achieve significance as a successful entrepreneur, I could never let it happen when I was running my first business.

I had success. I had financial freedom and time freedom. I had as much money as I needed to live with comfort, and I created a lifestyle for myself and my family that I was happy enough with. Yet I created barriers inside my head that stopped me from going for what I really wanted.

Maybe that sounds familiar to you?

Doing the right thing is not always the most profitable. Doing the right thing is rarely easy. But doing the right thing—even when it isn't lucrative, even when it's hard—is what puts you on the path to significance.

"Significance" is a tough word to get our heads around because it's not easily defined or measured. It is a feeling from within. You know when you have it, and can feel its absence when you don't.

Here's the full definition of "significance" from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

- 1        a : something that is conveyed as a meaning often obscurely or indirectly  
      b : the quality of conveying or implying
- 2        a : the quality of being important : moment  
      b : the quality of being statistically significant

To think of it from another angle, Tony Robbins describes significance as "feeling unique, important, special, or needed." I would add that significance goes along with the need to contribute to others.

I would add that significance ebbs and flows with you, depending on your focus. When you focus on life's frustrations or struggles, you feel common, unimportant, and irrelevant. When you decide to focus on the value you create and the impact you make, you feel significant.

There was a reason that I couldn't get out of bed on some of the darkest days after my business collapsed. I was so focused on the bad in my life that I couldn't see even the possibility of the good. That is how focus works.

But what if I said you have a choice about where to put your focus? You can focus on the struggle you face . . . or the impact you could have.

Which would you choose?

## **Freedom**

Significance includes a sense of freedom. It is hard to feel the power of significance if you feel trapped by your to-do list or by the choices you've already made.

Freedom is the primary reason that people start businesses. Having the freedom to do the work you want to do instead of the work you have to do is huge. But even your entrepreneurial businesses can become traps if they don't align with your bigger ideas about making a difference in the world. When your days are filled with work that doesn't inspire you or give you energy, you will struggle to find significance.

### **Innovation**

Creating something new and unique is also part of significance. Doing the same thing as everyone else, even with incremental improvement, is not innovation. Innovation is creating a new and unique approach to old problems—doing what has never been done.

Significance and innovation go hand-in-hand as you push into new areas. People like Steve Jobs and Elon Musk learned that their contribution to the world comes from driving innovation.

To be an innovator, you don't have to change the way we make phone calls. Nor do you have to create a new form transportation or build a rocket to Mars. But you do need to push the boundaries beyond what is traditional if you want to feel significant.

### **Money**

Money often adds to significance, but it is not required.

You can have money and not feel significant; conversely, you can feel significant without an abundance of money. I've felt significant with very little in my bank account, and I've felt insignificant while closing million-dollar deals.

If all you care about is money, this may be hard to understand. Don't get me wrong, money is a part of our lives, and an important part. You can't pay your mortgage with hugs, nor can you save for a rainy day with smiles.

To put it another way, if you are struggling with the basics of life like food, shelter, and security, it is hard to be focused on the bigger goals. That's compounded when you are providing for others in your family.

However, true significance is about so much more than money. It is a sense of worthiness, a deep and grounded understanding that you are making a difference in the world.

### **The Journey of Significance**

The journey is not the same for everyone. We all have different paths and start at different points. We will encounter different challenges as well.

This means that there is no end to the path. You keep going and discovering new challenges. You continue to grow, and you evolve as a person. It is not about what you accomplish, but about what you become. It is less about what others see in you and more about how you feel about you. On the journey of significance, it is about being fulfilled with who you are.

But I am sure that it is a journey, because the feeling of significance is gone in a flash if you are not careful and intentional about it.

How do we know it is not about a destination? Because it's so easy to "arrive" at the destination you had defined as important, only to find out that owning your own business, earning a million dollars a year, winning the big award, completing the advanced degree, or whatever else you had aimed for . . . doesn't bring you a feeling of significance.

The journey of significance can take many forms.

For some, it could be creating or building a non-profit. One example of this is Tony Robbins' mission to feed 42 million people over the past seven years. Tony has used that mission as a driving force in his life and his business.

For others, it could be the impact you have in your immediate community and personal circles. Being significant to your family is a given for most people. I get it—I love my family. And family is likely important to you; however, it is not the only reason you are here.

For the startups, the journey is about creating businesses that innovate for the way we live and interact with each other. There are thousands of new technologies that we use for this every day—tools that didn't even exist a few years ago. You don't have to be Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook or Travis Kalanick and Garrett Camp, co-founders of Uber, for this to apply to you. You can innovate in your own market or niche. If you are a founder, surely you see what you do as significant to the world.

If you are like me, the journey of significance comes through working with others in a transformative way. I am overjoyed by helping leaders and teams see new strategies and remove the foggy thinking that keeps them stuck.

It can take a while to understand exactly where your own feeling of significance lies, as I have learned from experience. In the process of writing this book, I read through dozens of old journals and looked over backups of old hard drives. I discovered something that I wrote in 2009 (just before my "2x4 day") that I wanted to share with you. It was from a coach I worked with back then. He asked me a series of questions before we started working together. One of them was:

"What dream or goal have you given up on?"

When I looked at the list I made back then of dreams I was no longer pursuing, I noticed that at the top was "Be an entrepreneur coach." That's interesting, because at the time I was making tons of money and had the freedom in my life to do what I wanted. But I was so set in my ways that I gave up on a dream that had real meaning and purpose attached to it. I share this with you because we all have dreams that we give up on . . . and often we give up for the wrong reasons.

Ten years ago, I didn't know it was possible for me to be a coach, but now I can't imagine not doing it for the rest of my life.

You have likely given up something that was a dream of yours, or otherwise really important to you, to be the person that you are now.

It is easy to let other things get in the way, especially when money is involved. But finding significance is a journey that goes far beyond making a living. In fact, I am going to show you how significance is essential to making a life and making a living at the same time.

During that journey, you must face many internal and external battles.

### **Your Inner Critic**

The internal battle usually comes from that little voice inside you that wants you to doubt yourself and fear change. I call that voice the "inner critic."

That inner critic exists inside of each us, and it is annoying and persistent. I say this with a smile, but we all know your inner critic is an asshole.

Sure, "asshole" is a strong word, even a nasty one. Yet after interacting with thousands of people, and realizing that this destructive inner voice is what gets in the way of people achieving their goals, I'm comfortable with using it, because your inner critic does not play nice—it plays dirty.

### **Significance Flows In and Out**

Significance is not something that I feel all the time, even though I feel it more now than I ever did before.

In my previous business, significance was something I wanted, yet felt I could never have. I felt successful — confident, even. But I didn't feel like I was making a difference in the world.

That's one big reason for writing this book. In the work I do today, I love coaching and speaking to people to inspire them to see new perspectives and challenge their old ways of thinking, because I love being a part of others' growth. I can see the transformation so clearly that sometimes I tear up when my clients share their breakthroughs with me. The reaction is even stronger when I talk to them years later and they have continued to evolve and achieve new milestones.

Yet significance is still a journey, and I still endure the day-to-day trials it takes to create any business—much less a transformational business. The last seven years of building my coaching and speaking business has tested me. When I got started, I felt uncertainty and doubt for many months, wondering how I would pay the bills. I remember the times when I was doing about \$3,000 per month in sales and had about \$1,500 per month in expenses.

It is nearly impossible for a family of three to live in Atlanta on \$1,500 take home each month. At the same time, my clients were adding \$10,000 per month to their revenue with ease. Some were doubling and tripling their businesses. Think about that for a moment: I was struggling to pay my bills, while my clients were thrilled with their results. I felt significant in my work, but nearly worthless in my promise to provide for my family—not very successful.

The ups and downs of any business are part of the process, of course. I deeply love what I do, which is what makes it possible to face the continual tests of courage and resilience.

Yet my work still has to provide for my family, and that means money is an important part of the equation. There has to be enough money. And the truth is that significance is not always the most profitable decision, even as we grow, But the reward for significance is beyond what extra money in the bank can give you.

### **Confessions of a People Pleaser**

For as much as significance is about impacting others, it is also about self-worthiness.

I pause even as I write this. Because wanting to feel worthy is something that tends to grab us and point us in the direction of being liked. Yet significance is not just about being liked, because the need to be liked puts the focus on your own ego. Significance is about finding the harmony between your own vision of life and the need to live in a world that you are changing. Finding that harmony calls for a sense of worth that comes from deep inside, not one that's always dependent on others' judgements of you.

Yet I am a people pleaser, through and through. I want to be liked. I get this from growing up being taught to be “nice” and wanting to fit in.

In high school, even though I had many friends and good grades, I was a bit of a nerd. I remember, during my junior year, when the decision to go to prom came around. I had someone in mind to ask, but never found the courage to do it, so I let the moment pass.

I never went to prom that year. I worked instead. This was my pattern—I would take the money instead of taking the emotional risk. Thinking back, it was about the fear of what others would think of me. It was more comfortable to risk nothing than to risk rejection.

That pattern repeated itself for senior prom. I let the fear of rejection keep me from making a move. I didn't want anyone else to see my pain and make fun of me, so I never told anyone how I felt. I skipped that prom, too.

In the bigger picture, I didn't feel worthy during those years of my life.

Maybe you went to your prom, and maybe you didn't grow up being a nerd. However, you surely faced your own moments when you played it safe and chose to live in comfort rather than taking the risk. This is natural to the journey of life.

Today, I am a different person—very different. Because of what I've been through, and because I'm now so focused on balancing significance with success, I've broken through those fears and put myself on the line again and again. Now I use big stages to share my message without concern for being liked. I coach people, and sometimes I am the one who shines a light into the dark corners they'd rather not explore. To be honest, most people are uncomfortable examining the dark elements of their life. At times, it causes them to be annoyed at me. But they often appreciate it later.

I know that not everyone in my world is happy with me, and that's okay. I have learned to detach from their actions and behaviors. It's tied to a deeper lesson I've learned, which is that, when you show up as a leader, you can only help others see new perspectives; you can't make them do anything about it. As a coach, my job is only to help my clients see new choices with clarity—not to force them take action, much less try to get them to always like me. I have to let them take full responsibility for their success or failure; worrying about what they're thinking of me in those coaching moments would be pointless.

It is impossible to be liked by everyone when you want to be helpful. This book embodies that. It's a deep reflection of who I am and of my life's journey. I'm giving this to you because I want you to know that you can find significance—and that you are not alone in seeking it, or in struggling to find it.

Significance is about the internal feeling that you and your work matter—that's what I mean by self-worthiness. In a crazy-busy world, feeling significant has to be done with intention. That means you have to purposely choose to grow as a person. You have to choose to push beyond the boundaries of comfort and strive to make an impact in this world.

If you'll indulge me, I'll take you back further into my life, to the beginning of my professional career, and explain how I came to these realizations.

### **Starting Out in Corporate America**

My story is probably not unlike yours. I began my career working to fulfill other people's goals and dreams. (I love that description of having a job.) I'm keenly aware that getting a paycheck is a huge priority for many people, and that's it often the right thing to do. Some people are meant to work for others. You can definitely still have significance while you do that.

My nine years in corporate America definitely had a purpose, because I gained the skills that would serve me as a business owner. I took it upon myself to align my professional goals with the goals of the companies I worked for, and I didn't see work as just a nine-to-five job. I was there to learn and grow by taking on new responsibilities. This made me a great employee, and I landed numerous promotions and new opportunities.

The important thing is that I did it for me, not the companies I was working for. I was engaged in my work to prepare for my real love: being an entrepreneur.

I started out in strategic consulting. In my work as a consultant, I wanted to gain as much experience as possible, as fast as possible. I tackled a variety of projects. I worked on mergers and acquisitions that were worth hundreds of millions of dollars. I carried out deep research, writing two books with my colleagues. I even wrote one book essentially on my own at the age of 24. I consulted on dozens of projects and interacted at the highest levels within companies. I took on responsibilities that allowed me to grow and prepared me to be an entrepreneur.

With the emergence of the Internet, I developed a thirst to understand technology. I worked for a web design and development company in 1996. The company made websites; my job was to sell them. I was on the bleeding edge of this new movement, but it's a challenge when you make a living selling something to people who don't know what it is and certainly didn't understand its value.

I changed jobs to get a more complete understanding of technology and worked for what would become PricewaterhouseCoopers in their emerging technology sector. Again, the work gave me experience that I would later use to launch my company.

The last stop on my journey through corporate America came when I worked with a dotcom company, NetVendor, in the boom era of 1999 to 2001. We raised a few rounds of venture capital, and as employee number 27, I had a key role in sales that brought the first waves of e-commerce to Fortune 1000 brands. I know you've never heard of NetVendor, because we didn't make it in the traditional sense. Certainly, it would have made my transition into entrepreneurship far easier if I had been at Google, Amazon, or some other well-known company with a massive IPO.

Regardless, it was a fun ride. The excitement of working with the Internet and large brands to make their products available online in the early days was thrilling. It was the future, and I was right there on the front lines.

In 2001, after the fall of the Twin Towers, business got hard. My company's leadership knew they needed to weather the storm, so they made massive layoffs. Since I was considered a "key employee," I had a contract with a golden parachute. Lucky for me, the company didn't need me anymore. When I was laid off, they handed me a check for about \$35,000.

I didn't even consider getting another job. I was ready to go out on my own. I was beyond ready. Now was the time to follow the dream that I had hidden inside myself.

### **Early Significance**

As I have reflected on my tenure in corporate America, I've thought of where I felt significant. There were certainly times that felt more significant than others. For instance, when I traveled around the country researching and writing, I felt significant to the company and myself. My work was a big part of that year's revenue supporting the other employees at the company.

When I was with the dotcom, I felt significant in my role in sales. I was an integral player in millions of dollars' worth of sales, and I trained a diverse team to support that effort.

Those times were great, as I felt like my work mattered beyond myself. I know that, in the grand scheme of the world, I wasn't righting wrongs like a cop or curing cancer like a doctor. But I felt like my work made a difference. I had pride in what I was doing, and I felt valued.

That's what significance feels like. You don't have to make some grand gesture to have that feeling inside you. You don't have to be Mother Teresa, either. You just have to make a difference that you can be proud of.

### **Why Significance?**

My professional journey was different than yours, though you can likely find some similarities, too. But whatever path you took, it's important to think about significance right up front because it's absolutely vital for escaping the trap of success. I start this book talking about significance because it can become harder and harder to keep significance firmly in mind as we talk about attaining transformative levels of success in the next stages of the book.

All of that became very clear to me when I lost it all back in 2010. Having lost my success, I realized that what I longed for most was the feeling that I mattered in the world. I wanted to do something that made a difference.

As you'll see in the chapters that follow, before that period of crisis, I spent nine years building a business that was successful when measured in traditional terms. I made good money, and I was happy with the lifestyle I created. I loved that I could train in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu 15+ hours per week and run my business, too. I provided for my family and made regular contributions to my retirement. I had a convertible Mercedes (boy, do I miss that car). Many people, looking in from the outside, would have said that I had achieved significance.

But, to be honest with you, I didn't feel it. For all the money and the trappings of success, I didn't feel that my work mattered, or that I was creating something amazing and innovative.

I came to realize that the money I had made was a trap that kept me from reaching significance.

### **Your Challenge**

When you decide to create a life of significance, you will be challenged in many ways. You have to be willing to take risks that make significance a regular part of your life.

This book emerged from The Trap of Success that I created for myself in my former business. That trap is likely something you have experienced as well. I have talked to thousands of people about the trap, and I've seen it affect many clients who operate their business from a place of comfort.

But now it's time to embrace the challenge, to break free from your own Trap of Success and achieve a deep sense of satisfaction in your work and your life.

As you do that—and as I'll show you—attaining that deeper sense of satisfaction will also open you up to achieving more success than you've previously been able to imagine. That's the thing about pursuing transformative change: it changes everything you are and everything you do. Once you embrace the challenge to pursue significance and escape The Trap of Success, you'll find that significance and success will “dance” with each other throughout your life and work. It's as though you'll hear new music and find a new rhythm that allows you to attain more and achieve new, profound levels of satisfaction in your career.

### **The Dance of Success and Significance**

Let me explain this “dance” between significance and success. It is quite common to see success as a stop along the journey to significance. The thinking is “I'll create this success, then I will create significance.” For instance, maybe you'll set up your charity after you build your business to a certain size. In general, people tell themselves, “I will do work that matters after \_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in the blank).”

In other words, significance comes after you have the success of making money and achieving your other goals. By this logic, success is the gate that you must pass through to get to the land of significance.

I lived this with my business in sports tours. But when I achieved the success, I felt empty inside. I felt like I could do so much more, but the money and time freedom kept me stuck in my old habits. I would fight the urge to innovate and do something purposeful with my life out of fear of giving up what I had worked so hard to create.

This is similar to all the people in corporate jobs who get comfortable with the lifestyle and the perceived lack of risk . . . so they do nothing to stretch themselves and grow. They just keep working on their projects and making their standard raises. I have talked with hundreds of people who relate to the trap of success because they have been pushing down the desire to create something amazing in favor of getting that consistent paycheck.

I have been looking into the lives of my clients over the last seven years to see how that model of success just has not been working for them. Either they are so determined to get the money that they forget the really important things in life, or they get to a level of success they want and then find that they are comfortable and only want more “success” trophies.

Take a moment to consider this: the idea that you must first achieve success so you can then create significance is a myth. That myth is the wrong way to think about success and significance. Getting success first and then working on significance is the wrong sequence.

Here is a crazy thought . . . what if there is not a “sequence” that you must follow? It is not one, two, three.

What if success and significance are more like a dance? They go together in creating a life and a business you love. The energy that comes from doing work of significance actually feeds into your success. Success and significance are like two dance partners. It’s not that one dances first and then the other one follows, but that they each have a simultaneous role to play. The two of them constantly draw energy and rhythm from each other to create something more beautiful and compelling than either could alone.

The real power of significance is that it can make you more successful. More significance in your life adds to the success you experience. Within this book, we will explore how you can make success and significance dance together in your work and life.

Ready?

### Questions to Inspire You

- Over your professional career, where did you feel the most significant?
- In which areas of your life is it most important for you to feel significant now?
- What gets in the way of you feeling significance? What doubts? What fears?

## CHAPTER TWO: THE DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

"Success breeds complacency. Complacency breeds failure."

—Andy Stanley, Senior Pastor and Master Communicator/Preacher

This is not a book about building a wildly successful business, in the traditional sense.

And it certainly is not about how I made millions, and how you can do it too.

This is about the failure to see the traps we set for ourselves. About how we fail to seek significance, and in so doing cheat ourselves out of deeper fulfillment and greater levels of success.

The mechanics of success are unique for each of you—your path is different from my path. So this book gives you a framework to shift how you think about success and significance. You can apply this framework to your own situation, wherever you are.

I wish I had understood the framework when I started my first business more than 15 years ago. Though I reached a high level of conventional success with that business, I was still not happy. In fact, I was obsessed with doing something bigger and more innovative. I wanted to create a game-changer for my industry — to create something that would matter to the world.

I wanted my work to be more than just filling my bank account. I wanted purpose, fulfillment, and significance.

All of that sounds great, right? But the truth is, I wasn't willing to let go of what I had created so I could reach for something greater. Getting stuck in doing what I had always done caused me to lose it all. I had to lose millions to learn this lesson. (That's part of why I'm writing this book for you: so you don't have to make mistakes as bad as the ones I made.) You may never have lost everything, but you've likely had to start over or make a huge pivot at some point in life that caused you doubt and fear.

You might be wondering, why are such pivots needed? It's because we have a tendency to drift in life if we are not careful. Real drift occurs when we get so focused on day-to-day life that we don't see the bigger picture of what we are living in. Sometimes it takes a shock to the system—like the failure of my business—to bring that bigger picture into focus. But you can take yourself there, without that kind of trauma, by applying the principles of this book.

This book will help you understand your current patterns of thinking and being so you can break free from your comfort zone, where you tend to be seduced into a series of supposedly safe decisions. Decisions like that keep us from growing, which is bad because growth is an essential part of attaining significance and fulfillment.

### **Starting My Own Business**

Let me tell you a little more about how I got seduced into the Trap of Success in my first entrepreneurial venture.

My idea, back when I started that first business in 2001, wasn't revolutionary. It was a safe bet, because I set up the business to operate just like my competitors.

As I explained in the Introduction, my business was in tickets and ticket packages, commonly referred to as international sports tours. I sold them to help people—and large groups—attend the world's largest sporting events: Super Bowls, the Olympics, the World Cup, and other marquee events.

Even if it wasn't very innovative, I knew what I was doing and I executed pretty well. The business grew to more than \$1 million in revenue the very first year. I worked hard, took reasonable chances, and invested in my business. I was good at what I did because I knew how to see opportunities that others didn't.

After achieving that traditional degree of success in business, I began to think about what was next—a new set of goals. It wasn't about making more money (I already had plenty) or free time (ditto). I wanted to change the way people bought and made decisions about tickets, and change the industry as a whole.

I talked about it constantly. "There has to be a better way" was all I could think about. It consumed me.

Those seven words became a theme for me starting in 2005. I remember the year distinctly because I steered hard in that direction right after my father passed away. His death hit me at my emotional core. You've probably experienced that kind of introspection for yourself after a life-changing experience. Moments like that tend to get us to reflect on what are we doing on this Earth. I loved my dad very much, and losing him to cancer made me want to do something beyond just making money.

I wanted a better way to make a living that was more fulfilling, something that had a purpose and made an impact in the world. It was not about more money. I was already thinking about significance, even though I was still a long way from the breakthrough I needed to get there.

The other side of "There has to be a better way" was about innovation. By 2006, the Internet was ubiquitous in our lives. We researched everything online, Googling to find out more about anything we cared about, and especially anything we wanted to buy. I wanted to transcend the old way of buying and selling event tickets—to revolutionize the process.

My desire for purpose and my drive for innovation became two opposing forces in my search for "a better way." Underlying this tension was the reality that I had grown to hate the ticket industry. I hated the travel and the risk, but mostly I hated the fact that selling tickets had become solely about making money.

I let this conflict play in my thoughts for years. It became a self-sustaining narrative, a fully-detailed "story" of disgust for my work and the whole ticket industry. As that story ran through my head, it kept me from moving forward. It was not real, it was not the truth—but I bought into it.

The problem was, I was so absorbed in this industry that I hated that I couldn't separate myself from it. Creating a better way to make a living and creating a better way to buy and sell tickets were obviously

not the same thing, but failing to distinguish between them was part of the problem—one that I couldn't see at the time.

I suffered through that period of life for more than four years. I thought about it. I talked about it to friends and people in the industry. I made plans to change it. Yet I didn't do anything about it.

My wife, Amanda, was sick of hearing it, and I don't blame her. I was like a broken record. She asked me one day, "When are you going to do something about this?" That was hard for me to take. I had built two multi-million dollar brands in the ticket business by taking action. Yet here I was, doing nothing.

Her words caused me to reflect. I realized that my unresolved internal conversation about this new direction was keeping me from moving forward.

### **Trapped in My Success**

It came down to one thing: I was trapped in my success. I was making great money and had built a world around me where I had freedom in my business and personal life. I was comfortable where I was—too comfortable.

To be clear, I had kept pushing my business to new levels of profits. I was taking calculated risks by investing more and more into deals. I led my team diligently and built strong relationships with strategic partners. It paid off as I grew the footprint of the business and made more money.

For example, I began working on packages for the 2008 Beijing Olympics about one year before they started. I had huge contracts for delivery of tickets, including the biggest contract I had ever written. I worked crazy hard on it and took risks by trusting in others. That was my normal pattern of running the business.

Ultimately, my company helped more than 8,500 people attend the Olympics in Beijing. I made more than a million dollars during the eight weeks before and during the Games. The two months I lived in Beijing were the hardest I ever worked, but I've never been afraid of hard work.

Looking back, I realize that, for all the extraordinary effort I put in, I was only doing what I knew to be safe. So even though I kept pushing my business to new levels, I was lodged firmly in my comfort zone.

Fear kept me from moving forward with my grand plans to revolutionize the ticket industry. The inner critic stopped me. I didn't want to lose what I had created, and I was paralyzed at the thought of doing something bigger that didn't work out.

Being trapped by success is like being in an invisible box. You can't see the walls, but you're still constrained. It seems like you are doing the right things and making the right decisions, but you're always working within tightly circumscribed limits.

I want to make a note here about resilience. There is so much talk about it these days, and resilience is definitely part of the recipe for continued growth. Yet I've noticed something about resilience: we often cope with life by doing more of what is not working, then call it grit or resilience. But toughing it out on principle when you're doing the wrong things does not serve you. It doesn't get you results.

Looking back, I realize that I lacked courage, not resilience. I needed to muster the kind of courage it takes to break free of what I'd always done. I made incremental gains by playing it safe with what I knew, but I didn't have the courage to leap forward exponentially into the unknown.

Here is the painful part of this story: I was afraid to lose it all, so I didn't go for what I wanted . . . yet I still lost it all. I lost \$3 million dollars in 24 hours doing what I had always done, and was forced to start over again.

I couldn't see it at that time, but being trapped in my success kept me stagnant in my thinking, my business, and my life. I was stuck.

I've shared my story with you here to give you one view of this problem that you might identify with. Over the course of the book, I will share more stories of people that were trapped in their success and had to find the courage to break free.

### **Looking for More**

When I realized that the "success" that I was working for was no longer making me happy, I looked inside to figure out what was going on. I wondered, "Is this it?"

Think back: have you ever had a huge goal that you wanted, and then, once you got it, . . . it didn't feel like you thought you would? You may have had an initial satisfaction that quickly faded away.

In my old business, I felt that way all the time. I felt empty in my gut and confused in my head. Focusing on money and getting it didn't make me feel better about myself, which made me feel even more empty and confused.

Now that I've interviewed hundreds of business leaders for my Leaders in the Trenches podcast over the years, I know I'm not alone. I have attended conferences with speakers courageous enough to share similar stories. Many have had the same moments of frustration, and that same overall lack of fulfillment from the success they had achieved. The all-too-common phrase that comes up is "Once I had success, I wondered, 'Is this it?'"

You're successful, and that in itself is the problem. I know this sounds counterintuitive, but the same things that make you good hold you back from the extraordinary. Keep reading to discover the subtle differences between traditional success and exponential success.

The main point: You can't create a new invention or innovation by doing and thinking as you have always done. Extraordinary comes only when you challenge the old patterns of thinking.

Before we push beyond our quest for success, let's dig deeper to see why a narrow definition of success so often becomes the focal point for those striving for more.

### **Definition of Success**

Let's turn back to the dictionary one more time. Merriam-Webster defines success as "the fact of getting or achieving wealth, respect, or fame," but that definition doesn't feel complete.

Money, respect, or fame definitely can be an element of success, but if you think only in those terms, you limit yourself.

Here is my attempt to analyze various definitions of success to come up the common ways we think about the concept.

Success is:

- 1) the accomplishment of an aim or purpose
- 2) the attainment of popularity or profit
- 3) a person or thing that achieves desired aim or prosperity
- 4) the outcome of an undertaking

What if we broaden this definition of success to include the idea of significance? The common held view of success that we've accepted lacks the element of having an impact on others and the sense of purpose—of significance—that affecting others creates within ourselves. Success without significance seems too self-centered, which is why the achievement of traditional success can feel so empty.

Keep in mind, too, that your own definition of success will change over time based on your progress in life and your priorities.

### **Success Is Relative**

Success is relative to where you are and thus different for each of us. You want something different than I do, and I want something different than you do.

Think about it: If your net worth were all of a sudden \$10 million today, you would likely be thrilled. You would call today a success. However, if Bill Gates or Oprah woke up today with a net worth of \$10 million, they would be in shock. Bill and Oprah would not call today a success.

### **Success Is About Momentum**

One way of understanding success is seeing it as the momentum of life. Momentum is about growth. It is about a change or shift from where you were, whether that is in terms of money or influence. When you have momentum in your professional life, you are better than you were in the past.

It takes a huge amount of courage to create a new future and build this momentum, especially if where you are has become comfortable. When you keep stretching the boundaries of your courage, you expand your comfort zone.

If you stay at it, over time that courage can evolve into bravery. We often use “courage” and “bravery” as synonyms, but in fact the two words are not interchangeable. Courage means moving forward despite the fear you feel; bravery is a state of being fearless.

As you grow, what scared you before will become easy to overcome. With courage and patience, it turns into that fearless attitude—true bravery.

### **Incremental and Exponential Success**

Gaining success is a goal for nearly every person on the face of the earth. Certainly, those without some sense of direction or goals are not allowed in my life. I say that only semi-jokingly, because I do purposefully surround myself with people who are growing and striving in all areas of life and business.

We are here to grow. That growth might be in your business, your professional life, your relationships, or your outside interests. Whatever the case, you must think about stretching yourself.

What most people think of as success is actually incremental growth. There is nothing wrong with the incremental. It is comfortable and evolves over time. But we are not looking to stay in the comfort zone. You don't find significance there.

I settled for incremental success in my sports tours business. Over the years, the company profits continued to grow, and my network expanded. Think back to what I shared in the opening part of this chapter: I got comfortable with my success and my level of risk—that incremental approach. I didn't have the courage to go for what I really wanted.

While incremental growth is linear, exponential growth is explosive.

Exponential growth is the "hockey stick" that startups aim to achieve—the graph of growth that is flat in the beginning, then rockets up as users, revenue, or profits rise at a rapid pace. That's what investors look for in ideal companies when they are considering writing big checks.

Exponential growth applies to startups and investors, but it also applies to people who aren't raising capital.

I had a great interview with Rich Litvin on my podcast and continued the conversation when we met up in Los Angeles to discuss success. Rich is a transformational coach to Olympic athletes, presidential candidates, Hollywood film directors, special forces operatives, and serial entrepreneurs.

Rich has delved into "the trap of success" with his clients. He finds that it is common for people to reach a point of conventional success and never make the transition to exponential success. They accept a fixed view of success, and themselves, that keeps them from changing on the inside. Think about that last sentence: "changing from the inside"—by changing your thinking—is the key.

Exponential growth happens when new thinking takes place. Conventional success tends to block that thinking. Rich believes—and I agree—that conventional success comes with effort and time, and that conventional success is exactly what holds people back from exponential success.

Consider how this relates to what I've been saying about the comfort zone and why we have to escape it. I like to simplify The Trap of Success by bringing it back to this core concept: breaking free from your comfort zone. Your comfort zone is where conventional success happens. You seek comfort and peace in doing more of the things you've always done, yet that very behavior keeps you from fulfilling your potential and achieving exponential success.

We are meant to expand and grow. That's what life is supposed to be.

Helping you escape your comfort zone and find your way to exponential success—along with real significance—is one of the main reasons for this book. In my own life, I have seen the advantages that come from continuously challenging my current comfort level—of expanding beyond my comfort zone. I have also seen hundreds of people do the same in my coaching work, and I am still amazed that more people don't lean into this way of being.

So let's unpack four different ways that success can trap you.

### **Four Different Traps**

1) Growth — Being successful gives you confidence to "stay the course" and keep doing what you have been doing. This is the inertia of the status quo, which ironically, is the problem. To continue to grow, you have to seek out new ways of being and doing to solve the bigger challenges in life—not just roll along on the same track you've been on.

The trap here is not easy to see. In fact, it seems like you are on the right path.

2) Vision — Your vision of a new future comes with a governor. Not the political kind, but the mechanical part installed on an engine to keep it from running too hot and breaking down. Your future is only as big as what you, and your governor, believe is possible. The problem is most people think too little of themselves to think big.

This trap keeps you playing small and avoiding risk.

3) Support — Getting to where you are now has worked. You may not have done it all on your own, but now you live in a space where you don't need help from others to keep going. This keeps you from seeking out new perspectives, thus hampering exponential growth.

This trap slows you down, because it becomes all about what you can already do.

4) Truth — This trap is about the stories you live in. It is about the way you see the world. You hold your story as the truth, and you have not thought about how you made that story up based on your experiences and your limited view of the world. This is something we all face. There is a difference between your truth and the absolute truth.

This problem is only made worse when you surround yourself with people who agree with you. Organizations that are filled with the proverbial "yes-men" and "yes-women" struggle to grow consistently, precisely because they are not open to broader viewpoints that take in more of the truth.

### **Trap Overlap**

There is overlap among the traps I've shared. It is likely you have more than one trap affecting you right now. If I were sitting beside you, we could have a real conversation about the traps, one that would challenge you to think about the grip they have on you. So now is the time for you to challenge yourself and examine how these traps are affecting you.

Because of this, we are not addressing the traps one by one. I prefer to roll them together and focus on how you can move forward from where you are right now, with the ultimate goal of finding your new path, one that combines exponential success with significance.

### **Success Breeds Complacency**

Safety is the enemy of success. There is a huge difference between starting a business and keeping it growing. It takes different skills and even different thinking. You can say the same for any professional endeavor.

Let's look at the beginnings of an entrepreneurial venture. Starting out, businesses grow through execution on a good idea. It takes hard work, but it also takes courage to overcome the challenges that come up. That is the typical path; while some take longer to make it, many never make it all.

For the few that turn the corner to profitability and larger scale, things can go one of two ways. They either continue to evolve or they don't. You can say the same for leaders—they either evolve or they don't.

Do you remember Kodak? Blockbuster? Circuit City? Borders Books? Those companies didn't make it for a number of reasons, but if we simplify it, they failed to stay relevant to consumers. They didn't evolve.

Meanwhile, companies like Apple and Amazon have navigated many market changes. Apple completely cannibalized its highest margin product, the iPod, when it launched the iPhone. That worked out pretty well for them. Amazon has continued to grow far beyond books so that now it is a colossus in online retail, cloud computing, and more.

There are many stories on both sides of success that we could look at. In the rest of this book, I will tell you about a few other companies, but most of the examples will be about people. That's because I want to address you at a personal level. Your success. Your continuous growth. And, of course, your shift from conventional, linear success to exponential success and significance.

### **Don't Wait**

This book is meant to activate you to step up now.

Don't wait for some pivotal moment come along to get you to take action.

Don't fail to evolve like so many businesses have done.

Don't let your fear kill your dreams or rob you of what you really want; show the courage to create a new future.

That new future is one where you regularly venture outside your comfort zone, where you achieve exponential success, and where you achieve deep significance in your work and life. To get there, you must listen to the calling in your soul.

That calling can be hard to hear. Maybe you don't hear it at all yet, but you will. At first, I ignored my calling. Maybe it was only a whisper. But by ignoring it I missed the signs of my true potential. It took me years of frustration and then years of new learning—the learning I'm sharing with you now—to hear my calling and begin to pursue it. It has made all the difference in my work and my life; I just wish I hadn't waited so long to find it.

Will you ignore your calling?

### **Oprah's View of Success**

Striving for success usually means making more money, having more freedom, maybe winning some fame. Yet those things often feel empty once you have attained them. That's what happened to me, and I've seen it happen with many others.

Oprah Winfrey says that she sees success as more than money and fame. It is about service. Her view of success takes it far beyond the ego. This is Oprah's prayer:

"Use me, God. Show me how to take who I am, who I want to be, and what I can do, and use it for a purpose greater than myself."

—Oprah Winfrey, Talk Show Host Extraordinaire and Mega Influencer

That is a calling. Yes, Oprah has money and fame—more than most people can imagine—but she has also been on a journey of significance for years as she has evolved in her career. Oprah has invited the dance of success and significance into her life, which is obvious when you see how she continuously shares with her audience after her show is long gone.

### **For the Love of Money**

Here is just one example of the limitations of conventional success from the crazy world of Wall Street. You may not have heard of Sam Polk, but his story is quite interesting. You'll likely enjoy it—if you're already thinking that success in life might be about more than just money.

Sam was a Wall Street investment banker at a top firm. It was a dream come true for him to work among the other traders, and he made more money in a year than most people make in a lifetime. He became driven by the money and the perks of life as a trader, pushing himself in nearly every area of life. To be clear, his never-ending drive also pushed himself into areas like alcohol, drugs, and overeating.

It all came to a head in 2014, when Sam received a bonus of \$3.75 million. His hunger for more became obsessive, yet he realized that the path he was on was not the way he wanted to continue. Sam quit his high-paying Wall Street job and began a search for something more. I discovered an abridged version of Sam's story in a New York Times article, but you can read more about it in his book, *For the Love of Money*.

### **Your Success Is Not Bad**

Please understand: I'm not saying that traditional success is bad. I'm also not saying it's good. I'm only saying that there is more to life—and there must be more to your work—than the traditional pursuit of money and other measures of success.

I've been on that treadmill. Having made tons of money in the first decade of this century, I felt the inner drive to make even more. You can call it greed if you want. Mind you, I didn't want money to buy toys or expensive gifts, but to plow back into my business to keep it growing and provide for my family.

But having money and freedom was not all that I wanted. I had an emptiness in my stomach that ached for something meaningful in life: to make a difference. I realize now that what I wanted was significance; what I had instead was a business that made money, and that business was my comfort zone. That was my trap of success.

As hard as the journey has been, I now see losing it all as a gift. I regret the losses and disappointments faced by all the people who got wrapped up in my Vancouver Olympics ordeal. I hate it that I trusted the wrong person and impacted more than 10,000 people who spent their hard-earned money with me and depended on me for their tickets. For all of that, I am deeply sorry.

Yet going through that pivotal moment is part of my journey, one that I needed to shift my perspective. You might be on a similar path that will cause you to look back at your life, or parts of it, with regret. My hope is that this book will give you a new perspective on success and significance, one that will encourage you to continue to grow and innovate as you navigate life.

Getting there is about working on yourself, not about shortcuts or even "strategies." It is about building your self-awareness, and especially your awareness of what you really want out of life, and how that aligns or contrasts with how you're actually running your career.

I believe that facing this challenge is 80 percent mindset and 20 percent mechanics. The lion's share of our success is about the way you think—what I sometimes refer to as the “inner game.” If all you focus on is traditional success, you can attain it with the right strategies and enough hard work, courage, and resilience. It's no easy task—but it also doesn't answer your inner needs. So ask yourself, “What do I really want?”

Do you just want more money? Or do you really want something else?

If you're reading this book, I assume you want more than money. So it's time to start learning how to reinvent yourself.

### Questions to Inspire You

- Has your personal idea of success changed over time? What was it five years ago?
- What is your idea of success now?
- What is your true calling? Will you ignore it or embrace it?