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Get the Life You Really Want

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Release Your Potential

Why do you want to change?

I am a great believer in what I call the Power of Why. It's amazing how a change to your state of mind can start to unleash your potential right away. This is all about understanding what is important to you, what is spurring you onwards and upwards. It is finding the part of your personality that will give you the energy and the power to transform your life.

The Power of Why is something I am always looking for when I think about backing a new business. It was what I tried to uncover whenever I was sitting in the Dragons' Den. During each presentation I studied the person making the pitch. I always back people, rather than purely ideas, so I want to know what is driving them on.

I invest in the person leading the business. If I don't feel their passion, then it doesn't matter to me how good their financial plan is. I won't

be convinced they will achieve what they are forecasting.

I want to identify what it is in their make-up that tells me they have the determination to succeed. How will they deal with the problems they are certain to come up against? Will they go that extra mile to make it?

Everybody has their own reasons for wanting to achieve their goals. Mostly people will say that they are doing it for themselves. However, one of the great motivators is the fact you want to change for other people.

I know this goes against the grain of usual business advice. You will often be told you should be changing your life for you, and not for other people. However, I think that is too simple a response. Of course we all want to change for ourselves. But the problem is that if it is *only* for ourselves we want to change, we too easily accept compromises. Our pain threshold is much lower. We will always cut ourselves more slack. But let's say your mum and your brother have each put some of their own money into your latest venture. Believe me, you will work twice as hard to make sure you don't let them down.

It's like Gina, who wanted to turn her life around after being in prison. She wanted to do

that not only to support her young kids, but also to show her family and friends that she had changed. 'Now I can look my family in the eye,' she said, 'instead of hanging my head in shame.'

Dig down and find not only *what* it is in your life but *who* you want to change for. That is a powerful force. The more factors you can add to make your commitment to your journey stronger, the more likely you are to achieve your goals.

My dad left his life in Pakistan and travelled over to England without a word of English. He did that because he wanted to provide for me and his other children. Can you imagine what it must have been like for him arriving here? Somehow after arriving in London he made his way to the East End. He relied on nothing but an address on a piece of paper and a lot of pointing and smiling. Again, what determination. He was so driven, so motivated, so committed to being successful in business. That character – his DNA – is part of me.

The very first investment I ever made on *Dragons' Den* was in a person rather than a product. Sammy French came in with her Fit Fur Life treadmill for dogs. It wasn't the idea of the dog treadmills themselves that convinced me. I knew absolutely nothing about them or their market potential.

What inspired me was Sammy's own story. Here was a single mum, living in a council flat, working as a waitress to pay the bills. She was selling her treadmills in the evening because she really wanted to earn more money to give one of her daughters a private education. That was driving her on.

As well as that sense of motivation, which gives you the desire and the hunger to transform your life, you also need the willingness to start out on this process of change. You have to do that without necessarily knowing where you will end up.

It is what I try and use when I help other people in their businesses. I hope to come in and give them confidence. I want them to believe in the fact that they can achieve what they want. That is another massive part of giving yourself the right mindset to change your life.

When I tell people they will be successful, I start the process of them believing in themselves. I may not have done anything practical or specific. Often I have helped them with the why, rather than the how. I might simply have had a conversation with them, but the key thing I have done is to remove the fear of failure that is dragging them back. I want to get rid

of the voice in their head saying, 'You can't do it, you're useless, you haven't got the experience.'

Everyone knows that fear of failure. The common ingredient shared by every successful entrepreneur I meet is that they have learnt to deal with the threat of failure.

I was once at a conference with Bill Gates, and he was asked whether he ever doubted he would succeed. He said of course he had. When he started Microsoft, it nearly got stuck at the first hurdle because he couldn't get a company car for the first salesman he hired. The car leasing firm refused, point blank. They had never heard of Microsoft, the company had no track record, they would never make it. If a friend of Bill's had not agreed to guarantee the lease, the Microsoft story would have ended there and then. Bill Gates learnt not to be fazed by the fear of failure.

Top sportsmen and women do the same. When Wayne Rooney finds himself in sight of the goal with the ball at his feet, he is fearless. He will just take the shot. He believes he *can* score, even if that time he shoots wide. Yet over and over again you see other players miss a tap-in, in front of an open goal. They fumble the shot. Why? They feel the pressure. The adrenalin is

pumping and they start worrying about the possibility of missing. Sure enough, they miss. They've lost their nerve.

Great players in any sport have harnessed their fear of failure. They have learnt how to draw on their belief and their confidence, and importantly they are able to do that on the big points.

I find the same in business. The basic skills are the same. There are people with all the business skills you need who still fail. It is all locked up in that emotional thought, 'I can't do it.' Those who succeed say, 'Yes. I can do this. And I will.'

Mindset: the JC approach

- Find out what it is inside you that is going to drive you on to transform your life. Those driving forces are all-powerful. They will encourage you to overcome the natural, human fear of change and fear of failure.

- If you can work out who the people are that you really want to demonstrate your transformed life to, that is a great additional motivation.

- The difference lies not in the basic skills we all have. It is in our minds. It is in the confidence that we can get what we want.

- **It is your mindset, not your ability, that shapes how high you will go. In other words, it is your attitude, not your aptitude, that determines your altitude.**