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GET ON THE RED CARPET

Courtesy of the taxman!

There are few people in the world who like paying tax and even if they do, they'd like to know their money is going into something worthwhile.

But what if you were given the opportunity to exchange your tax bill for an investment in a British film – and the chance to walk on the red carpet with the movie's stars?

Tax advisors and wealth managers are usually aware of the schemes available to help High Net Worth individuals and Sophisticated Investors, but this information doesn't usually enter the mainstream as it is targeted to such a small number of UK residents.

However, those people who have anything from £10,000 readily available can benefit from tax efficient schemes which can significantly reduce or even negate their liabilities including income and capital gains taxes.

Janet Kelly is the author of Dear Beneficiary and Associate Producer of the film, currently optioned for film by Circadian Pictures –which has been fully approved for one of the Government Seed Enterprise Initiative Schemes (SEIS).

> "Investors can place between £10k and £45k into the SEIS and would immediately qualify for at least 50% of that money back from the HMRC – more if the investor has any capital gains liabilities, going back up to three years."

Investors are currently raising an initial £150,000 for Dear Beneficiary Film Ltd under this SEIS structure to finance the development of the film. This is the first stage which pays for the screenplay adaptation, a director and the leading actors.

Depending on circumstances, up to 64% of any investment could be returned by the HMRC immediately and all the investment is placed back into the account, awaiting further profit flow and dividends.

Already a number of A-list actors have been earmarked for different roles in the film which is a comedy about an older woman who has a relationship with a younger man from Nigeria. When he disappears and she gets a 'Dear Beneficiary' email promising her great wealth she believes it is from him. That is when her comedy adventure begins.

Very much in the style of the Marigold Hotel films and with some similarities to Shirley Valentine and Thelma and Louise, Janet's book has had 4 and 5 star reviews – and the film looks set to achieve the same level of response.

'Obviously anyone considering putting their money into any scheme needs to take full financial advice to ensure it is the best thing for them to do,' said Janet

Investors placing more than £25k into the SEIS of Dear Beneficiary will also be invited to VIP events during the production process – including meeting the key actors, visits to the film sets and invitations to red carpet events.

'I think many of us would be happier putting money into a film than giving it to the HMRC.'

Anyone who would like any further information can contact Janet Kelly on **janet@freefeatures.co.uk**













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THE OTHER BOMBSHELL

It was our wedding anniversary and I'd been busily making arrangements for a mini-break to remember.

I'd made a list. I like lists. If there's a list, I feel in control. There's a confidence in seeing something clearly written down – and clearly crossed off. I'd checked through the final few items – kids sorted, car fuelled up, swimming trunks packed – and, as the day dawned, we were ready to roll. Everything was going beautifully to plan, and I was whisking my wife away to the Cotswolds hotel where she'd always wanted to stay.

Now, picture the scene, if you will.

We pull up and manoeuvre easily into the delightfully spacious car park. We gather our belongings, enter our idyllic-looking retreat and, exchanging smiles with the receptionist as we collect our key, we head, full of anticipation, to our room. There, the flowers and champagne-on-ice I have carefully organised await us.

Setting down our luggage, I take out my phone, very deliberately switch it off and enter complete radio silence (my mobile is one of the last few on the FM network). I know, but there are no boundaries to the sacrifices I will make for this beautiful woman.

We unpack our things, slide our clothes onto luxuriously padded hangers, open the windows, then stand for a few moments, breathing in the fresh, clean air and admiring the view. It's stunning. We've arrived. Our celebration holiday has begun.

"Tell you what," I suggest. "Why don't I pop the champagne and then we can take a romantic dip in the outdoor hot tub?" I like bubbles with my Bubbly (she hates being called that). My wife smiles and nods her approval. "Fantastic," I say. "You get yourself organised and I'll meet you there."

Champagne and towel in hand, I stroll through the hotel lobby, and out into the grounds. The hot tub beckons. Literally. Who could resist that seductive warmth and gently frothing water? Not me, that's for sure. I slide into the bubbles and lean back, eyes closed, enjoying the glow of the sun on my face.

Moments later, at the sound of a light splash, I smile. "Hello, gorgeous," I say, eyes still closed. "That didn't take you long."

There's no immediate reply, so I turn my head, just a little, and open an eye. And there she is – the long-legged blonde bombshell, chin slightly tilted, her two perfectly blue eyes gazing into mine. Well, into the one that was open.

But not with adoration. She stares at me curiously. "I don't know who you're expecting, darling," she says at last, matter-of-factly, "but I think you'll find, it's not me."

I sit up quickly. Too quickly. The champagne from my glass slops into the water.

This bombshell is not my wife.

My mind starts to turn somersaults. If I was wearing anything with a collar I'd be feeling hot under it. This is my wedding anniversary. This whole trip is a celebration of my marriage to my beautiful wife. Now, here I am, up to my neck in bubbles – with another woman.

Normally I would have come up with some amusing retort but in the panic my creative thinking has disappeared in the 38°C water along with my 2007 Bollinger. Before I have time to climb out of the hot tub and away from the offending blonde, I spot my wife – my very own bombshell. She is making her way across the courtyard, one eyebrow arched, with an amused smirk playing at the corners of her mouth.

As she drops her towel next to mine and slips into the water beside me, she remarks, "Well, that's a bit of luck. This will make another chapter in your book." She then turns to the 'other woman' and strikes up a conversation.

I breathe again.

On another note, I could also do with finding a hotel that has private hot tubs. ■





"Here I am, up to my neck in bubbles – with another woman."

STEVE LEGG BIOGRAPHY

Steve is a British entertainer and motivational speaker. The author of 13 books, Steve launched *Sorted* at the Odyssey Arena, Belfast in 2007. Through its associated charity, Breakout Trust, thousands of free magazines are sent to 62 Prisons, to members of HM Armed Forces and into Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Centres throughout the UK. Also available in hundreds of WHSmith stores nationwide and in newsstands globally, *Sorted* has been voted the world's most wholesome men's magazine with 100,000 readers in 21 countries.

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ON THE UP



BY JOSH SENIOR
IMAGES BY CHRIS JELLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

I'm going to be totally honest from the get-go and say I'm a competitive athlete and in the modern world of social media, your media presence is everything when it comes to achieving support or sponsorship. While I love sharing my story and believe it has the potential to inspire, motivate and encourage people, I'm also shamelessly seeking good publicity!

So, a quick overview of my story.

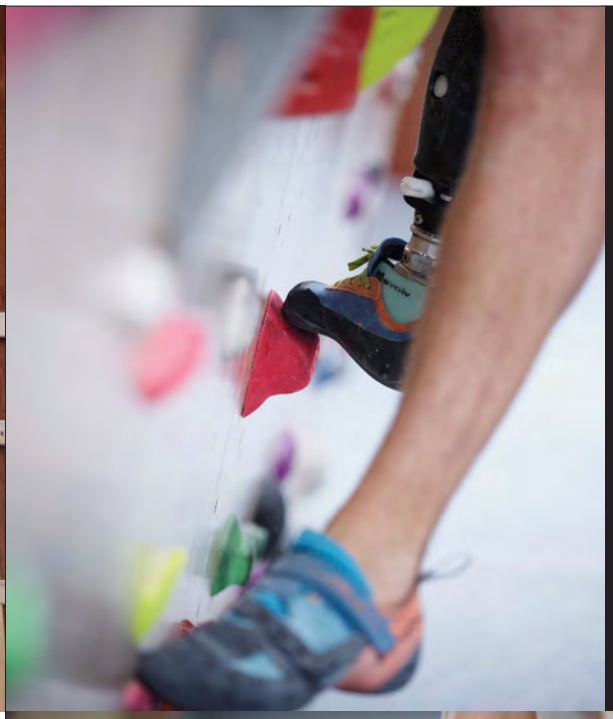
I'm 30 years old and an international competition climber on the GB paraclimbing team. →

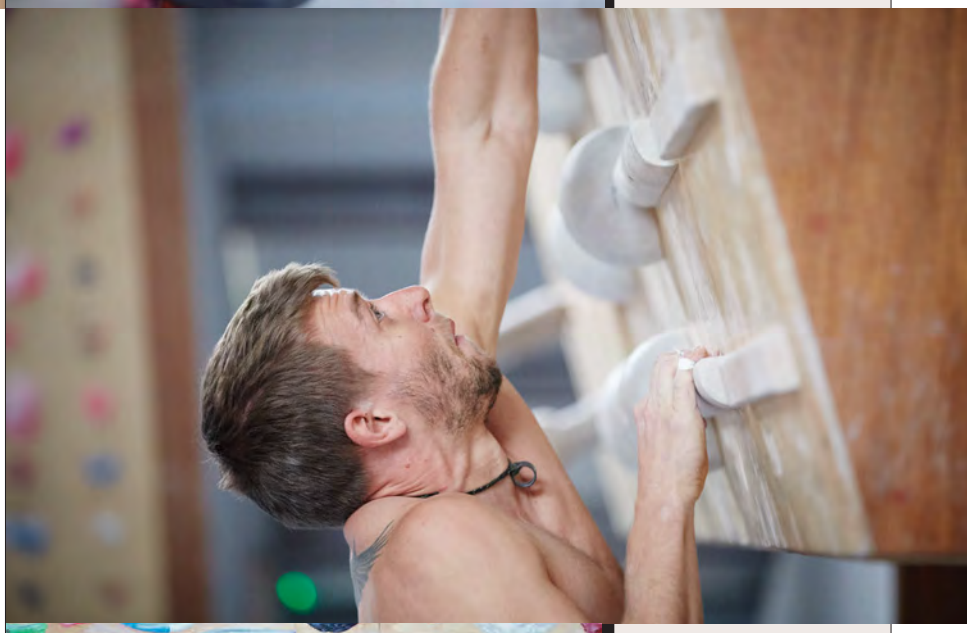


In August of 2010 I had an accident, a 35ft fall, which led to me breaking my back in two places, and dramatically smashing up my ankle. Following six months in Stoke Mandeville Hospital, a couple of eight hour-plus spinal operations and various other ops and procedures, I had reached a point where I shuffled around a bit on crutches but predominantly I was a wheelchair-user. With huge amounts of dedication, continued physiotherapy and gym work I reached a point where I was walking fairly effectively (however painfully), but as I walked better the damage to my ankle (which had been irrelevant in a wheelchair) became more apparent. Cut a long story short, a few ops later and lots of opinions considered I opted to have my leg amputated below the knee in 2013 and I've not looked back since.

Prior to my accident I was a keen rock climber and an outdoor instructor and I've returned to climbing in a big way. In 2016 I competed in three out of the four national paraclimbing series and reached a podium position in each leaving me in third position for the overall series. I was then invited to join the GB paraclimbing team and have had my first season of competing internationally. It was an exceptionally steep learning curve and the competition pressure alone was something I have had to learn to adjust to, but I managed to hold my own. Honestly, I don't believe I've even scratched the surface of what I could yet achieve. I'm currently training like a bit of a madman both at the wall and at the gym, determined to get lighter, stronger and more powerful. Following this year's national series, I am currently ranked second in the UK, and I am determined to be a serious contender at international competitions this year and beyond.









In addition, almost more importantly, I also want to position myself so that I can do some big expeditions and push the boundaries of what it means to be 'disabled'.

Alongside the competitive rock climbing I also want to do some big wall climbing around the world in the future. I'm a keen kayaker and lover of adventure and exploring. I really believe I will get to some interesting places; it would be wonderful to have the backing to really push the boundaries of disability.

My current goal list consists of:

- Compete at the next world championships.
- To one day achieve V10 grades.
- To lead 8a climbs. This and the goal above refer to climbing grades which are exceptionally hard grades for anyone, let alone someone with injuries. These goals will push me incredibly hard.
- White-water kayak grade 4 rivers.
- Run more obstacle course races.

Alongside all of this, my ambition is to be an ambassador for sport in general, show its life-changing powers for people, both mentally and physically, and I want to be an example. By that I mean I want to be an example of good sportsmanship, I want to be an example of what hard work looks like, an example of the power of positivity and an example to my boys to never give up on their goals.

My faith has been a huge part of getting through my initial injuries, rehabilitation, surgeries and recovery. I don't know how I would have handled anything in that time without God pulling me through on one side and my wife pushing me through from the other.

Don't know if this is helpful or not, but a friend made a short documentary as a university project. It might give you a feel for who I am: youtube.com/watch?v=GyTMUp8DD8Q&list=UUAYyYLlk8tdq10b4RC3juQg

You could also get a feel for who I am through Instagram, too, @josh_senior and I have recently started my own YouTube channel which is very much in its infancy but I'm excited to see where it goes – https://www.youtube.com/user/jts107

So that's who I am. If you are interested in doing something, let me know.

Thanks so much for reading.

JOSH SENIOR BIOGRAPHY

Josh is a passionate climber and lover of all things health, fitness and adventure related. He can easily be found on social media on instagram @josh_senior, on twitter @senior_josh and on facebook as @paraclimbingjosh if you want to connect.

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BEAR GRYLLS
The Bear Facts



OFF ROAD

Getty Images / Bluegame

Off-road driving is one of those skills that you can keep on improving over the course of a lifetime. However, if you can get to grips with a few basic skills, you'll be well-equipped for those adventures that require you to get behind the wheel.

It's a lot easier getting into a difficult situation than getting out of it. Once you're five feet into that mud, or sliding out of control down the loose side of a hill, it can be near-impossible to reverse your way out. In a survival situation, you need to question and study everything in your surroundings. When you're driving in difficult terrain, it's often a smart move to get out of your vehicle and walk the ground ahead (undramatic as it sounds.). If you feel things getting difficult, sometimes discretion is the better part of valour. Don't plough on; rewind, reverse – retreating exactly back the way you came – then get out and do your recce properly. It's always best to travel in pairs, and this is especially true with off-road driving. If you have two vehicles (and a good, sturdy tow rope), you can pull each other out if you get into trouble. If you only have one vehicle but two passengers, one of you should drive while the other acts as a 'spotter', guiding you across any tricky obstacles.

Off-road driving is all about wheel traction – making sure that the rubber is firmly gripping the terrain beneath it, whatever that terrain may be. As soon as those tyres start spinning, or slipping on unfamiliar surfaces, you've lost control of the vehicle. You can increase your wheel traction in most circumstances by lowering your tyre pressure. This not only gives you better traction but a more comfortable ride too. The looser the surface, the lower the tyre pressure, so snow, mud and especially sand would benefit from less pressure. Start by reducing the tyre pressure by one half of your usual road pressure. If the vehicle is still struggling, you can continue to reduce it by 2psi at a time – small reductions are your friend here. Remember, though, that the lower your tyre pressure, the slower you need to drive. Low pressure plus high-speed equals increased heat and tyre failure. There is also a risk of the tyre separating from the rims. Not good at low speeds, massively dangerous at high ones. If you're going off-roading, consider taking a portable air compressor with you. These plug into the cigarette lighter of your vehicle and give you the ability to increase and decrease your tyre pressure. If, despite your lower tyre pressure, you find yourself stuck in mud, or on ice, and your vehicle has rubber floor mats, you can place these in front of the driving wheels to give you that extra bit of traction you need. (A sack or an old rug will have the same effect.)

DON'T MISS
BEAR
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Page 88

If you find the way ahead barred by a ditch, don't approach it straight on. Not only do you risk the front of your vehicle making contact with the ground and becoming stuck, you will also tend to reduce traction in your two front wheels. Instead, approach the ditch at an angle so that only one wheel is in the depression at a time. This gives you traction on three wheels rather than two. ■

Knowledge and skills are great, and we are designed as humans to learn, especially when it comes to staying alive and smart ways to survive life! But ultimately the greatest survival tool we have is the courage and faith to trust God with our lives. That's where true wisdom is found, and real life is encountered.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." (NIV, Proverbs 3:5-6)

"One of you should drive while the other acts as a 'spotter', guiding you across any tricky obstacles."

WANT TO READ ON?



Excerpt from *How to Stay Alive* by Bear Grylls
Bantam Press

BEAR GRYLLS BIOGRAPHY

Known worldwide as one of the most-recognized faces of survival and outdoor adventure. BAFTA award winning TV host Bear Grylls began his journey in 21 SAS before becoming one of the youngest-ever climbers of Mount Everest. He is a number 1 bestselling author, Chief Scout to 50 million worldwide and an honorary colonel to the Royal Marine Commandos.

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ANTHONY DELANEY

Rough Diamonds

WHAT IF EVERYTHING GOES?



Getty Images / AdrianHancu

As I read today's paper and watch the news the world really seems to be in a spin again and reporters think we'll soon fall off.

I just finished yet another opinion piece about Brexit (this is not one, so pull your neck in).

What's best to do for us?

What's the best deal (or no deal)?

What does it mean for you, Mr Ordinary of Chingford?

What does it mean for the economy?

How it will work out

and what if it can't

and what if they won't

and what if this and what if that and what *The Financial Times*!

Whatever your politics, so many people I talk to, even those saying they're followers of Jesus, echo all the same fears, which I have to say makes me wonder if we have the same God. Because mine told me that where your treasure is shows where your heart lies – so what do you have that can't be taken away?

My friend Neil Cole tells of the trial of John Chrysostom, who was Bishop of Constantinople in the fourth century and known as the greatest preacher of early Church history. He was so eloquent, his name means 'Golden Mouth'. But the truth he spoke made enemies until eventually he was put on trial by the empress, who threatened to banish him.

"You cannot banish me, for this world is my Father's house."

"I will take away your treasures!" said Eudoxia.

"You cannot, for my treasure is in heaven and my heart is there."

"I will kill you!" the empress said.

"You cannot, for my life is hid with Christ in God."

"I will drive you away from your friends and you will have no one left," Eudoxia responded.

"No, you cannot," said John, "for I have a Friend in heaven from whom you cannot separate me. There is nothing you can do to harm me."

What a way to live!

Matthew was a tax collector. Maybe that's why many of Jesus' parables that he recorded in his Gospels stuck in his mind, stories about money and possessions – taxable!

In Jesus' day they didn't have banks, ISAs or pensions. What did they do with their most valuable possessions to keep others from stealing what they had?

Go to the museum and look at all those lovely coins and jewels from treasure troves going way back to when people were stupid enough to think they could keep anything.

They hoarded and worried over and worked for then buried prized possessions to keep them safe. To stop thieves from stealing them.

But everything does go. Now we find what they buried, but we don't know where most of their owners are buried. History rolled on and they are dust and what they made most important gathers it. What they lived for died with them. They never got to return to their treasure, unless they had deposited in heaven where moths and rust and boom or bust can't touch it.

Which must raise the question, to anyone but a fool, what's really most valuable?

> "WHAT'S REALLY MOST VALUABLE?"

When Jesus told a story about buried loot in a field, or a pearl so big it was worth selling everything to get, Matthew's ears pricked up and he got his pen out and he pondered its meaning. Have a read of his Gospel for yourself and do the same, but in the meantime I'll ask how many are worrying more, working harder and searching further for 'what it's all about', when Jesus said finding God and putting him at the centre of your life is like stumbling across the most precious priceless, treasure?

Ever dream or imagine finding the winning jackpot lottery ticket?

Chicken feed.

Chicken droppings.

There is treasure worth giving up everything else to get. You don't buy it. You could never afford it. You don't work for it, earn it or deserve it. It's all that lasts forever and God "adds no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22, ESV). Nobody can take it away once you have it. Have you found it? ■





Work It Out: What It Means to Follow Jesus
Ivy Network Books

ANTHONY DELANEY BIOGRAPHY

Anthony Delaney leads Ivy Church and broadcasts weekly on UCB and regularly on TBN-UK.

His latest book Work It Out: What It Means to Follow Jesus explains basic Christian beliefs in plain language and is now widely available, or contact info@ivychurch.org for bulk deals.

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KRISS AKABUSI MBE

Keeping on Track

DEAR TRUST

A life without you is unthinkable to me; isolation, loneliness, fear, anxiety, and trouble around every corner. Trust, I feel safe and secure in you. Without you, surely we're on our own?

You're there from the very beginning, in our very first relationship in life. When we are born, we're hopeless. We cannot manage alone, but we soon find you in that bond with our mother – the one who'll support us, nurture us, provide for us, look after us. Trust, you're so foundational because, in that situation, it really is a matter of life and death. And with you there, we can build the basis for one of the greatest things in life: love.

From the very first moment we sense you in our lives, we are bound to find you again and again, your presence found at the root of every supportive, beneficial and loving relationship in our lives. Such vulnerable beings we are, we need others to have our backs – and with you there, we can.

When I think about my friends and family in this way, Trust, I find you in spades. Those special individuals have proved themselves to be qualified of my trust, reliable in my hour of need, and close enough to me to tell me when I'm too direct or abrupt, or to encourage me when I've done the right thing. I am also assured that their relationship with me is one of mutual interest, not self-interest on their part. And with all that in mind, Trust, we welcome your company in our relationship.

However, you are a plant of slow growth. Like a mighty oak, you take a very long time to grow – but can be destroyed in an instant. If that happens, repairing you is no easy feat. It takes considerable time and effort, and can even prove impossible in some cases.

This is something I understand all too well. My own relationship with my mother – despite being the first relationship in my life – is one where I lost you very early on, Trust. When she and my father returned to Nigeria, my brother and I were placed into the care of foster parents, and later into a children's home. Trust, you were broken and, I'm sad to say, in this particular relationship, you didn't come back.

Looking back, I realise it wouldn't have been impossible for you to come back. It would have taken a lot. But it wouldn't have been impossible.

To find you again takes contrition, honesty and communication – importantly, on both sides. I look at my relationship with my mother, and I think about what it would have taken to bring you back into our relationship. Although it would have required a lot from *her*, it would have required a lot from *me*, too.

The first step would have been for my mother to simply accept and acknowledge where she'd gone wrong. Accepting responsibility for the part a person has played in any destruction of you, Trust, is a critical starting point.

What would I have wanted to hear her say? Perhaps that she knew where she went wrong. Perhaps a genuine apology. Perhaps a commitment and very real desire to make amends and develop a relationship with the person I'd become. Open, honest and sincere communication is key in enticing you to return.

Then what would I have wanted to say? I would have wanted my mother to hear *my* story, to hear what it was like for me after she left for Nigeria, how it made me feel and the impact it had on me. I'd want to tell her how I felt she'd gone wrong – not to apportion blame, but just to get these long-held feelings out into the open. Without that openness and honesty, it's impossible for either party to move on – and impossible for you, Trust, to return.



"LIKE A MIGHTY OAK, YOU TAKE A VERY LONG TIME TO GROW – BUT CAN BE DESTROYED IN AN INSTANT."

I'd also want my mother to give me her reasons, to help me to understand her actions. I know this might not have been easy for me to hear.

These are conversations I was never able to have. That I never will be able to have. I never had that openness with her, and I was never able to walk a mile in her shoes. And that's why we were never able to rebuild you, Trust, and were never able to move forward.

All this simply serves to remind me, Trust, how truly essential you are in our lives. When you're there, life is easier, safer, happier, securer. When I have you – either in relationships or situations – a weight lifts from my shoulders.

Thank you, Trust, for surrounding me in all I do, even when I find it hard to find you. I can't imagine life without you. Here's to me welcoming you as an ever-closer friend in *every* aspect of my life, continuing to build you even in places where I struggle, and enjoying the peace and comfort of your presence in the years ahead.

Yours, Kriss



KRISS AKABUSI MBE
BIOGRAPHY

Kriss Akabusi MBE is an Olympian, TV personality and business keynote speaker, trainer and facilitator. He will probably always be remembered for helping Britain clinch the gold from the mighty Americans at the 1991 World Championships. Kriss is regularly consulted on a variety of radio and television programmes, discussing topics ranging from sport to business. Kriss is also an accredited personal coach, having qualified at the Hudson Institute of Santa Barbara and works with executives to help them identify and achieve their goals.

@KrissAkabusi



NICHOLAS HILL

Leadership Matters

LEADING WITH YOUR HEART

Embracing the human element

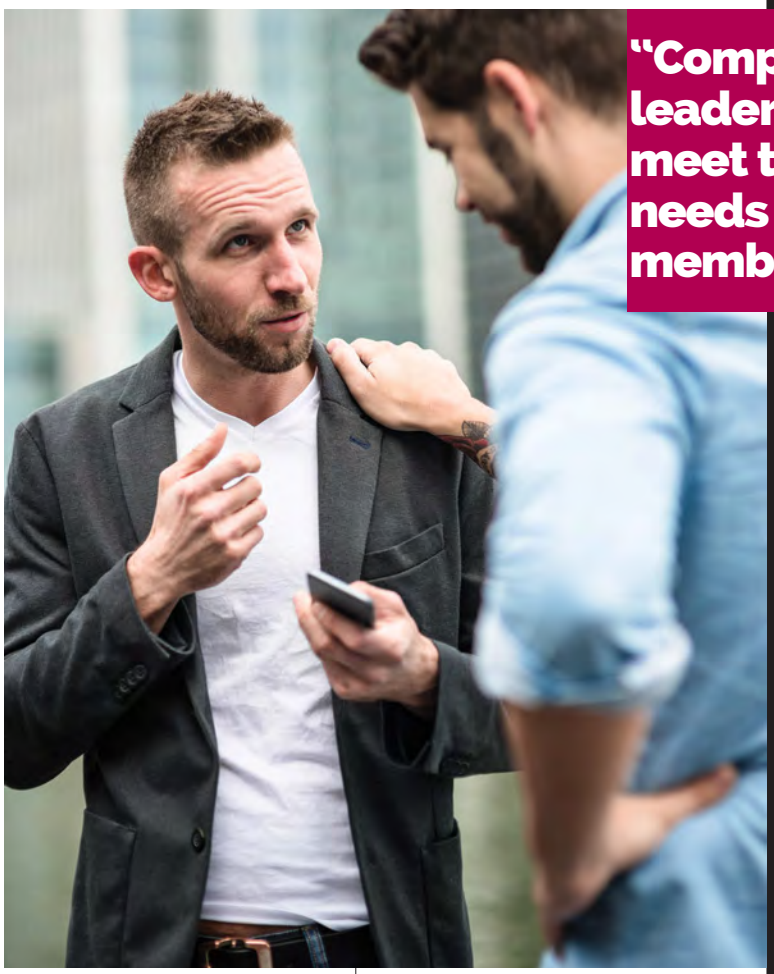
You need to get the project completed. Time is waning, and your team is whining. Do you address the human issues or dismiss them and get straight down to business? During a workplace meeting, a heartless leader places efficiency and productivity before the well-being of team members, deeming personal concerns as trivial. On the other hand, a compassionate leader tackles any immediate personal issues, before shifting the attention to project work.

While the former leader strives to cover pressing workplace concerns as quickly as possible, the latter person takes time to prioritise the mental and emotional health of team members, despite time constraints. In this example, compassion entails giving attention to the individual and collective well-being of team members, without neglecting organisational matters. Heartlessness, meanwhile, puts sole emphasis on business performance.

Both compassion and heartlessness are attitudes which govern your thinking, emotions and behaviour. Therefore, your state of mind precedes your physical expressions. As a leader, you must decide what attitude you need to develop to fulfil your mission.

Heartless leadership

Heartless directives may sustain your workplace production in the short term, but this approach is an unsustainable management practice. Even if this strategy allowed you to maximise productivity for a while, its consistent execution would force your people to regress, causing your performance curve to dive eventually. Worst of all, heartlessness can push your team members to resign. A heartless attitude disconnects you from your colleagues and causes breakdowns in communication due to team members viewing you as aloof, which prevents them from receiving and responding positively to your feedback.



"Compassionate leaders strive to meet the human needs of team members."

The heartless leader fails to consider that the absence of compassion is a counterproductive strategy that leads to teams either burning out or walking out. Unresolved personal issues, which the heartless leader perpetually ignores, hamper long-term performance.

Compassionate leadership

Even the most skilled people on your team doubt their ability at times, which leads to reduced productivity due to a hesitant approach to project work. Compassionate leadership provides emotional support throughout their learning curve. This approach expresses sensitivity and empathy when they are struggling, as well as encouragement and praise when they are performing well.

By nurturing compassion, you create a foundation for trust and rapport, which boosts team morale and improves communication. Compassionate leaders strive to meet the human needs of team members. They recognise that their people do not merely *serve* the organisation; instead, they *are* the organisation.

Conclusion

After two decades of developing leaders and managers, I have learned that in most cases, people do not leave *organisations*. People leave *people*. Start this New Year well. If you want to work with your team in 2019 to fulfil your long-term goals, then become a compassionate leader by leading with your heart.

Develop your leadership style today. To learn more, visit **www.leadergravitas.com.**

NICHOLAS HILL BIOGRAPHY

Nicholas C. Hill FCMI FIC FInstLM FBIPP is a modern thought leader and international leadership and management trainer. Since 1996, he has developed thousands of managers from corporations and SMEs in leadership principles and management strategies. He is a recognised interviewer of celebrity leaders and former editor of *Managerial Magazine*. Enrol onto our UK-wide scheduled senior leadership and management masterclasses or book us to deliver your in-house customised training. For a FREE diagnostic consultation with Nicholas, now visit nicholashill.com or email info@hilltraining.com or call 0345 678 9900.

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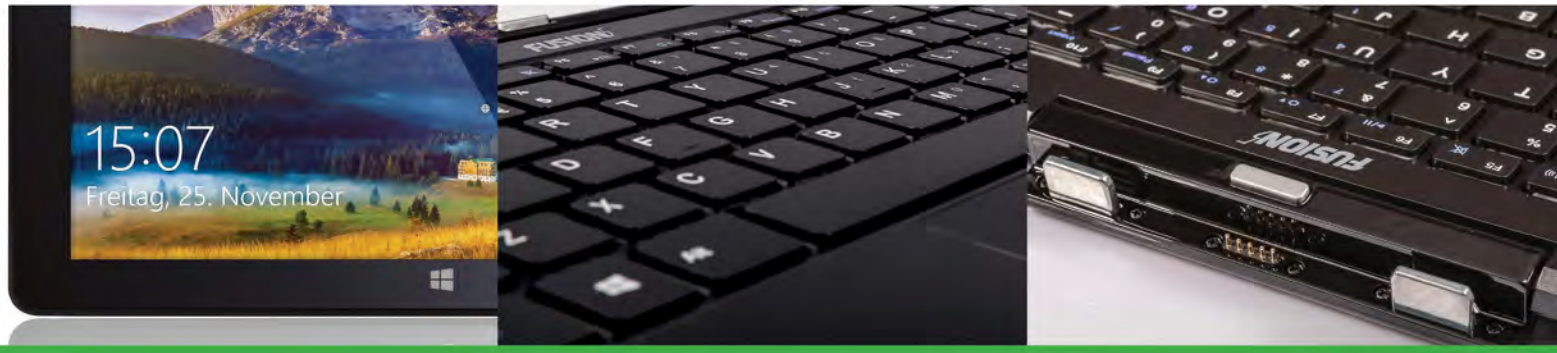
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MILES PROTTER

Mentoring

WHAT EXACTLY IS MENTORING?



> "WE TELL PRIVILEGED YOUNG MEN TO PRIORITISE CAREER AND SUCCESS OVER EVERYTHING WHEN THEIR DEEPEST DESIRE IS TO BE USED FOR A HIGHER PURPOSE."

In ancient Greece and Rome, a mentor developed a young man's character, self-control, courage, sense of justice and morality. In indigenous societies selected 'uncles' passed on culture, creation stories and how to be a man.

Mentoring today, however, seems focused on career development for the lucky few.

What a missed opportunity. We tell privileged young men to prioritise career and success over everything when their deepest desire is to be used for a higher purpose.

Good mentoring is about developing the whole man. It includes career advice, but so much more.

First, a mentor offers lessons from his failures.

This weekend, I heard an inspiring talk by a 'warrior monk' who trained as a Jesuit priest, then joined the Australian SAS, fought in Vietnam, became a senior career officer and later as a civilian was a mentor to a number of CEOs.



"These guys have the loneliest job on the planet," he said. "There's no one they can talk to. So I take all the mistakes I've ever made and help them not to make the same ones."

Second, mentors build trust and confidence. When I asked another group of men what mentoring is to them, they said:

"It's using your two ears and one mouth in the right proportion."

"No judgement. Even if I'm judging them in my head, I say nothing."

"It's informal, just having a coffee."

"It's caring and believing in a man."

"Being a friend."

"Active listening."

"It's like a lieutenant giving instructions."

"It's gentle guidance."

Third, mentoring sometimes requires telling someone a hard truth (with generosity) to give them the opportunity to self-correct and improve.

A man told me a wonderful story of mentoring a talented young comedian.

"He was too energetic and in your face, so the audience just backed away. We worked on how to use this energy to his advantage. The guy is now a real star in the UK."

Fourth, there are times a mentor must walk alongside a man as he faces pain and suffering. Just being there is all we can do.

I've often mentored men struggling with defeat, grief and loss. One man was running a company and at the same time caring for a dying parent. I had no easy platitudes to make his journey easier. I couldn't take any of his pain away, only "mourn with those who mourn" (Romans 12:15, NIV).

"When I saw the vulnerability in my mentor's eyes," one wise man said to me, "I could then be vulnerable."

A good mentor offers more than career advice; he gives his authentic self.

For more on being a mentor, go to Men's Business, mensbusiness.net. If you want support to start a mentor community, contact Miles via @ mensbusiness.net.

MILES PROTTER
BIOGRAPHY

Over the past 30 years, Miles has travelled alongside many hundreds of people as a mentor. He's worked all over the world as an investment banker and management consultant. Now he's equipping men to be mentors and start mentor communities where they live. He founded Men's Business as a mentoring resource: www.mensbusiness.net.



MARTIN CARTER

Bolder & Boulder

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

He's generally regarded as the greatest basketball coach of all times, but unless you're a US sports fan, you've probably never heard of Arnold 'Red' Auerbach. Born in Brooklyn in 1917 to Russian-Jewish immigrant parents, Arnold's red hair and fiery temper soon earned him the nickname 'Red'. It would stick with him for the rest of his life. As coach of the Boston Celtics, Red was fined more, sent off (aka ejected) more and generally caused more disruption than any other coach. His trademark was to light up a cigar on the sidelines once he felt the game was won, and under Red, the Celtics won a lot of games, 936 to be precise. Along the way he won nine NBA championships in ten years, and seven more as general manager and president. This combination of gamesmanship and success reportedly led one rival coach to declare: "At first I didn't like Red Auerbach, but in time I grew to hate him." Red Auerbach was no soft and fluffy leader, but he was a game-changer.

His philosophy was based on picking the best group rather than the best individual players and then coaching them to flourish within his famously uncomplicated system. His desire to succeed led him to constantly break down barriers. He was the first coach to draft an African-American (Chuck Cooper, in 1950), the first coach to send out a team composed entirely of black players (in 1964), and the first team manager to appoint a black coach (Bill Russell, in 1966). He also pioneered the use of substitutes in modern sports, using them as strategic weapons rather than injury replacements. In short, he changed the face of professional sport.

Years later, Red was being interviewed about the secret of his success. After a while, the interviewer (after no doubt taking a deep breath before challenging this famously fiery character) suggested that all of Red's answers so far were just what everyone else was doing. Surely there must be some other magic ingredient? Auerbach paused, chomped down even more furiously on his famous cigar, and blurted out: "You just gotta love the b******s."



"His trademark was to light up a cigar on the sidelines once he felt the game was won."



"When people know you care deeply about them, they feel valued, they feel they belong, and they feel anything is possible."

The juxtaposition of Red's characteristically direct words sends a powerful, if uncomfortable, message. If you want to get the best out of people on a court, at home, at work or in your community *(ed. note: or church?)*, you don't need to like them, but you do need to love them. When people know you care deeply about them, they feel valued, they feel they belong, and they feel anything is possible. This is how they repay your love.

But can this really be true? Could the secret of this tough, no-nonsense, game-changing leader be love? Yes, according to Earl Lloyd, the NBA's first African-American player: "Red convinced his players that he loved them, so all they wanted to do was please him."

In the end, it seems, love wins.

MARTIN CARTER BIOGRAPHY

Martin Carter is an experienced leadership coach, consultant and facilitator. He helps individuals, groups and organisations to make a bigger difference in the world by equipping them to be bolder in their actions and conversations as well as helping them shift the boulders that sometimes get in the way. Martin lives in the West Midlands with his wife and three children. You can contact him at martin@martincarterassociates.com.

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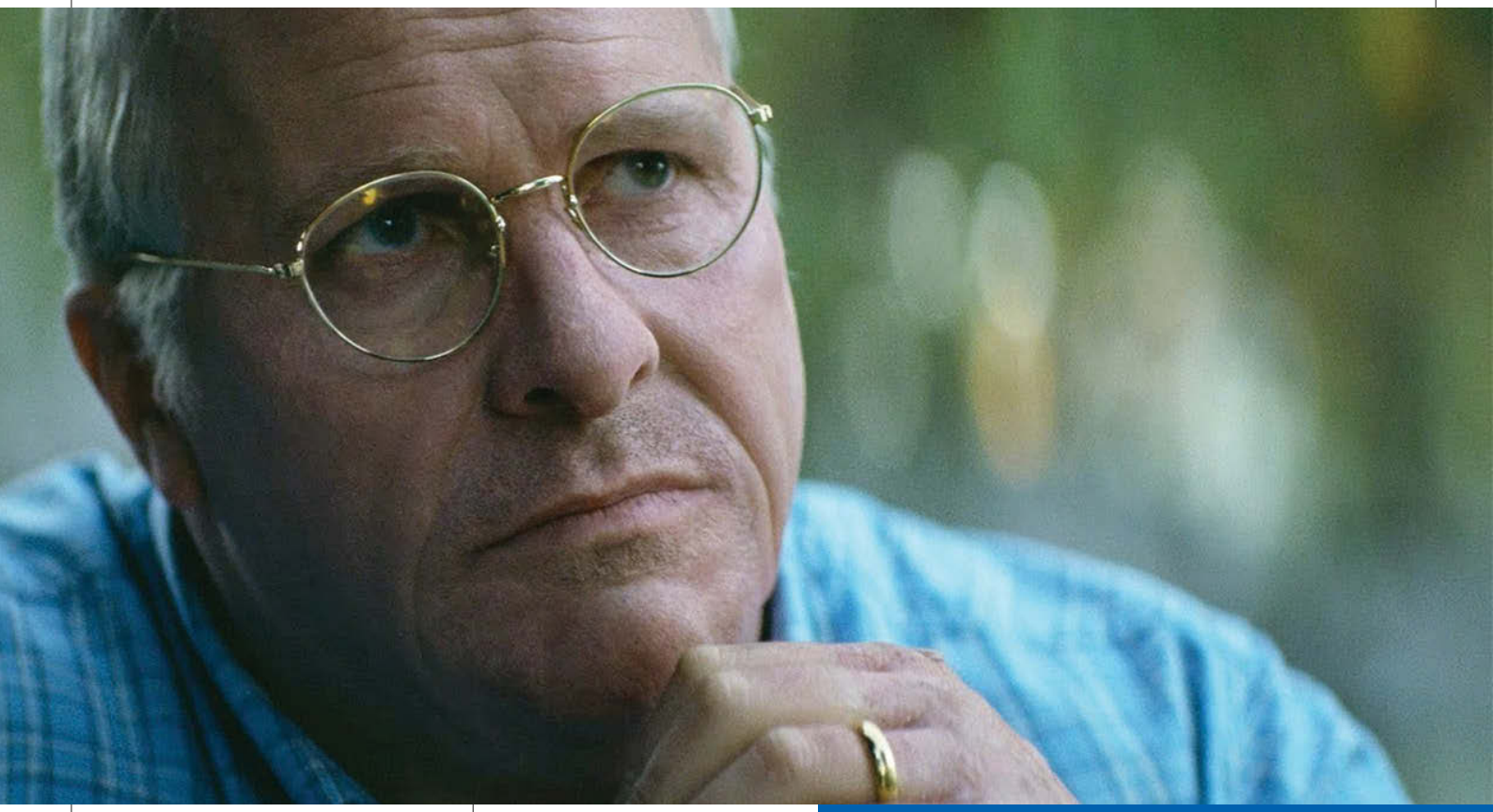
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MOVIES

WITH **MARTIN LEGGATT**



Vice

Don't worry, it's not a film about sexual exploitation, but a fact-based historical drama charting how a very unlikely Dick Cheney became arguably the most powerful vice president in the history of America. Christian Bale makes an excellent Cheney, joined in the cast by Amy Adams as his wife, Lynne, Steve Carell as Donald Rumsfeld and Sam Rockwell as an uncannily realistic George W. Bush, the President of the United States. It charts the rise of Cheney, a middle of the road politician and businessman, who thanks to his incredible talent for administration led him to become the power behind the Bush administration, whose legacy is still very much with the world today.

"It charts the rise of Cheney... who thanks to his incredible talent for administration led him to become the power behind the Bush administration."

Green Book

Viggo Mortensen stars as Tony 'Lip' Vallelonga, a crude, boorish working-class Italian-American bouncer who is hired to chauffeur supremely cultured concert virtuoso Don Shirley (Mahershala Ali) on a tour of America, culminating in the Deep South in the 1960s. The catch: Shirley is Jamaican, and while the high society audiences are happy to listen to his music, the attitude towards him away from the piano becomes far more volatile. The pair are a classic odd couple; Tony struggles with Shirley's high culture and mannered lifestyle, while Shirley finds his companion an uncouth slob. While on the road, they both overcome their personal prejudices and become close friends.



Ad Astra

Army Corps engineer Roy McBride (Brad Pitt), embarks on a search across the galaxy for his astronaut father, Clifford (Tommy Lee Jones) who has been missing for 20 years on Neptune to find alien life. An epic film that follows Roy's quest to not only find his father, but also the unanswered questions about what happened to him and why his mission failed. Cast also includes Donald Sutherland, John Ortiz, and Ruth Negga.



"An epic film that follows Roy's quest to not only find his father, but also the unanswered questions about what happened to him."



Stan & Ollie

Steve Coogan and John C. Reilly bear an incredible likeness to comedy legends Stanley Laurel and Oliver Hardy in this biopic of the dying embers of their post-war career. In an attempt to rekindle the flame of their popularity, the duo undergoes an ill-fated sluggish and relentless tour of English theatres. In what becomes their swansong, the film charts the gruelling toll a life of success and fame can take and the melancholy that descends when the glory fades.

"The film charts the gruelling toll a life of success and fame can take."

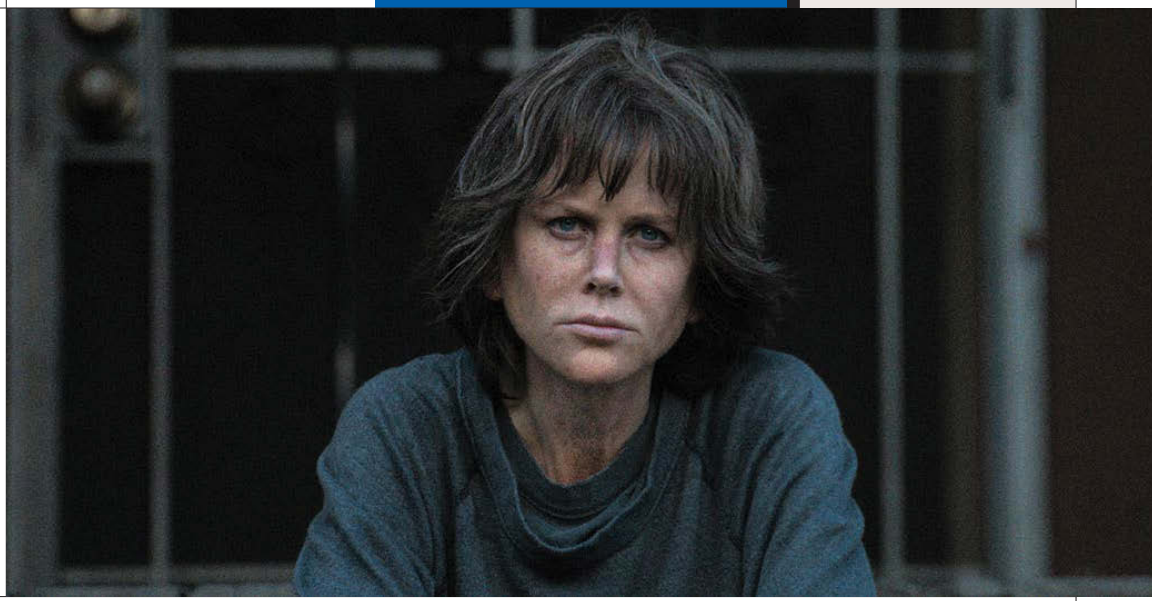
MARTIN LEGGATT
BIOGRAPHY

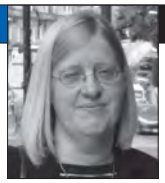
Martin Leggatt is married to Sue and father to Aaron, Sam, Hope and Paige. He's a self-confessed movie geek, although his tastes run to an eclectic assortment of action, thriller, black and white, war and pretentious (as Sue would say) art house films. Martin's favourite film is Powell and Pressburger's *A Matter of Life and Death*.

@martylegg

Destroyer

Nicole Kidman is barely recognisable as undercover LAPD detective Erin Bell. Bell infiltrates a notorious gang of bank robbers based in the Californian desert, an assignment that comes to a tragic end. Many years later, the leader of the gang resurfaces and awakens memories in Erin that lead her to track down the remaining gang members to lay her demons to rest. By turns violent, moving and heartbreaking, this is probably Nicole Kidman's best performance ever. If you're worried about gunfights and fighting, then you might not like some of the scenes in this film.





BOOKS
WITH **ALI HULL**

FAKE NEWS AND GOING LOCO



"An ideal gift for any train buff, or even just a lover of the UK."

Fear
Bob Woodward

Simon and Schuster £20

★★★★★

The title of this book comes from a statement Trump made in March 2016, when running for President: "Real power is ... fear." But actually an even better title might have been "Chaos". Woodward, using hours of careful research and interviewing, builds up a picture of a White House where chaos reigns. Yes, Trump bullies, undermines, humiliates, gets angry, hires and fires. But his inability to lead and to stick to the minutiae of governing, means that he forgets from day to day what he is trying to do, which means documents can disappear from his desk and he won't notice. His staff plot against each other or against his daughter and son-in-law, and the result is the profoundly worrying and highly entertaining mess that we have been observing since January 2017.

The Rhine
Ben Coates

Nicholas Brealey Publishing £12.99

★★★★★

In this fascinating travel book, Ben Coates sets out to travel the length of the Rhine – starting not as its source but from Amsterdam, and aiming for the Alps. Along the way, he introduces us to the river and the impact it has made on the people and places that lie along its banks. He discusses the Netherlands, France, Germany, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, all in a highly readable and entertaining way. He is also the author of *Why the Dutch Are Different*, also published by Nicholas Brealey, and I recommend that book as well.

The Railway Adventures
Vicki Pipe and Geoff Marshall

September Publishing £16.99

★★★★

In the summer of 2017, railway enthusiasts Vicki and Geoff set off to visit every station in the country. With the advice of others who supported them via social media, their trip became a celebration of Britain's railways: the trains, the staff, the stations, the signal boxes and the heritage. This is a lovely book, and contains great photos. It is a bouncy, happy account, but they also nail some of the problems and call to account those responsible for the railways who are not running them properly. An ideal gift for any train buff, or even just a lover of the UK who enjoys the best of train travel.



Fear
Bob Woodward



The Rhine
Ben Coates



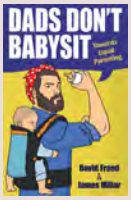
The Railway Adventures
Vicki Pipe and
Geoff Marshall



Guys Knit:
The Instruction Manual
The Bike Book



This is Going to Hurt
Adam Kay



Dads Don't Babysit
David Freed and
James Millar



Good For a Grin
Brenda Burling

Guys Knit: The Instruction Manual

£22.99

★★★★★

The Bike Book

£18.99 Haynes Manuals

★★★★

Remember the Haynes manuals of yesteryear, with their exploded drawings? Over the past few years, Haynes have turned to other guides, and these are just two of the latest set – one on pushbikes and one on knitting for men. Both are well produced and superbly illustrated, and would make wonderful gifts. The knitting one is written very tongue-in-cheek, which makes it frankly a lot more interesting than a lot of the other knitting guides. Technically, it's spot-on as well, and it is supplemented by video guides. The book on bikes uses cycling jargon, which is fine if you know what it means already: apart from that, it is a good introduction and covers all kinds of cycles – road, mountain and commuter bikes. It describes itself as offering "complete bicycle maintenance" and is full of excellent photos, tips and explanations.

This is Going to Hurt

Adam Kay

Picador £8.99

★★★★★

If you want to know what life is really like in today's NHS, then this is the book for you. Written by a junior doctor, this diary is a vivid account of trying to work very long hours, study for exams, give proper attention to his patients and remain sane. He has changed names and details to protect patient confidentiality, but apart from that, the underlying truth remains – and it is worrying. But this book is also very, very funny. It's illuminating, and it has become a bestseller. It is also important, because the NHS matters to all of us. If anything, the conditions doctors (and other NHS staff) are now working in are worse than they were when Adam Kay wrote this book.

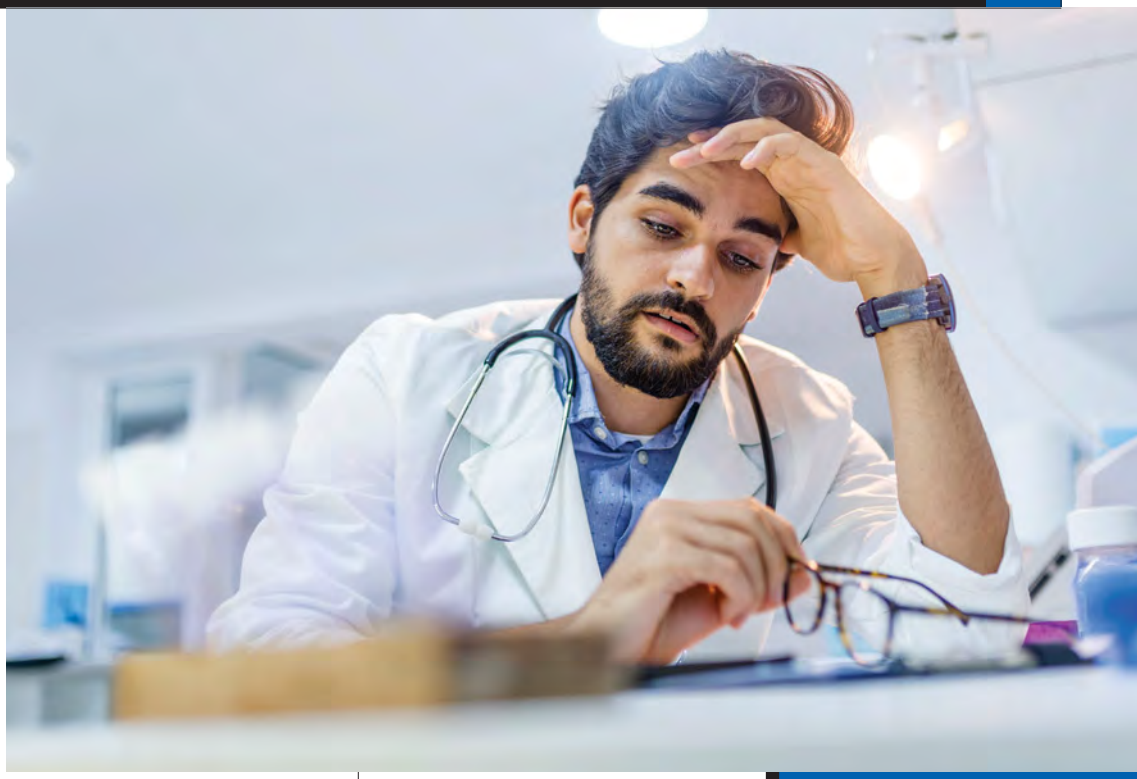
Dads Don't Babysit

David Freed and James Millar

Ortus Press £11.99

★★★★

The subtitle says it all – 'Towards Equal Parenting'. Behind the title is a fact: if a man stays at home to look after his children while his wife goes out, the chances are someone will describe what he is doing as 'babysitting'. If his wife stays home while he goes out, nobody would even think of using the phrase. And that attitude – which prevails across society and particularly into the workplace – is exactly what these two authors are battling against. They want to be equal parents: to look after their children as much as their partners do, and – most importantly – to be allowed to do so, by employers in particular. They have both come up against prejudice as a result: the feeling that they are not really interested in their jobs if their families are so important; that looking after small children is really women's work. I suspect their manifesto will gather more and more support as the years go on: it is an interesting read.



Good For a Grin

Brenda Burling

Matthew James Publishing £7.99

★★★

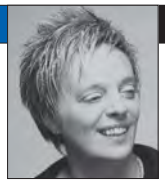
This book is about men with cancer, and 10 per cent of the sales will go to Oddballs, a charity for testicular cancer. It is a collection of real-life accounts of men from across the UK, all of whom have had cancer, and this book is an attempt both to tell their stories and to get men to talk about how they felt, what it was like, in as humorous a way as possible. If you have bought it to give to someone else who is struggling with cancer, I would suggest reading it first to make sure it is right for them, but it is definitely a brave attempt to bring out into the open that which tends to stay in the dark. ■

"If you want to know what life is really like in today's NHS, then this is the book for you."



ALI HULL
BIOGRAPHY

Ali Hull is addicted to books – reading them, and helping others write them, polish them, publish them and publicise them.



MUSIC

WITH **SUE RINALDI**



"Their new songs are all about facing up to life and their shared experiences of being on and off the road."

Mumford & Sons

Delta

The concept of how a river meets an ocean and interacts with a sense of transition and wild discovery is the creative launchpad behind Mumford's fourth studio album *Delta*. The British band, who soared to fame with their honest approach to folk-rock in debut release 'Sigh No More', admits their new songs are all about facing up to life and their shared experiences of being on and off the road. What results is a more reflective and mature album, albeit less up-tempo with reduced raw energy, but an interesting and occasionally experimental journey.

Marcus Mumford continues to steer the sound with his emotive soulful vocals, with debut single 'Guiding Light' being most reminiscent of their earlier character. The remaining 13 songs carve their way into fresh territory, exploring a slightly slower pace with more weighty and inventive arrangements. 'The Wild' starts minimal and finishes in majestic orchestration; 'Darkness Visible' blends the slightly chaotic with a reading from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the nicely building 'Delta' concludes with samples of Marcus' children giggling. But within all of that, the easy to appreciate 'Woman', 'Beloved' and 'Rose Of Sharon' make this an enjoyable album. If you approach *Delta* with the hope of hearing signature-styled Mumford, you are likely to be disappointed. But if you're open to a few variations, then the crossing will be a good experience.



Mumford & Sons
Delta



Tom Odell
Jubilee Road



Gawvi
Panorama



Take that
Odyssey

Tom Odell

Jubilee Road

With a voice beyond his 28 years, Chichester-born Odell is a perfect example of a serious and focused singer-songwriter. *Jubilee Road* was written while he was living in east London, incorporating real stories from his time there, with the street name changed to protect his neighbours. Reminiscent of an early Billy Joel or Elton John, Odell takes control of this album by writing the songs, performing and producing all ten tracks.

Songs about love and heartbreak such as lead single 'If You Wanna Love Somebody' and 'You're Gonna Break My Heart Tonight' sit kindly beside the perky 'China Dolls' and 'Son of an Only Child'. Overall the vibe is heartfelt, bordering on the melancholic, but delivered in such a way to never pull you down.

Gawvi

Panorama

Gabriel Alberto Azucena, better known as Gawvi, is an electro-pop artist, Christian and record producer who blends rap, EDM, pop and hip-hop to create an inspired collage of inventive beats, cracking melodies and a positive message that doesn't lose touch with reality. 'Slingshot' takes aim at the daily battles we face; 'Fight For Me' is an enthralled duet with Lecrae expressing how everyone fights for something; 'Baker Act' touches on mental health and 'With You' uncovers his struggle with depression. 'Fashion Joe' is a clever carousal and 'Imperium' and 'Get Em' burst with energy. A brilliant listen.



"Inventive beats, cracking melodies and a positive message."



Take That

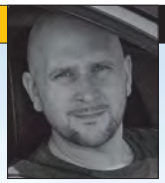
Odyssey

To mark their 30th anniversary, the grown-up boy-band Take That release 27 tracks spanning from 1992 album *Take That & Party* to recent material including three brand-new songs. Featuring reimagined versions of hits including a Motown-flavoured 'Everything Changes', a jazzy reform of 'Relight My Fire' and a stripped back 'Pray'. There's also new versions of 'How Deep Is Your Love' with guest vocalist Barry Gibb, an update of 'Love Ain't Here Any More' with Boyz II Men and a few interview pieces. New songs 'Out Of Our Heads', 'Spin' and 'Everlasting' are welcome additions and proof that Take That can still write-up a musical storm!

SUE RINALDI BIOGRAPHY

Sue Rinaldi travels internationally as a concert artist, worship coordinator, speaker and creative consultant. A self-confessed info junkie and movie enthusiast, her interest in culture, justice, technology and the future fuels her living and writing.
Visit suerinaldi.net.

@suerinaldimedia



TIM BARNES-CLAY

Motoring

ANNUAL MILEAGE

2018 was a packed year for car launches and our motoring editor, Tim Barnes-Clay, will be kept just as busy in 2019. So, without further ado, let's dive in and see what he's been driving since the last issue.

Jaguar XF Sportbrake

Jaguar's XF Sportbrake is a big and beautiful estate, with bags of practicality and a pleasant drive.

The car is an executive blend of refinement and room. At 565 litres, the boot size is respectable, and the flat floor makes loading easy. Even better, there's 1,700 litres of space when you fold the rear bench, and a powered tailgate is fitted as standard.

As well as a large boot, the athletically styled XF estate has enough room to carry four people in limousine-like luxury. Soft-touch materials and leather are everywhere inside, along with in-car WiFi, ambient lighting and touchscreen infotainment.

The XF Sportbrake is a delight to drive, with sharp steering that allows you to test the limits of the car with confidence. What's more, with a towing capacity of 2000kg, the Jaguar will lug a caravan effortlessly.

Most buyers will select a diesel, and I was handed the keys to the all-wheel-drive 2.0d 240ps R-Sport Auto Sportbrake. The £42,435 car returns up to 48.7mpg and will do 0-62mph in 6.7s. Top speed is 150mph. It's also very grippy, so will make light work of driving on wintry roads.

The Sportbrake feels almost identical to the XF saloon in most ways. It is composed on all surfaces and at all speeds. Furthermore, it's relatively efficient and very comfortable. OK, the car's satnav may not be quite as on-the-ball as some German executive estates, but the Jaguar is a good all-round package. Indeed, it's an excellent alternative to the likes of BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz.





Škoda Octavia vRS Hatchback

The spacious, reliable, Škoda Octavia has always been the most unrelentingly sensible of family cars. But add a 'vRS' badge to the rear, and it undergoes a metamorphosis.

The standard Octavia isn't unappealing, but it's bland enough to merge into the background. The extended bumpers, black trim and boot spoiler on the vRS hike it just far enough beyond anonymity to let you know it's something a bit sexy. It's gritty without being boy-racer 'chav'.

The cabin is largely benchmark Škoda fare, so it's hardly electrifying in there. But everything falls readily to hand, and it's well made. It is made livelier, though, by some tremendously supportive sports seats.

The 2.0 TSi turbo-engined Octavia vRS, under review here, produces 245ps. This car, equipped with a seven-speed DSG transmission, achieves 0-62mph in 6.6s and has a top speed of 155mph.

So, as any good hot-hatch should be, the Octavia vRS is talented at covering tarmac quickly. Add in solid stability, and its calm manner gives you confidence.

What's more, rear seat space betters many motors from the class above, and the hatchback has a truly mammoth 590-litre boot. It will also do 44.1mpg, though if that's not decent enough for you, you could always get the diesel. And if you need an even bigger boot, get the estate.

The vRS comes with Bluetooth, DAB radio, dual-zone air conditioning and rear parking sensors as standard.

There are plenty of good family cars that are rapid and fulfilling to drive. If you want those merits in a car that costs £29,490, then the Škoda Octavia vRS unifies them better than any other motor.





"This car, equipped with a seven-speed DSG transmission, achieves 0-62mph in 6.6s and has a top speed of 155mph."



Hyundai i40 Tourer

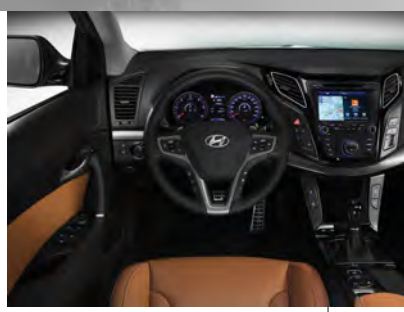
This stylish and sporty motor is an uncompromised addition to the medium family estate car market. It offers low running costs as well as an intuitive and contemporary interior package.

Sitting behind the wheel of the leather-clad i40 Tourer Premium 1.7 CRDi 141ps DCT, on test here, is a pleasant place to be. Refinement and efficiency, as well as practicality, are what the estate is all about. With only a 1.7 oil-burner under the hood, it's not a performance vehicle, but 0-62mph in 11.0s is not outrageous, and the car cruises happily, returning up to 56.5mpg on the combined cycle.

In the countryside, the suspension soaks up our pothole-ridden British 'B' roads, and the i40 has decent body control with light and precise steering.

The car is exceptionally airy in the front and the rear, and there's enough head and legroom for even the tallest of passengers. Additionally, the 553-litre load area (1,719 litres with the rear seats down) is low, wide and long – and gobbles up pretty much anything you throw in there.

Indeed, at £29,630 this i40 Tourer is good value for money and is an estate car worth considering for business or family motoring. →







New Fiesta ST

Ford's Fiesta ST is a gutsy hot hatch with a 200ps lump under the bonnet. It also wears an assertive body kit and has a snazzy interior with a flat-bottomed steering wheel.

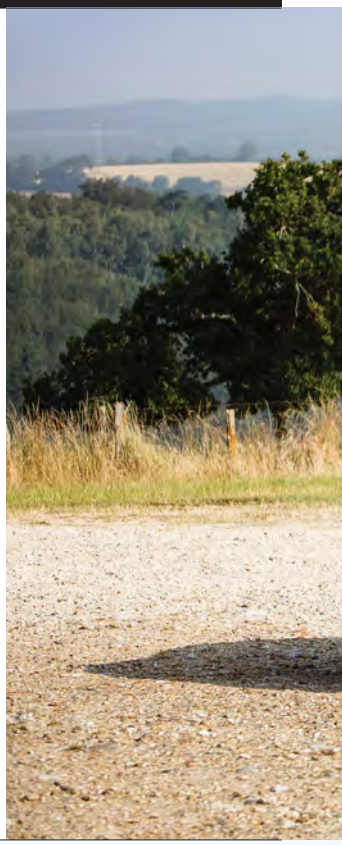
The seats are supportive, the view out is excellent, and the eight-inch touchscreen is easy to use.

The ST-3 three-door model, on test here, has enough room in the rear for a couple of adults and the boot is larger than in the withdrawing Fiesta. At 292 litres it'll just about take a week's worth of supermarket shopping.

The £21,995 ST-3 gets athletic 18-inch alloys with red brake callipers and comes stacked with kit, including a heated steering wheel and heated leather Recaro seats. There's also loads of tech to make the Fiesta a joy to live with, including automatic air conditioning, rear parking sensors and keyless entry.

The car shoots from zero to 62mph in just 6.5 seconds and has a top speed of 144mph. What's more, selectable driving modes allow you to pick sportier or relaxing settings for the accelerator, steering and exhaust.

The new Ford Fiesta ST is a brilliant little motor that represents great value performance for weekend fun. Only its sensitive steering and jarring suspension might put you off using it as your daily car.



SsangYong Rexton

This is an SUV that does everything you need. It goes off-road, and it'll tow up to 3,500kg. This means it's as good as a Land Rover Discovery.

Its high-tech four-wheel-drive system will drag you out of the muddiest of places, and the hill-descent control makes it stress-free to crawl down rugged slopes.

The Rexton doesn't feel overwhelmingly large to drive off or on the road, though – and despite it being not as plush inside as the Disco, it's good enough. The cabin is swathed in leather, with just a load of hard plastics raining on the parade.

You get a lot of kit and loads of room. The £34,995 2.2 ELX SsangYong Rexton I tested came with seven seats. That means there's space for five adults – then two kids will fit in the third row of seats. The boot is vast, too, at 820 litres or 1,977 litres with the rear seats down.

The Rexton's steering is light, meaning the car is undemanding to manoeuvre in town, and the lofty driving position gives you an excellent view forward. Parking is also easy, thanks to a reversing camera.





"Its high-tech four-wheel-drive system will drag you out of the muddiest of places."

The consequence of the Rexton's robust ability is that it's weighty and the only engine available (a 181ps 2.2-litre oil-burner) has a fuel efficiency figure of 34.9mpg. It's also not a fast car, with 0-60mph taking 11.9s. Top speed is 115mph.

However, if you're after an easy-to-drive SUV that'll lug a horsebox or caravan over a boggy field and transport your family everywhere, then you could do a lot worse.







New Ford Mustang GT

Another Ford that offers good value is the latest Mustang. It wouldn't be complete without a roaring V8, so you'll be pleased to hear Ford offers a colossal 5.0-litre one with 450ps.

Together with its active sports exhaust, there are few lovelier tunes in the automotive world, and in convertible 10-speed auto guise, as reviewed here, it'll race from 0-62mph in 4.5s. Top speed is 155mph. Expect it to use lots of petrol though, as although 22.49mpg is possible, that'll quickly turn to less than that when you're in a rush.

The Ford isn't just rapid in a straight line; the ride and handling are a revelation. A decent chassis and advanced technology help optimise driving dynamics to deliver the kind of sporty event you'd expect to have behind the wheel of a Mustang.

What's more, you can enhance the Mustang's performance to suit your frame of mind using selectable drive modes. And, away from the public highway, you can use Track Apps to keep an eye on driving performance. These can be operated via the steering wheel and seen in the instrument panel.

The view you get over the long bonnet is very much retro-Mustang; and, from the roomy front seats, you get a good view of the road.

Alas, if you're expecting decent rear-seat space, you'll be frustrated: adults will find it cramped, and even kids will feel constrained. On the plus side, while the boot's elevated lip makes it difficult to load, the £47,645 convertible has a 332-litre storage capacity, so you'll get a suitcase plus other bits and pieces in there no worries.

I've already starting to save up. I need one – and it has to be the 5.0 litre V8. ■

"I've already starting to save up. I need one – and it has to be the 5.0 litre V8."

TIM BARNES-CLAY
BIOGRAPHY

Tim Barnes-Clay is an experienced motoring writer with a background in radio and TV journalism. He puts his pedal to the metal each issue with his must-read car reviews. Visit carwriteups.co.uk.

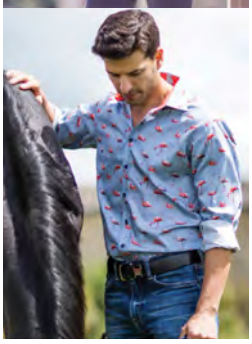
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"THE BRAND HAS BEEN GETTING GLOBAL ATTENTION AS A RESULT OF STYLING HIGH-PROFILE SPORTS STARS AND RESHAPING THE WAY IN WHICH MEN HAVE BEEN APPROACHING FASHION."

KNOCKOUT STYLE





London-based fashion brand Claudio Lugli specialises in producing bold, vibrant and rebellious printed shirts in limited numbers for audiences online and on the high streets in the UK. Over the last five years, the brand has been getting global attention as a result of styling high-profile sports stars and reshaping the way in which men have been approaching fashion. Most notably Claudio Lugli is responsible for the styling of Conor McGregor, Tyson Fury, Amir Khan, Goldberg, Alexis Sanchez, Scott Nicholls, Damson Idris, Charlie Sloth, Anthony Crolla, Drake Maverick and many more. The question is, why are these celebrities moving towards statement garments over more conventional and safer trends? Maybe it is a throwback to the days when boxers dressed more flamboyantly to reflect their persona. Think Chris Eubank, with his eccentric take on a Victorian gent, or the Hip-Hop street style of Mike Tyson.

Nav Salimian, head of marketing at Claudio Lugli explains a paradigm shift in men's fashion towards more daring designs, "It's all about expression. At Claudio we champion brave designs that shatter convention. The outfits we create and use to style the incredible pool of talent we work with centre around the personality and soul of the individual. Our garments are so unapologetically disruptive, they ooze confidence and demand attention."

Made from a blend of satin and cotton, it is clear to see the levels of quality craftsmanship that go into each piece. What is intriguing is why talent at the top of their game choose a brand that deliberately turns heads. Claudio Lugli's mantra is to create clothing that energises the wearer's character, unlocking the personality within. Nav explains the styling process, "Each project is different, and each brief has its own goal which needs to be met. Tyson [Fury] was going face-to-face with Deontay Wilder on a warship in New York as part of his US press tour. Immediately I thought I have the exact outfit for the occasion. This is all about mind games, appearances and one-upmanship. The UK vs the US. So I chose a shirt peppered with Spitfire planes accompanied with a classic grey check country tweed jacket and contrasting blood-red waistcoat combo."

Appearance is everything. Confidence is everything. Each garment is rich in details and engineered to celebrate individuality, and it is clear to see why the brand is a pioneer in the shift towards men shopping for more daring products, particularly in the online realm. Claudio's webstore houses a wealth of colourful designs across shirts, blazers, suits and shoes. Last year marked the introduction of their women's range and demonstrates the brand's continual growth. The brand is stocked in over 350 active stores in the UK and they are a consistent fixture at some of the UK's best and biggest events, including Goodwood Revival, Festival of Speed, Burghley Horse Trials, Badminton, Royal Bath and West Show, Silverstone Classic and many more.









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PETER HORNE

60 Second Life Coach



ESCAPING A LIFE ON AUTOPILOT

I'm sitting on a windswept pebble beach looking out to a turbulent grey sea, watching shafts of sunlight pierce through the leaden clouds. The wind bellows as it whisks past my ears and I'm not even sure if sitting here in such conditions is entirely comfortable. But my eye is drawn to a lone windsurfer, whipping along the edge of the waves at breakneck speed. He seems to be utterly immersed in the moment and enjoying every nanosecond.

Contrast his experience with one that we can probably all identify with – driving from A to B and reaching your destination with no recollection of large chunks of the journey? For some of us, zoning out like this can happen over even longer timescales, with months or even years seeming to fly by, leaving us wondering what on earth we did with all that time. Bestselling author Chris Baréz-Brown describes this as an autopilot existence. In his book entitled *Wake Up.: Escaping a Life on Autopilot* (Penguin Life, 2016), he offers some fun and practical guidance about what any of us can do to escape this trap.

As we tend to live lives of habit with ingrained routines, most of what we do is stuff we've done before and therefore autopilot becomes the default mode of existence. Baréz-Brown states his belief that the only way to wake up is to deliberately bring in new and different experiences to our lives that will provide a heightened sense of consciousness as we engage with them. His great little book is designed to help the reader with some practical ideas to kick-start this process. Here's a quick snapshot of some of his suggestions:

Breathing properly is the fastest way to get off autopilot as it slows down the brain and brings greater clarity.

Walk in the woods: Japanese researchers have proven the benefits of *shinrin-yoku*, or forest bathing. One study shows that it reduces stress, anxiety and depression, and can be associated with a reduction in blood pressure and other stress-related illness.

Be lost in music: When we listen to music we know and we love, our brains release dopamine – a chemical messenger that carries signals between brain cells. Taking opium apparently triggers the same chemical release.

To escape a life on autopilot, today do something new – it can be anything at all, as long as it seems more fun and exciting than the norm. Often when facing a new challenge, our caveman brains will kick in and see potential danger. Just breathe and smile and notice it for what it is: a normal fear reflex to uncertainty.

> "JAPANESE RESEARCHERS HAVE PROVEN THE BENEFITS OF *SHINRIN-YOKU*, OR FOREST BATHING."



PETER HORNE BIOGRAPHY

Peter Horne is a qualified life coach with a passion for helping people change things in their lives when they feel stuck. He works with individuals and organisations, and can be contacted at enquiries@therealyou.eu. Peter is married with four children and attends St Peter's Church in Brighton.



INTO THE LIONS' LAIR



WITH GARY SPICER

The Lions were created a number of years ago by Gary Spicer and a travelling companion out of what Gary calls a minister's frustration to release an entrepreneurial spirit in the Church in the UK. Gary kept asking himself, "How can we connect with that for the kingdom?" The conception came at Geneva Airport of all places, as a springboard to launch and pioneer the idea of a type of *Dragons' Den* with the three Cs, Community, Church, Commerce at its heart to create a social impact and to release all the dreamers.

Initially accepting between 60 and 90 applicants, the candidates are whittled down to 15, for a six-weekend experience with people who have been 'successful' in their chosen fields, the "good, the bad, and the ugly" as Gary puts it, in the Belfry Hotel in the Midlands. There, they discuss things like the concept of their pitch, case studies of things that have gone wrong and those that have gone right, business plans, team dynamics, legal aspects of what they are doing and how to build good teams. This culminates in an elevator pitch exercise where the applicants have two minutes to pitch to each other. That cuts out the waffle and fantasy and makes them focus on faith and purpose.

The sixth week sees them enter the Lions' Lair, where they have ten minutes to make their presentation and then face a further ten minutes of questioning to check that the plan is sustainable. If they can convince the Lions, the successful applicants are accepted for the second year.

During that second year, intimate close and purposeful coaching, not lecturing, is where the focus is on creating a structure and sustainability to the dream. They encourage dreamers, but there is a clear difference between a dream and a fantasy. Encouraging and nurturing the dream with faith provides the right foundation to flourish, no matter what their vision is for.

The first year is paid for by the participants, although it can be subsidised, and for those successful to progress, the second year, which sees the applicants again reduce in number to four to six people, is free. →





"They have ten minutes to make their presentation and then face a further ten minutes of questioning to check that the plan is sustainable."







"They encourage dreamers, but there is a clear difference between a dream and a fantasy."

They can look forward to boardroom presentations to previous participants and other second years, and a great deal of support and resources. This is where the Lions is vastly different to television's *Dragons' Den*. There is no profit made by the Lions. They are financed by contributions from businesses, entrepreneurial businessmen to promote an entrepreneurial spirit in Church and ultimately the kingdom. Unlike the Dragons, the Lions don't lend money with the expectation of a capital return of investment, they give a grant, seed money, with the question: "What is the kingdom aspect of this?" Success is defined not purely by financial return but the impact the venture has on the kingdom.

I asked if there any success stories that really stand out for Gary. There's a number. The first that sprang to mind was Gemma Francis who founded community choirs, which started as a small choir that grew into big town choirs, getting the community together through singing. This evolved into the BIG Sing™ with more than 15 choirs of around 12,000 people going into prisons, schools, hospitals, old people's homes, and corporate events and television.

Others include a 24-year-old businessman who has built up an incredible network and property portfolio which has created a financial freedom that he sows back into the kingdom. His branches of Christian businessmen networking together, training others, and above all encouraging others is an example of the 'domino effect' of the Lions.

Another success story is the Be Strong project, founded by a "rough diamond" who had been through the prison system and came out with a dream to help other former prisoners. Among the great work the charity does is helping former prisoners find a home, teaching them skills and helping them into a job. Initially, this great dream wasn't managing to flourish, it wasn't financially sustainable, but with help from the Lions' experienced mentors and networks, the coaching and assistance they were able to provide have helped make it a financially sustainable organisation.

I asked Gary where he felt they had the biggest success rate, and he felt that it was probably in the world of business and that creatives were a little more difficult, but they had many growing success stories in the arts and theatres, citing a theatre company in Oxford. Tough messages, variety celebrate

Next March sees the Forward 19 conference, a one-day conference in Coleshill where leaders with a heart for the three Cs have the opportunity to feed into new ideas, and gain coaching and networking with people who have also had a dream and have found a way to make it happen. It's the tapestry that connects arts, commerce and the Church.

Are you a dreamer, a budding entrepreneur, or someone with a big idea that can't seem to get off the ground? Maybe the Lions are the link that can get your venture on the road to success.

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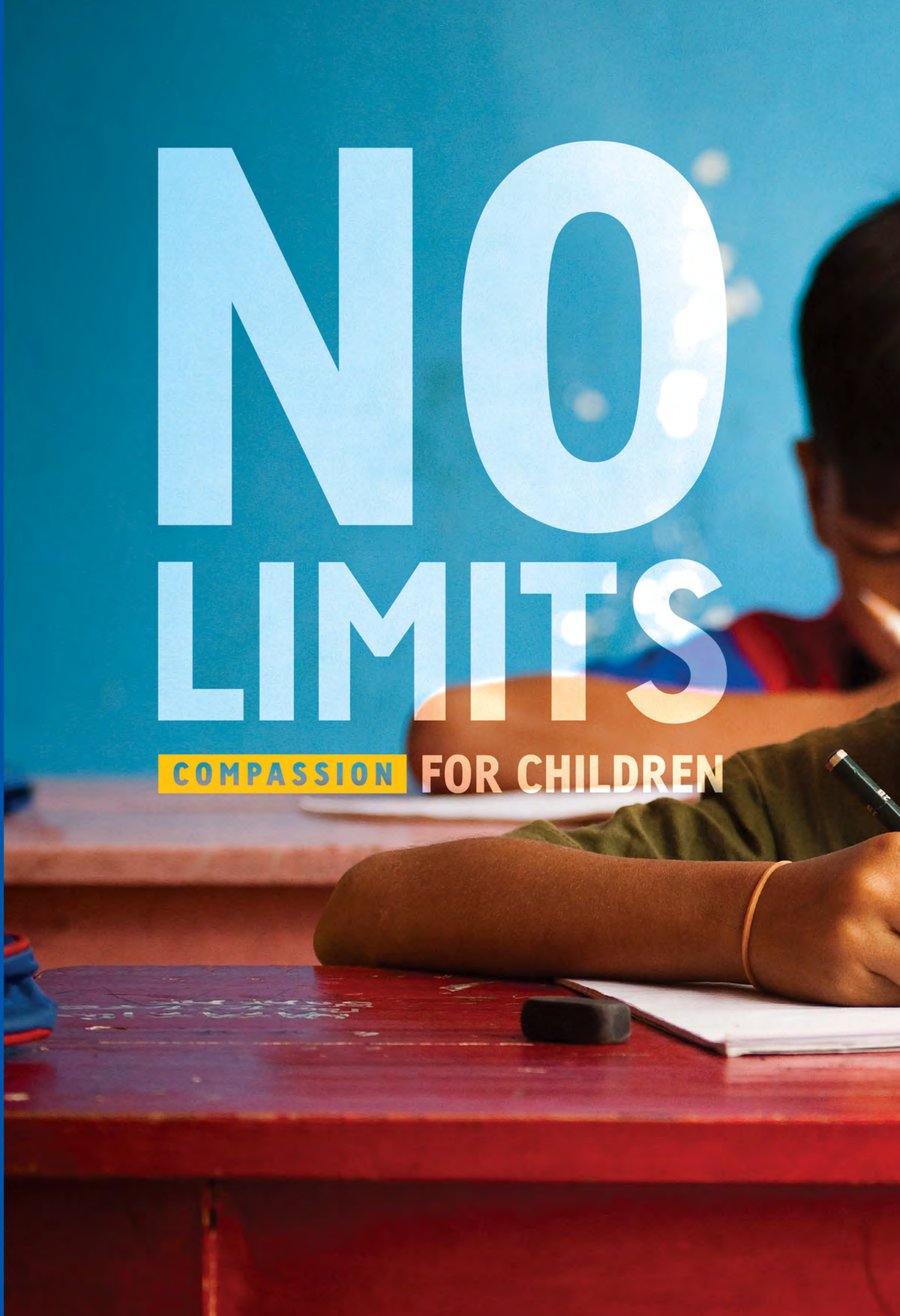
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“WHO LET THE DADS OUT? HOPES TO TURN THE HEARTS OF FATHERS AND CHILDREN TO ONE ANOTHER SO AS TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES.”

MEN ON A MISSION

Tony Sharp provides an update on the Who Let The Dads Out? initiative

The battles are still being fought, snipers are still taking shots on the fringes, but surely the war is effectively over. In 21st-century Britain, men now know that it's good to be seen caring for their infant child, that sporting a papoose in the style of Daniel Craig is as OK as emerging, bronzed and buff, from an azure sea.

Of course, die-hards remain, along with the odd self-publicist, who will always hark back to more gender-specific roles. But our world is changing, and fathers and father figures could change with it, to navigate the confusing landscape of how to parent a child and how to stay together as family. It can be scary, but it can be an exciting roller coaster of a ride too.

The Who Let The Dads Out? movement is part of this changing landscape, and is led by Mark Chester and myself, but with the support of many volunteers and partners. We are 'men on a mission', working as a catalyst for change, but also adapting our own vision, attitudes and ways of working. In this article I'll explain what Who Let The Dads Out? is, how it all began and where it is now heading.

Mission accepted?

The story starts 15 years ago in Hoole, a small suburb of the city of Chester in north-west England. And it starts with a church responding to a perceived need in the local community it serves, like so many other acts of human kindness. In this case, mothers at the parent and toddler group were concerned by the lack of engagement by their partners in the parenting of their newborn and infant children. This was threatening to break families apart right at that time when they are at their most vulnerable.[1]

The response was to create a time and place where fathers (and father figures) could come, meet other men, and experience spending a bit of quality time with their children. And amazingly they came: some 20 dads plus assorted infants on that first occasion in March 2003. Many had no idea why they were there, just that their partners told them they were going and dutifully they came. And the experiment continued, moving from a one-off to a monthly Saturday morning session, replete with strong filter coffee and bacon butties (and, of course, copies of Sorted) to sustain the men as they heroically bore their childcare responsibilities for a couple of hours.

What could two hours a month really expect to achieve? One possible answer may be found in some verses within the Bible. The prophet Malachi (see Malachi 4:6) talks of "[turning] the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers" (ESV). Read back in the book of Malachi and it becomes clear that this action is God's approach to addressing problems of family break-ups. Fast forward 400 years and the angel Gabriel appears to foretell the birth of John the Baptist, declaring that he too will 'turn the hearts of the fathers to the children … to make ready for the Lord a people prepared' (Luke 1:17, ESV). If such a gathering of fathers and father figures strengthens the bond between them and their children, then maybe if can also strengthen families, and perhaps create opportunities for faith to be passed down through the generations?

But rather than solely rely on one interpretation of a few words written more than 2,000 years ago, let's test this further against the latest research. Research such as that reported by *The Guardian* newspaper in September, highlighting that fathers who took sole charge of their babies for periods before they turned one were as much as 40 per cent less likely to subsequently break up with their partners.[2]

In a nutshell, Who Let The Dads Out? hopes to turn the hearts of fathers and children to one another so as to strengthen families.

But what started as one church's project with a catchy title has grown into an initiative to encourage others to consider what it might look like to reach out to fathers in their communities; to be intentional and specific. While our aim is to support families by supporting fathers specifically, the realisation of this aim is achieved by inspiring and equipping church leaders, workers and volunteers to think about the opportunities, the benefits and the social need into which support can be offered. And let's be clear, a Saturday morning group for fathers, father figures and infant children is just one way that organisations might respond.

Mission successful?

How successful are we being in our mission? That's such a good question, and one that is not easily answered. →

1. One in three couples split up within three years of their first child being born, according to a research study by parenting website Netmums and reported by *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 April 2012.

2. Guardian article reporting on Does Fathers' Involvement in Childcare and Housework Affect Couples' Relationship Stability? Helen Norman, Mark Elliot, Colette Fagan, University of Manchester, published in Social Science Quarterly, 2018.



But to give it a go, let me describe three ways in which we might measure success.

1 Diversity of ideas – as we aspire to share best practice, here are some examples we can highlight:

- The name that churches give their mission is itself a testament to the diversity of ideas – I imagine you can guess which of the home nations lays claim to 'Boys, Bairns and Blether', or the preferred viewing of the guys who set up 'Men Behaving Dadly'.
- The number of permutations of age range for the children that groups seek to accommodate is truly staggering and reflects a desire to support fathers through all stages of their parenting journey.
- As one would hope, churches are hugely compassionate, and this is reflected in how they respond to the diverse needs of families in the communities they serve. There are groups specifically designed to support fathers caring for children with special needs, groups paying special attention to supporting single dads, and our experience is that all groups are welcoming to families of any faith or none.
- The depth of engagement with families often extends beyond the initial contact established with fathers through a monthly group, and might include social events, parenting programmes, sporting endeavours, discussion groups, fundraising events and one-to-one mentoring/support.

2 What do the numbers tell us – how many families are impacted?

- We currently have over 270 registered groups in the UK across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, plus overseas church groups registered in New Zealand, Australia, USA, South Africa, Denmark and Ireland.
- Around 30 volunteers represent Who Let The Dads Out? in different regions of the UK.
- Over 9,000 dads, father figures and children get involved every month.
- 100,000 bacon or breakfast butties are consumed every year at Who Let The Dads Out? Groups.
- Around 50 per cent of dads report that they have a better relationship with their children through attending a group, and feel better supported to be a dad or father figure as a result.
- Thousands of copies of the Who Let The Dads Out Soul Man? resource have been distributed to military chaplains and are being used with the serving personnel in our armed forces.

3 Tales to tell – and here are some of the stories behind the numbers, in people's own words

"In August my wife and I separated. She moved out of London with my son, a two-hour drive away, making it impossible to take him to the places we used to visit together. After a number of visits to the zoo and other outings, I was aware that we hadn't had enough 'normal' time together, just playing trains and hanging out. I started to take him to different Who Let The Dads Out? groups each time I had a Saturday with him and they gave us that space I was looking for. Since November I have had him every other weekend. We visit a group for a morning together before driving home during his nap. Each group we've visited has given us a warm welcome. These groups have made a big difference to our time together."

"I love the fact that family is given a lot of emphasis in Christian life. As well as the church family, which provides great love and support, I've tried to focus on changes I can make to my family at home. I used to think I was very patient and unselfish but I've realised that I was sometimes being selfish with my time. Therefore, I've made sure I put my family before me wherever possible and give my boys especially as much time and focus I can. This has led to those relationships becoming even closer and more rewarding for all of us. I would like to end by giving praise to Who Let The Dads Out?. It was this that got me into a church and started me on the path to faith."

"It is the volunteers that make Who Let The Dads Out? such a special, safe and rewarding place to come. I have made good friends here and although I am not a regular church attendee on Sunday, this church and Who Let The Dads Out? are very much at the heart of us as a family – for family, community and friendship."

"We baptised our first Who Let The Dads Out? dad on Sunday, it was brilliant. If you run a group, be encouraged, God is at work in the hearts of men."

Mission accomplished?

As our society encourages fathers to be fully involved in the lives of their children from day one, and increasingly provides the specific and targeted support that fathers (and likewise mothers) need, then are we approaching the completion of our particular mission? This is a question we routinely ask ourselves.

Our current view is "not yet". We must conclude that it's still a small fraction of the UK Church (let alone worldwide) that is able to implement or support a ministry to fathers. It's in this context that Who Let The Dads Out? has recently been incorporated into Care for the Family. Care for the Family's aim is to promote strong family relationships and to help those who face family difficulties, and is motivated by Christian compassion, with resources and support available to everyone, of any faith or none. Hopefully the synergy between us is self-evident.

Within Care for the Family we expect that the core elements that we offer will continue to be developed, and that our reach will be extended. For example, we are excited that we can further increase our involvement with the Playtime network which supports parent and toddler groups throughout the UK. We hear many stories of how our directory helps new families to find a group close to them that dads and father figures can connect into, and also of it helping families to settle into a new area after a move. We will continue to share the ideas, resources, stories and best practice that we gather from our groups and partner organisations. And we are looking to expand our volunteer team who are committed to supporting those local to them.

And we remain men on a mission. Will you join us?

To find out more about Care for the Family visit **careforthefamily.org.uk**
To find a group for dads and children near you visit **wholetthedadsout.org.uk/directory**
If you'd like to join us on our mission in any way, then you can contact us at **wholetthedadsout@cff.org.uk**

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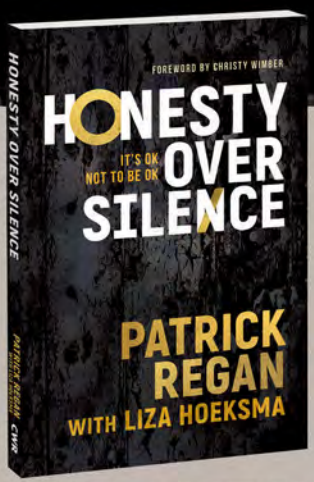
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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CWR

11 SIGNS YOU LACK EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

eq

Nick Keith discusses the key to understanding feelings, plus strategies for seeing them more clearly and dealing with them through emotional intelligence (EQ)

The good thing about emotional intelligence (EQ) is that we can acquire it with practice. Daniel Goleman, a psychologist and editor who was educated and taught at Harvard, declared that IQ (intelligence quotient) was not enough to achieve success, in his best-selling book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* (Bloomsbury, 1996).

For Dr Goleman, 80 per cent of a person's success is down to EQ and 20% per cent to IQ. While IQ elicits a score for your intellectual ability, EQ provides a masterplan for success in life by helping to recognise and channel those troublesome emotions, intelligently.



And what of IQ? That first surfaced just over 100 years ago when William Stern, a German psychologist, coined the term in a book. It has been used as a way to measure intelligence through specific tests, many of them now online at websites such as mensa.org. They are used to judge peoples' capabilities for jobs, and in education and in measuring disability.

However, intelligence on its own seems a narrow way to "measure people's capabilities".

"IQ and emotional intelligence are not opposing competencies, but rather separate ones", he writes. "We all mix intellect and emotional acuity ... Indeed, there is a slight correlation between IQ and some aspects of emotional intelligence – though small enough to make clear these are largely independent entities ... of the two, emotional intelligence has far more of the qualities that makes us more fully human."

First let's deal with some blocks to emotional intelligence, which are linked, and which may cramp your development of other life skills.

1. **Confrontation** – you run away from challenges. While simple survival is a primary instinct of a primate, including man, when threatened, there is a basic instinct within us to meet the challenge (to fight) or to flee for safety (flight). The third option is to keep absolutely still, which is advised when facing some wild animals. All three forms of defence can be positive and allow us to survive. But to thrive we need to take action and embrace the challenge.
2. **Lies** – being economical with the truth, or lying, tends to work against you. In this case, the block is that you can't speak your own truth, i.e. stand up for what you believe in.
3. **Poor judgement** – you aren't confident in your judgement. Your perceptions and verdicts on life, people and events do not make sense to you.
4. **Shirking an issue** – you can't always avoid the heart of a matter if you are to remove blocks. Heart is equivalent to courage (from the French *coeur* or heart), and you need to be brave to get to the heart of things.
5. **Conventional catches** – in a fast-changing world, it is very difficult to solve the problems of today by using the methods of yesterday. Einstein said something like this: "You can't solve problems with the same level of thinking." So, embrace innovation and new things because sometimes you need to consider them and try them to get on in life.
6. **Challenges** – (similar to 1). But a challenge does not have to be confrontational if you approach it with confidence, awareness and the aim to succeed.
7. **Vague values** – if you don't defend your own ideas and values, it's hard to develop a coherent sense of purpose.
8. **Surrendering softly** – to succeed in life you need persistence, patience and the motivation to keep on keeping on. Giving up easily is a major block.
9. **Being risk averse** – to take risks requires confidence, good judgement and self-belief.
10. **Lack of self-worth** – if you question your ability and lack self-belief, you will struggle with your emotions. See the findings of researcher Brené Brown below.
11. **Sense of powerlessness** – you don't have the mental and emotional strength to meet challenges, speak your truth, defend your ideas, try new things or get to the heart of the matter. This is an overarching concern.

Some solutions

Note that many of the signals are about avoiding an issue. Goleman's answers to changing these habits and achieving EQ competency are five-fold:

- **Awareness:** This is the essential trait to meet all emotional challenges. It means staying in the present and being watchful when emotions are triggered (usually by the memory of some incident in childhood, which may have been small, and is probably forgotten).
- **Self-regulation and self-control:** This ability helps to channel your nervous energy into a positive force.
- **Social skills in relationships:** The main skills in relationship are communication. That in turn allows you to maintain a clear and honest dialogue where you listen to the other person or persons in your life, with care, as much as you talk.
- **Empathy:** Take account of other people's feelings. (Sympathy is completely different. That is when you are sorry for someone and take pity on them.)
- **Motivation:** The desire to succeed for the sake of it.



Defining feelings

The Oxford English Dictionary defines emotion as "any agitation or disturbance of the mind; a vehement or excited mental state". Goleman adds: "There are hundreds of emotions along with blends, mutations and nuances ... Researchers continue to argue over which emotions can be considered primary."

Competencies help people come to terms with what Goleman describes as the primary emotions: anger, sadness, fear, enjoyment, love, surprise, disgust and shame. In this list 'surprise' seems to be the surprise, but it is simply a big unexpected event or challenge. Also missing is jealousy, which Goleman describes as a "variant of anger that also melds sadness and fear".

For Goleman, the dangers for people who lack emotional intelligence include: becoming aggressive and bullying, feeling lonely and depressed, dependency on drink and drugs, and eating disorders. Since his book was published, other experts have shed more light on our emotions and how we can recognise them and channel them.

Awareness and self-control are two of the hardest emotional skills to acquire. But they go together. Dr Joan Rosenberg, an American psychologist gave a TED talk →

"The dangers for people who lack emotional intelligence include: becoming aggressive and bullying, feeling lonely and depressed, dependency on drink and drugs, and eating disorders."

about dealing with unpleasant feelings and getting on top of your emotions. "If you can experience and move through eight unpleasant feelings you will achieve emotional mastery."

Dr Rosenberg identifies her eight unpleasant feelings as sadness, anger, shame, helplessness, vulnerability, embarrassment, disappointment and frustration. She describes how neuroscientists have established that emotions are a biochemical release which floods through the body like a wave, bringing feelings which are unpleasant or uncomfortable.

For example, a feeling of grief involves wave on wave, multiple waves, but they will always subside. One spontaneous memory of grief will launch the same wave of emotion again and again.

"What we feel emotionally is first felt in the body as physical sensation," she says. "The wave is triggered by a memory which dates back to childhood, an incident, possibly quite small, which your childish perception has labelled as 'bad' and retained. That's what we want to flee from or be distracted from," she adds. "We are afraid that they will be too intense, and we will lose control."

As with Goleman, her remedy is awareness. "Make the choice to stay present, fully present. It's about awareness not avoidance." The feelings last about 90 seconds, so "ride the wave" she adds. "Feelings are temporary. The waves come up spontaneously and they will always subside."

Emotional development

Another TED talk by British neuroscientist Dr Alan Watkins in 2015 outlined his version of "Why you feel what you feel". Infant children usually become aware of their bodies by the age of one, he says, and emotionally aware within another year. Between the ages of three and six they develop a conscious sense of ID, an awareness of the 'conceptual self'. From six to nine they learn that there are rules – a 'concrete consciousness'.

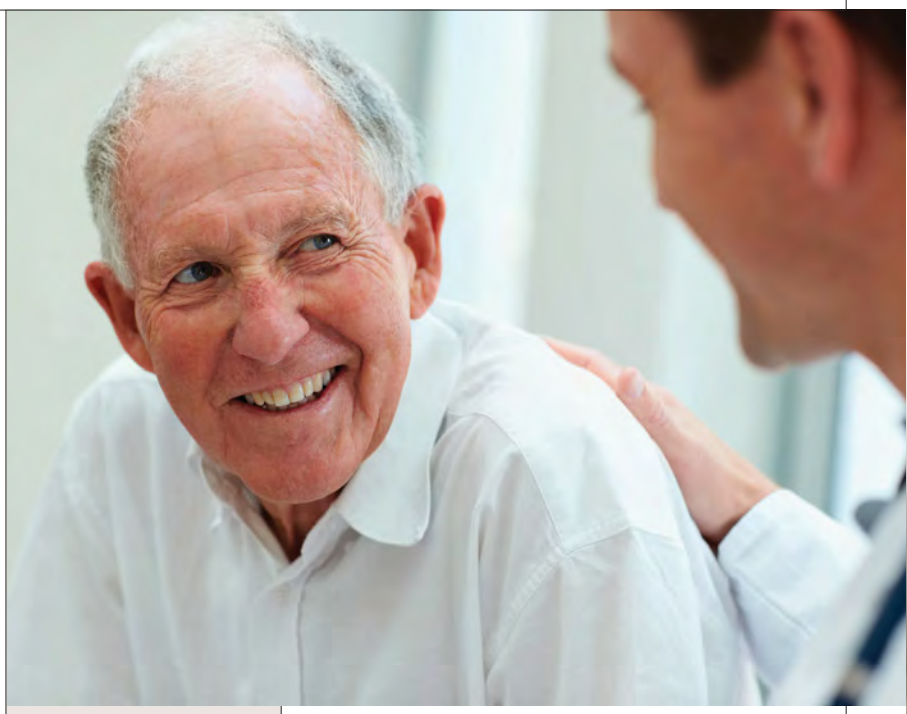
Dr Watkins declares that most of us get stuck at the age of nine in terms of emotional development. And, like Goleman, he insists that there are thousands of emotions – in his case, 34,000.

He says that in teenage years, people challenge the rules. But, when they become adults, they learn to follow rules (sometimes unknown or unwritten) to become good citizens, socially and at work. In mid-life they start to question the rules again, often called a mid-life crisis. And the coping strategy of many mid-lifers will either be anaesthetic (alcohol or drugs) or distraction (work, exercise, sex or material things like shopping).

He differentiates between emotions and feelings. Emotions are the energy which activates our feelings (indeed the original meaning of emotion was "moving away". Compare this with Dr Rosenberg's view where waves of feelings move through us as part of a biochemical reaction to a memory).

The way to come to terms with emotions in Dr Watkins' view is similar to other experts cited – straight-thinking, awareness and control. The pressure and challenges of life create chaos and stop awareness and the ability to think straight. "We are designed that way," Dr Watkins says. "It's about survival. Your brain has to become unsophisticated and binary – fight or flight (or play dead). We have some old software and we haven't upgraded.

"How well you think at any one time will depend on your biology. You have to change the context and the emotional state from which your thoughts emerge. Then you can change the quality of the thought and the thought itself. Until you take control of this physiology, anyone or anything can make you look like an idiot."



He suggests the trick is to retain and regain conscious control of your breathing through special deep and rhythmic exercise. Focus on the heart, which he says is the seat of emotions, and "learn to regulate your emotions". He adds: "The prime predictors of success are passion (which comes from the heart, as we know), determination and focus."

Value of vulnerability

The result of EQ and being aware may mean that initially we feel more open and vulnerable. Here we find solace in the wise writings and TED talks of Brené Brown, a self-styled storyteller and social researcher. Her witty and wonderful TED talk about the power of vulnerability has been watched my more that 35 million people.

In a massive piece of research on connection she found that people she interviewed all too often felt a deep sense of disconnection, heartbreak and sense of worthlessness. This resulted from "shame, underpinned by vulnerability".

However, she concluded that people with a strong sense of belonging:

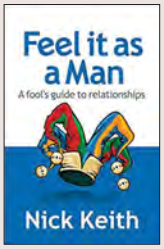
- Were wholehearted and open
- Had the courage to be imperfect
- Could let go of what they should be to achieve connection
- Accepted vulnerability.

In her book *Daring Greatly* (Penguin Random House, 2015), Brené Brown writes:

"To believe vulnerability is weakness is to believe feeling is weakness. To foreclose on our emotional life out of fear that the costs will be too high is to walk away from the very thing that gives purpose and meaning to living.

"The difficult thing is that vulnerability is the first thing I look for in you and the last thing I'm willing to show you. In you, it's courage. In me, it's weakness."

So, now we know the source of, and have seen some solutions to, our emotional upheavals, we have to remove the blocks and achieve EQ by practising awareness, empathy, openness and vulnerability. They say practise makes perfect, but it may be preferable to remember Brené Brown's maxim: "Have the courage to be imperfect".

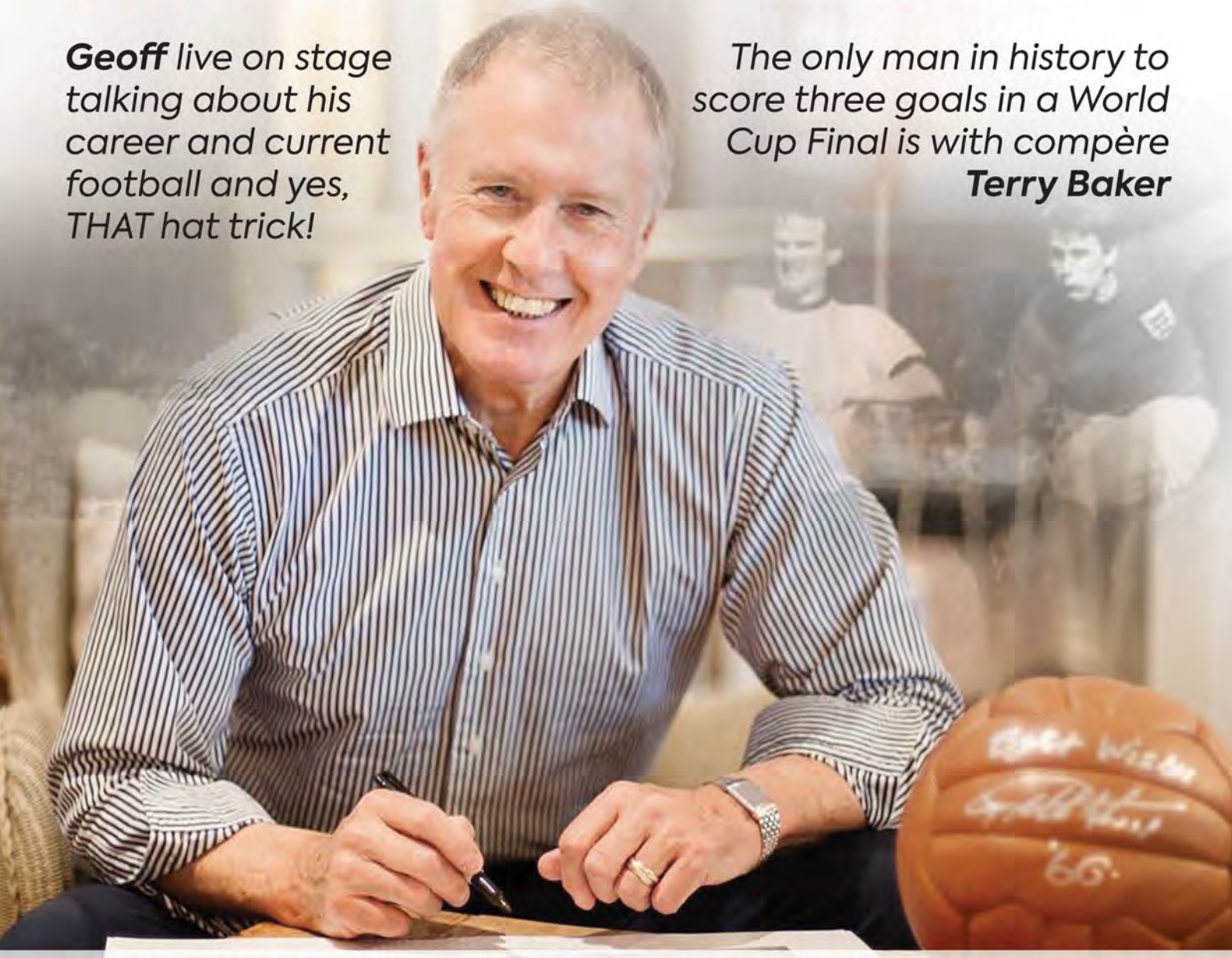


Nick Keith is the author of a new book, *Feel it as a Man: A Fool's Guide to Relationships* (Panoma Press; £14.99), available at all good bookshops and at Amazon as a book or in Kindle format

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MICHAEL BUBLÉ LOVES

BY SAMANTHA FRASER

Michael Bublé faced every parent's worst nightmare when his son was diagnosed with cancer in 2016. The Canadian singer put his career on hold as he and his wife Luisana Lopilato cared for their sick boy, who was suffering from a rare form of liver cancer called hepatoblastoma. Two traumatic years later and five-year-old Noah is said to be responding well to treatment and Michael feels able to face the world again with his music.

His new album is quite aptly called *Love* and features a brand-new version of 'When I Fall in Love', made famous by Nat King Cole. Other tracks include new versions of standards 'My Funny Valentine', 'When You're Smiling', 'Unforgettable', 'La Vie en Rose' and 'I Only Have Eyes for You'. It also includes the self-penned original song 'Forever Now', plus a collaboration with Charlie Puth on 'Love You Anymore'.

Michael and his wife recently welcomed their third child, daughter Vida. Alongside Noah, the couple have another boy, two-year-old Elias.

So how are you doing, Michael?

Good, thank you. Better every day. Just trying to live the new normal, whatever that is. It depends on the day and today is a good day.

You've called your new album *Love* – that's as good a name as you can get?

Love. You know what? I really struggled with the name. Because obviously I've been through a lot ... listen, this album like every album represents the snapshot of my life and where I've been and who I am. And so I [was] so focused on the theme of this record, on the seriousness of my interpretations of these songs. And the first name I had was actually *My Romance* and the reason I had called it that [was] because I felt like it was my romance rekindled with the music, my romance with the songs, my romance with the public, my romance with my persona, my work, my romance with my family, my romance with all of it. And someone was kind enough to say to me, "Listen, that's a lovely sentiment but unless you can tell every single journalist in the world this and they can spread the word for you then people might misunderstand." Because the truth is I didn't think the word 'romance' adequately described what this record is. And what this record is, is a group of short stories that are my theory of love and the complicated varied, layered emotion.

This word, it is so many things. Love isn't romantic always, you know, love carries many connotations. It carries sometimes violence and jealously and hatred and, you know, I can say that to you and sell it to you [as] "love means all these different things" but if I go through track by track, I can tell you that each one of them is a different kind of study of this emotion. I can start with 'When I Fall in Love', people say to me, "What a romantic song." I see it, yes, as a romantic song, but a very sad song. It's a very lonely song. ... When I became the character of the song, I found myself bitterly sitting in a bar after six drinks wishing that I had what that man had with this woman, wishing that I could find someone who loved me too. And knowing that one day if I'm ever lucky enough to find that, OK I'm going to hold on to it, but for now, it's only a dream, it's only an apparition. And so, I find it almost depressing but beautiful in that way.

> "FIVE-YEAR-OLD NOAH IS SAID TO BE RESPONDING WELL TO TREATMENT AND MICHAEL FEELS ABLE TO FACE THE WORLD AGAIN WITH HIS MUSIC."



The next song, 'I Only Have Eyes For You' has a sense of focus on that, almost the physical, at the beginning of romance, when the physical matters so much more than the mental. As in this person is everything to you and you could have a million things happening around you, but you see nothing else. And that is romantic love.

If I go down to the next 'Love You Anymore' the [Charlie] Puth song to me is a really complicated song because you'd assume when you hear it, it's about a couple but it's not, their romance is over. And it's, I think, the lover looking at his significant other and ... trying to say all the right things: "Well, just because I have your picture on my phone, just because when I hear our song my heart breaks, just because I would change everything if you would just take me back – well, that doesn't mean I love you any more." Well, I think he's lying, he's a liar, he can't be honest with himself because he's so in love with her that he might die of a broken heart if he admits to himself that he has lost the greatest thing.

Love is the most beautiful feeling, but it can also devastate?

Completely. But every song, every arrangement, I had a clear cinematic concept. 'Love You Anymore' was my [*An*] *American in Paris*. It's me having two cultures, very →



Getty Images / Brian Killian

much like my wife and I. Two cultures coming together and me walking as the ugly American down the street in Paris with this young, beautiful woman and speaking English to her. And I've written a counter melody so that she could reply to me in French and then we turn and now she starts to sing to me in French and I start to reply to her in English. And then within the solo we have this wonderful dance and we make love and we come out and all of a sudden, I've assimilated, I've completely taken her culture on and now we sing together in French.

And then we get to something like 'Such a Night' where I feel that that relationship has ended, and she has gone but I have great reverie because it was the hottest, sexiest, most wonderful night of my life and I'll never forget the electricity. You know? It continues to go on.

And then I think the best for me personally, the one that has the greatest sense of what I'm talking about is 'My Funny Valentine' because this song in one song counterbalances this beautiful dark, romantic melody, where you're telling this person that you absolutely love them, their imperfections are what make them so perfect to you and please don't go, never leave me. And then on the other hand you're saying to her, "Is your figure less than Greek, are you ugly? Is your mouth a little weak, when you open it to speak are you smart?" You're questioning her intelligence here. It's just mean, it's downright cruel. Who would say that to someone? And in the relationship that is love. This song comes with all of this love and then almost hatred. What's the word I'm looking for? Almost aggressive, not even passive-aggressive. But [an] aggressive kind of resentment towards this person.

I can continue, I can go down every song, but I had like a small movie in my head and I do that when I arrange, but I don't think I'd ever had it come together as completely and as emotional[ly] as I did for this.

You're talking big arrangements, big emotions – would you say this is your most grown-up album?

Well, after what I've gone through – yeah. I don't think I knew how else to do it. You know? I think I took all of my fear and my gratitude and my pain and I just wrote and arranged, and I don't know. I'm better now at this, like I feel like I'm complete as an artist, that I have come to a point where ... my voice is the best that it's ever

been, I'm able to walk into the song and now become the characters because I understand the emotion involved, and ... I don't know if I was ever able to do that as well because I don't think I ... ever understood the level of pain or how to access that. But I wish that this was a ****** record and I wish that I didn't have any of that. ... I would never have traded this for that. It's hard. I don't explain it very well. ... I know we have to acknowledge it because it's impossible not to have context because how could it not ... But I wish that I was light-hearted again because I will never be in my life. And that's OK because that's just what it is to be human and that's part of life.

Have you changed a lot over these past few years in the way that you look at your career?

Yeah, you know, it's funny. I think I didn't want to let people know, but I wasn't good. ... I think I lost my love of all of it. I'm just talking about a sense of the profession. I had lost my perspective ... I don't know how to say it, I was having no fun. None. Zero. ... My decisions artistically whether they worked or not has nothing to do with it, but were based on fear, the fear of losing it, the fear that it was going to go away, that it wasn't going to be as big ... I cared about what people thought, what they were saying, what the internet was saying, what the critic was saying and I just kind of lost my way a bit. ... I think I was headed for a great downfall.

You were having your own career crisis and then your shock family news came along?

Yeah, and can I tell you what happened? As I was having this crisis, the diagnosis came and all of a sudden ... I was sitting in like another dimension and this crisis I was feeling all of a sudden, this film that I had over me just popped. And this clarity, I was like, "What are you worried about ...? You're worried about this? What the internet said? ... Or how many tickets or if the song is number two or number four on the chart?" And it embarrassed me. Sitting on my own in a hospital I was embarrassed and in that moment, I said, I knew, I didn't say it, I'll never go on social media again, I will never look at a critic, I will never read my name. I know it sounds strange. But from that day, which was Halloween day, I never again read my name in print. I never will. I never ever post. I mean they asked me to do something, holding the camera, "Hey the record is coming out", never, no more, none of it. That day I understood, I thought, "Wow, I thought this mattered to me."

It's funny, the Christmas record, I had stopped doing my Christmas special and, you know, I stopped doing it because I was worried that people were saying I was a Christmas guy. And in that moment too I thought, "What's wrong with you, Mike? This worried you that people were bringing you in to this beautiful, personal vacation time of family and love and faith and what? You were worried because there was a ... meme of you on the internet."

You've always come across so cool and relaxed about things.

No. I was a liar. ... I was cool and relaxed and then I wasn't. And people around me were worried about me. At the end they could see me starting to ... there was no more joy. None of this. None of the light feeling ... because the things that should be important, you know, it's the journey, to share, to love and it just became all about, "What do you mean, the cover of *Time* magazine? What about *People*? I'm not on that." This crazy ... thing. I don't know.

In "Forever Now" you sing "I'm always going to lift you up" – who lifted you up during this period?

> "I THINK THAT LIFE CHANGES FOR ALL OF US WHEN WE FACE OUR OWN MORTALITY, OR WHEN WE FACE THE MORTALITY OF SOMEONE THAT WE LOVE SO MUCH."

You [the people]. You did. My faith, honestly, I've said this, so it feels like it's weird when I repeat it, the love that we got from the people all over the world. The way that we were treated by the media gave us faith in humanity. It's very easy to look at everything cynically and, my wife and I, there were days when there were people, we just knew they were praying for us and we knew that they were showing us this kindness and compassion, honestly. Because I never looked any more, I refused to ever look at myself in the paper, but I would have to go to a grocery store and buy stuff and I would see the way that it was covered with such class and dignity. People got us through more than they'll ever know. And part of my reason for even having this record was that I wanted to be able to say thank you in a small ... way and I wanted to be able to put together something beautiful and loving and peaceful and put it out to a world going through difficult times.

There is so much hate in the world these days...

Yeah, and for me it was my way of saying thank you. I kept saying it over and over again. My mantra was ... I kept even to my co-producers David [Foster] and Jochen [Van der Saag], when they asked me what my idea was, I said that the concept was love, the concept was for this music to help people, I hope, the way that they helped me. And even though it's anonymous and I'll never know how it changes someone's life, they'll never know how they changed mine. So there was that and I kept saying, "And I want it to be bliss. I don't want to work hard. I want us to have integrity and care, but every day should be just joy.! I don't have room for anything else.

Did you keep your optimism throughout the tragic times?

No, I did not. No. I think that life changes for all of us when we face our own mortality, or when we face the mortality of someone that we love so much. ... That's just me, I can't speak for other people. But, for me, I ask myself so many times and still, "What's it all about?" Because you lose the importance, the things that you used to list as things that were so important to you. All of a sudden...

Family has always been important to you, though?

Oh, of course. Always. Absolutely. I always had that. I think what I meant was that I think you just get to this point where you ... I think more philosophically; I don't mean, "What's it all about and what's important? Family or this?" But, "Is it just pain?" It made my faith stronger. I thought, "How can we suffer so much? There must be something more than this, this cannot just be suffering and ashes to ashes, dust to dust. There must be a greater reason, what is the reason?" I still, I mean, we all ask this question, don't we? This is the question. Where are we from? Where do we go? What is this? →



Getty Images / David Livingston



Getty Images / Ralf Juergens

And I think that's more what I meant. But the positivity I have is knowing how important it is to be grateful, and that gratitude in the moment, and to really remember that when something doesn't go your way or you have a disappointment in your plan or your business, that you can hit yourself and say, "Hey, remember when it was really bad? Well, this isn't so bad." And I think that's been a positive.

Is "Forever Now" a song you wrote about your wife?

Yeah. No, you know, of course I couldn't help but write it about the experience ... that I was going through but, you know, every song I've ever written, I have deeply wanted to leave something open-ended enough where your interpretation [is] it's your song. It's for you. And this song I thought, "Man, I would love for people to relate to this on the level of parenthood, of loving and taking care and being responsible" and not just for a child but for an animal, for a pet. Some people don't have children and their dog and their cat or their lizard is ... they feel as much love and as much pain and loss and all of that. And for me, I loved writing a song and it's funny. Every time ... I [got] stuck lyrically, [my co-writer Tom Jackson would] say to me, "But what are we looking for?" Over and over I kept explaining that this song was about time, I kept saying, "No it's about time, Tom. It's about time. It's about how quickly time comes. It's about this cycle of this life we live where we all suffer the loss and the fear, but we also celebrate this love that we have but we all have our time. Time runs out for all of us." And it was funny, the hardest part of the song that I had was the lyric, "It wasn't so long ago, we walked together, and you held my hand but now you're getting too big to want to and I hope you'll always understand." But the original words were, "Remember when you were little..." and I hated it. They were these words that I'd sung quickly. Tom is such a wonderful lyricist that he helped me to sort of tell the story. I remember just over and over I kept saying, "This is about time. In this song I must have a way to express the journey that we're going through and how quickly it all goes."

Talking of time, it was Noah's fifth birthday recently?

I know, it's crazy.

What did you do?

Oh well, we had two birthday parties. He had one two weeks earlier because all of our relatives from Argentina were in Vancouver. So, we went to an indoor trampoline place. And on his birthday, we went and rented a pirate ship and we all became pirates and we sang, "Yo ho ho a pirate's life for me" about 87 times.

You've also had a daughter recently. How is she doing?

She's beautiful. My wife is so happy. My wife is in love. It's really nice and really beautiful. Her name [Vida] obviously was purposeful because we felt like it was kind of a miracle for us. Out of something so hard, something so beautiful. And we were well aware because we had enough people tell us, I can't remember, someone told me that 92 per cent of couples divorce and I understand why, because it's too much. So we're happy that we didn't get divorced. [laughs]

Not only that you had another baby?

It's funny. One of the oncologists said it to us, talking about that. He had said, "Listen, most ... sadly it ends and then for some reason those few others have babies." I remember at the beginning we looked at him and said, "Oh ... sure."

> "SHE'S MY BEST FRIEND. I'M VERY LUCKY. I GOT VERY LUCKY. I MARRIED A GREAT WOMAN."



Getty Images / Phillip Chin

Did it all bring you closer together?

Closer yes, but, you know, I think you find out who people are when the **** hits the fan and you find out a lot about yourself and the other person, and I fell very deeply in love with my wife as a human being, as a mother. ...

And if you can get through that, you can get through anything?

Listen, I don't have another plan. I don't ever want to have to ... go on a date with another person in my life. Ever. She's my best friend. I'm very lucky. I got very lucky. I married a great woman.

Are you going back on tour? Are you itching to get back out on stage?

Yeah. I'm not itching. I mean, I love it. I'm doing it, but I've already created a calendar that allows me to do what I have to do ... but not to be away. The longest time away in the next two years is three weeks and that's long. Nothing else ever passes that.

You moved to a new house as well?

Yeah, we just moved in. It's nice.

And you have an ice hockey rink in the basement?

I'm the MC Hammer of jazz music. [laughs]

Was that like a dream come true, you were almost pro, right?

Totally. I love it. I hate going to the gym but when you skate, it's exercise, it's just a lot more fun.

Are your kids following in your musical footsteps?

The other day he got in the truck ... and he started to sing, and out of the blue he wrote a song.

Who?

Noah. He said [singing], "Pappy, pappy sings but he can't touch the piano like Alan" – that's my co-writer. [Singing] "Uncle Alan plays a better piano, Daddy stinks." He knows my limitations. [laughs]

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PARDONED



BY ALEX WILLMOTT, CHIEF FEATURES WRITER

On 26 April 1999, TV favourite Jill Dando was fatally shot outside her Fulham home in London. I was 15 years, and I remember feeling a sense of shock, shared by anyone who watched UK television at the time. A little over a year later, local man Barry George was arrested and charged with the murder. A murder he would be found guilty of and subsequently handed a life sentence for. Eight years into the sentence, the Old Bailey would clear Barry of the horrific crime.

I caught up with Barry's sister Michelle Diskin Bates, who recalled her experience for *Sorted* magazine.

Michelle, what were your initial feelings and how on earth did you process it all?

My world went into a tailspin in May of 2000, when my brother was arrested for one of the highest-profile crimes in Britain in recent years, the murder of Jill Dando, much-loved BBC presenter. My mum didn't tell me because she thought it would all blow over and I wouldn't need to be bothered with it; after all, it was a mistake. So, I heard it on the radio as I was getting ready to go to a ladies' Bible study, and my life as I knew it fell apart. Nothing ... could have prepared me for such a trauma. My nice peaceful life was replaced by a nightmare.

At each stage of the legal process we expected the judges to say there was no case to answer, though

“MY BROTHER WAS ARRESTED FOR ONE OF THE HIGHEST-PROFILE CRIMES IN BRITAIN IN RECENT YEARS, THE MURDER OF JILL DANDO, MUCH-LOVED BBC PRESENTER.”



REX/Shutterstock

Michael Mansfield had said it would take a brave judge indeed to throw this case out. The profile of the victim meant they would probably go all the way. Then, on Monday 2 July, Barry was inexplicably found guilty and life took another downward spiral.

What was the first year like with your brother in prison, and did you have any hope that the legal system would rectify the situation? How did you try to support him from the outside?

I was totally overwhelmed and had no idea how to go forward; we'd been certain he would not be, could not be, convicted. There was nothing linking him to the crime. Our whole family, those in the UK and my husband and children in Cork, Ireland were dazed. How could we fight the might of the whole British justice system? We were just little people, we couldn't fight a colossus. Then a feeling rose up from inside me... we couldn't do this *but God could*.

It was Paddy Hill, one of the so-called Birmingham Six, who started us on our way to campaigning for Barry's freedom. He had set up an organisation, MOJO, to help the wrongly convicted after his own exoneration and release from prison. Without their help I could never have navigated the maze that is our appeals system.

Eight years is a very long time. How did these years affect Barry, yourself and your family?

That first year was fraught with emotions as we supported Barry through one failed appeal, and when the House of Lords also rejected his appeal, refusing him the right to mount any further appeals. It was MOJO who wrote the submission for me, and together we took it to the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC).

They knew this was the only route open to Barry if he lost those appeals. The difficulty was that Barry told me not to work with MOJO, he didn't understand that other wrongly convicted people would give their eye teeth to have MOJO helping them. I decided to go against his wishes and I have never regretted that decision. The CCRC took up his case, but it was to be five more years before we heard any positive news from them.

Mum visited Barry as often as she could, often weekly. I was living in Cork and it wasn't so easy for me. I would have to leave my three children in order to visit, and that was agonising, more so when Barry would say we weren't doing what we should be doing. The cost of airfares and the heartache of leaving my home made this a very difficult time. Obviously, Barry had no concept of what life was like for us on the outside, but I'm only human and my patience was thin at times. If I could have split myself in two I could have lived in both of my lives, simultaneously, that was how it felt.

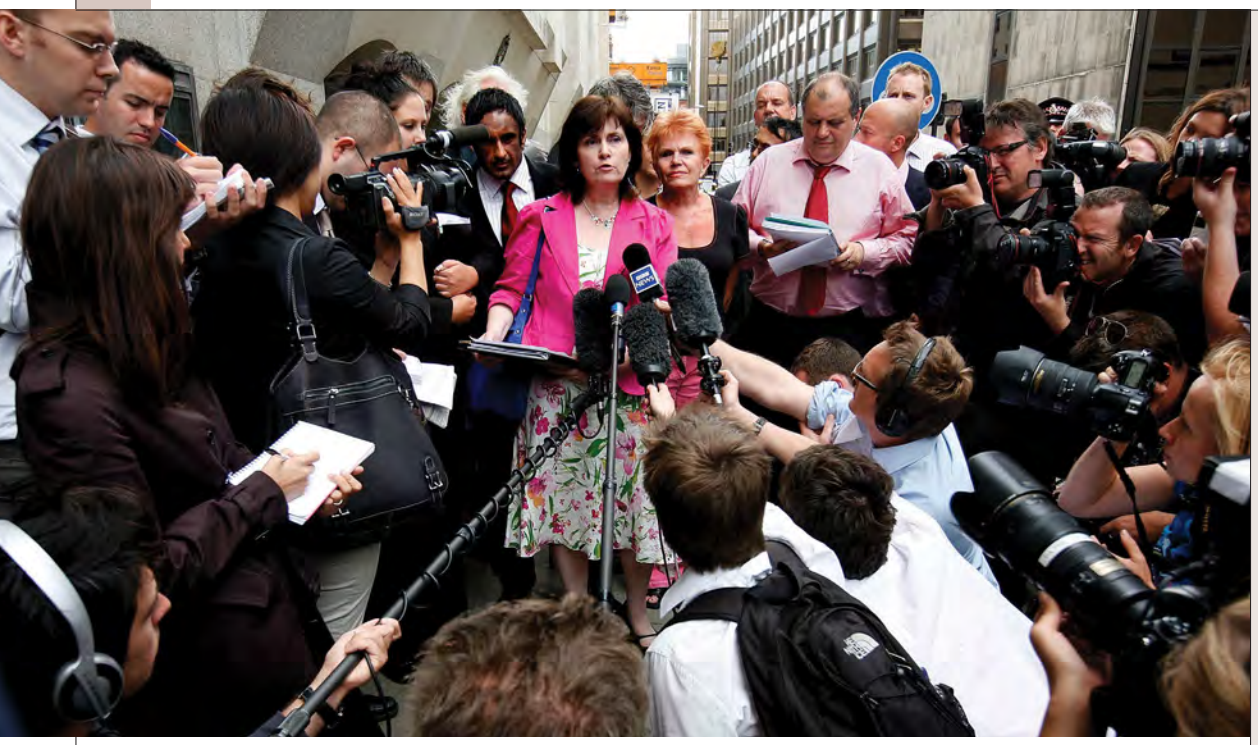
What were your emotions when you heard the sentence had been overturned?

This double life continued until 2007, when we received the news that Barry was to get a new appeal. The CCRC were sending his case back because the main plank of the prosecution's case, a single particle of firearms discharge residue, was neutral. It could not show he was guilty, neither could it show he was innocent.

We were approaching resolution at last. Then disaster struck. My husband of 25 years died, after a short illness. We were devastated. This was totally unexpected. ... I considered stepping aside from helping Barry to be with my children in their grief.

"No, Mum, we have each other," my youngest daughter insisted. "Barry only has you. You must continue."

Barry won this appeal and was remanded for retrial. →



Getty Images / Cate Gillon

"BARRY WON THIS APPEAL AND WAS REMANDED FOR RETRIAL. ON 2 AUGUST 2008 BARRY WAS, UNANIMOUSLY, FOUND NOT GUILTY."



On 2 August 2008 Barry was, unanimously, found not guilty. Many would think that was the end of the story, but it was only the beginning of a new level of legal battles for justice, and persecution by the media. Barry is still fighting for justice; he has been told he will never receive compensation for his years as a wrongly convicted man. Basically, he is not innocent enough; he didn't prove his innocence beyond reasonable doubt.

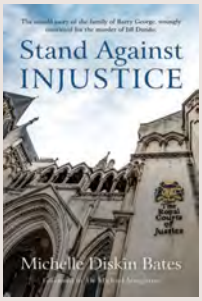
Tell us about the organisations that you work for now and why.

I have kept up my contact and friendships with MOJO, and am a supporter of their campaigns as they fight injustice for the wrongfully convicted. They, and others, are mounting campaigns and taking judicial reviews to have this 'not innocent enough' finding overturned because it undermines the presumption of innocence, a core legal precept.

Many others have been handed this decision since Barry's case, but there is no legal avenue to prove one's innocence beyond reasonable doubt, no court one can apply to with one's evidence. Not guilty means not guilty, it doesn't mean almost.

Recently I was honoured to be asked if I would become a patron for United Against Injustice (UAI). This organisation does not take on individuals' cases, instead they run workshop to inform families and would-be campaigners how best to tackle a wrongful conviction. I have been a speaker at many conferences for both UAI and MOJO, also for others, including universities and women's groups. This is a responsibility I take seriously.

It is my heartfelt belief that there is no fence to sit on when it comes to injustice. One either stands against injustice or one colludes with it. Justice is never served by the conviction of the innocent. ■



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MICHAEL W. SMITH IN TUNE WITH THE REALITIES OF SUCCESS

BY PETER WOODING

With a career spanning more than three decades, platinum-selling singer/songwriter and musician, Michael W. Smith is no stranger to the radical highs and lows that come with fame and fortune.

Since the early 1980s the 61-year-old American has won numerous awards including three Grammys, and counts Bono and George W. Bush as some of his closest friends. He performed at the Billy Graham memorial service earlier this year.

However, a number of challenges in his life almost caused him to throw in the towel last year after 35 years in the music business:

"I talked with my team at the beginning of 2017 and told them I'm not going to do another record unless I can write some stuff that really excites me. I was still grieving over my father who died in 2015 after suffering from dementia. The landscape changed in my life and I couldn't write anything.

"I thought it would be two or three more years before I did any recording at all if I ever did record ever again."

Fortunately, that writer's block only lasted two weeks after he felt challenged to respond to the divisions in his →



> “IT ALL CAME TO A HEAD IN 1979, WHEN I HAD A MELTDOWN AND NEARLY DIED FROM A DRUG OVERDOSE.”

country during the time of the US elections:

“It really wasn’t so much about the election. It was how mean and awful people were on both sides. It honestly made me angry. And the Church was at fault as well. That inspired me to start writing again.

“And then I also started writing about the teen suicide rate and drug epidemic in America. Two weeks later I got 26 songs on my computer. Then the floodgates opened up and I had 50 ideas. I literally ended up releasing two records in February that year, *A Million Lights* came out on 16 February, and then a worship record *Surrounded* came out just a week later which is completely insane on many levels. But I pulled it off because I felt that was what God wanted me to do.”

Michael’s passion for gospel music began in his church in Kenova in West Virginia where he grew up. He learned to play the piano at a very early age, sang in the church choir and wrote his first song when he was just five. Then as a ten-year-old he had an intense spiritual experience when he decided to become a Christian.

But after graduating from high school and feeling isolated from his friends who went away to college,





he started to battle with drug abuse which led to a near-death experience:

"I just thought I could play with the fire and not get burned. It all came to a head in 1979, when I had a meltdown and nearly died from a drug overdose. I knew at that point that if something didn't change I was going to lose my life. But thanks to the prayers of my parents and the support of so many people, my life was turned around.

"When you're doing the things I was doing, it's just a nightmare; you can't think clearly and you're hanging out with the wrong people. But from that day forward I said, 'God, I need another rescue today, I need another rescue tomorrow,' and all of a sudden, all these positive things started happening. God provided a way out of this mess that I was in and I was nurtured back to health for the next eight months."

Then Michael met two people in the early 80s who would play a pivotal part in his life:

"In 1981 I met this sweet little 100-pound 5' 3" woman called Debbie from Nashville; and we just celebrated 37 years of marriage. She is the best thing that's ever happened to me."Then, I started writing songs and all of a sudden I'm musical director for well-known Christian recording artist Amy Grant and I'm cutting my first record and I'm her opening act in 1982."

Not long after this, his own solo career started to take off. His biggest success in mainstream music came in 1991 when "Place in this World" hit number six on the American *Billboard* Hot 100 and in 2009 he was inducted in the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. Over the course of his career, he has gone on to sell more than 18 million albums.

Through all this success it was his wife, Debbie, and his church prayer group, who helped Michael as he struggled to deal with the trappings of fame in those early days:

"I was enamoured by all the success and attention I was receiving. I was always concerned by how many shows we'd sold out and how many people had bought my albums. I was young and growing in my faith. But my wife was always straightening my head. She'd say great and she'd remind me who I was; and that all this was a gift. This is the goodness of God. Now when it comes to the awards, I couldn't care less if I get another one.

"We've had a prayer group together for almost 30 years. I remember if I got a number one song on the pop chart I'd get puffed up and they'd say 'It's not about you.' My pastor, Don Pinto who's now 88 has really been my mentor all these years. He has always been really good at deflating my head when it got bigger than it should have."

Now Michael and his wife have five children and 11 grandchildren and he says whenever he's away touring he can't wait to return to their family farm home near Nashville:

"When we had all these kids my greatest joy in life was not being a celebrity, my greatest joy was being a dad and being a husband. So that really . . . would point me in the right direction. After all the attention and the fame and whatever, I just wanted to go home and be dad and be with Deb. So, the whole family thing has just been a life-giver for me.

"When I'm touring, I give it 120 per cent but then I come home and I can't wait to be with my family, but I'm exhausted. So it takes a few days to weave back into what reality is. I remember Bono telling me one time when he would do big tours his wife, Ali would make him go to a hotel for two weeks to wind down before coming home. I think that's true I think I did hear that. But family's always been the most important thing in my life."

Michael explains how he's managed to continue writing and recording so many profound songs for more than three decades:

"I write out of what I feel and what I experience. Sometimes I have a hard time finding the words to express what I feel, so the best way for me to process this is for me to write songs. →



"In 1999 I went to Littleton, Colorado to sing 'Friends' at the Columbine Memorial Service and it was a day that impacted me greatly. It was so overwhelming emotionally that I just had to find a way to cope with it and digest it all, so I found myself at the keyboard writing music. Meeting Cassie Bernall's family inspired me. Cassie claimed she believed in God and lost her life for it. Inspired by . . . her story I wrote a song called 'This is Your Time' which is a challenge for us all to recognise through Cassie's life, that now is out time to stand up and live life unabashedly for God.

"I try to stay current and to stay ahead of the curve. I surround myself with young people in the studio which helps me to be relevant to what's going on today. Even though I'm old enough to be their dad.

"The challenge is to be yourself and not try to be Bono or Chris Martin or anybody – there's already one of those. I've not always succeeded on every level. I push myself, I like adventure, I like to take risks and even if I fail, the journey has been awesome. I'm not one to play it safe."

So what advice would Michael give to other men dealing with issues of pride that he experienced?

"Especially for guys we think we can do it on our own, we think we can solve every problem. We always want to win, we always want to be successful and be on top. And you know what when you look at what the Bible says "he opposes the proud [but] gives grace to the humble" [James 4:6, ESV].

"I think there's a way that you can be clothed in humility and be a servant and absolutely just serve people for the rest of your life and be strong. Strong in character and strong in being a friend or being involved in your church. I think there's a way to do that I know there is. At the end of the day, you have to surrender and God has a destiny, a future and a hope; and that future and that hope is beautiful, absolutely beautiful. I challenge you to surrender to that because if you do, your best days are ahead."

Michael concluded by sharing one of the highlights of his career when someone told him how one of his songs literally helped to save their life:

"This lady came up to me and she said I was driving down the freeway and . . . had every intention of taking [her] own life; desperate, she was 19. She said [she was] driving down the freeway, [had] a pop radio station on and [my] song 'Place in this World' [came] on and she pulled over to the side of the road and just began to weep. And she gave her heart to the Lord, had an encounter with Jesus. Everything changed . . . And I just think it's remarkable that a three-and-a-half-minute song can completely change someone's life. That's the power of music. So that's the story I really remember." ■



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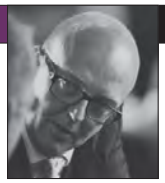


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MATT BIRD

Relationology

OPEN UP



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> "CREATE WARMTH, ENERGY AND OPENNESS, SOMETHING THAT CAN OFTEN BE MISSING IN URBAN LIFE."

Time recently named Matthew Welch, general manager and owner of Auburn Volkswagen, as Washington USA's 'car dealer' of the year. If you go into his showroom you will realise why; his team ooze Relationology.

Matthew is the only business leader to have been the featured guest on *A Minute with Matt* three times! Each appearance has featured one of three transformational relationship principles that he and his team live and work by.

The 10ft rule

Matthew believes in the '10ft rule'. In a busy and frantic life it is all too easy to keep your head down and get on with your own work.

He believes in acknowledging everyone that you come within 10ft of, whether a customer, colleague or supplier. Sometimes this will be about stopping and having a conversation but at other times it will be simply enough to smile and say hello.

Positively acknowledging the people around you transforms your environment and culture. You create warmth, energy and openness, something that can often be missing in urban life.

Good show bad show

Matthew believes in telling people if they are presenting a 'good show' or a 'bad show'. Sometimes we do things that are excellent but no one says "great job". Similarly we do things that let ourselves down but no one challenges us.

He believes in encouraging those who do well and at the same time challenging those who step over the line. When someone says "bad show", it means stop and think because you could be representing yourself and the business better. Contrastingly, saying "good show" to someone even when they are with a customer is a great way of affirming them.

The only way you and your business will continue to improve is when you put the spotlight on great performance and discreetly challenge underperformance.

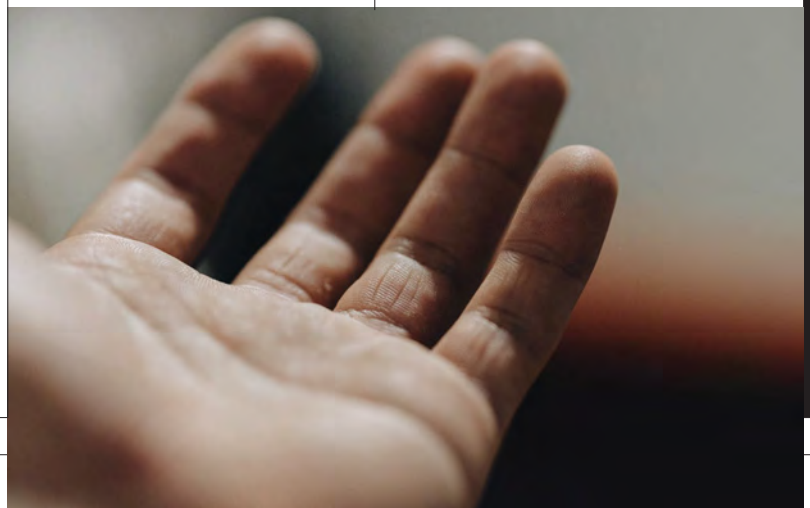
Palms up

Matthew believes in a 'palms up' approach to life and being open even in difficult circumstances. It is all too easy to respond to animosity, aggression and accusation in the same way.

He believes in going into tense and difficult conversations and meetings with his 'palms up'. What he means by that is to be open in every situation to find a way through the difficulty. If there is anger, be peaceful, if there is aggression, be kind, and if there is accusation, listen.

It is amazing how a generous approach can disarm negativity in our day-to-day interactions as well as in conflict situations.

If you ever find yourself in Washington, pop in and say hello to Matthew and his team. They really are unforgettable. ■



MATT BIRD BIOGRAPHY

Matt Bird is an international keynote speaker on Relationology and author of the new book *Grow Your Business: How to Build a World-class Business One Relationship at a Time* (Troubador Publishing), available from Amazon.

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CVM CHRISTIAN VISION FOR MEN Demolition Squad

THE GRAND MORALE BOOST



Lieutenant General William "Bill" Slim commanded the British Fourteenth Army in the oft-forgotten yet incredibly brutal land war against the Japanese in Burma. After first tasting defeat, and a retreat into India, Slim's job was to rebuild and prepare the army to fight back through Burma and on to victory. How he did that and what he accomplished is brilliantly recalled in his autobiography *Defeat Into Victory* (Pan).

Throughout his career, Slim became known as a military leader with an outstanding ability to produce and sustain high levels of morale within his forces. Often giving impromptu talks to his men, huddled around his vehicle as he spoke with passion from the bonnet, he saw that each man under his command came to know his place, his value and his mission. It was this morale that played no small part in the success of this army against a fierce enemy.

"It's not just within the armed forces that high morale is key to overall success."

It is so often observed that lessons from war apply equally well to other areas of life. It's not just within the armed forces that high morale is key to overall success. Businesses note that an engaged workforce leads to greater levels of productivity. And away from our jobs, it's important for a person to know who they are, what they about – essentially, why they get up in the morning.

There are many ways of raising morale. Some may turn to religion, which can in its own way help a person to find a place, a value and a mission. Others turn inward, creating their own sense of purpose, free from external prescription.

To these solutions the Christian faith says, yes; it's both of these, and more. The Christian, complete in his belief that his Saviour actually died for him, is given personal assurance of his value, his incredibly high value.

And in addition, the Spirit of the living God comes to live within him, to empower him, comfort him, speak value, meaning, purpose and future to him.

Some may dismiss Christianity as merely a support for those needing a comfort to get through life. How beautiful it is when those needing just such a comfort turn to Christianity and find it to indeed offer that, but also to be true. Yet how sad it is when the faith is dismissed out of pride and scorn, and that any admission of personal shortcoming is erroneously ascribed as weakness to that very faith providing the strength that so many people rely on, are empowered by and change the world through. ■

JONATHAN SHERWIN BIOGRAPHY

Jonathan Sherwin frequently travels nationally and overseas, teaching on and tackling the tough questions asked of the Christian faith.
He's married to the amazing Helen, lives in Oxford and also works as a communications consultant.
Jonathan runs Christian Vision for Men's (UK) apologetics ministry, the Demolition Squad, blogs at jonathansherwin.net and can be found on Twitter.

@jonathansherwin



JON COBB

Money

BUY BYE



There are certain professions out there that however hard they try, will always be seen by the general public as 'a bit shifty'. I'm a financial adviser so I should know. I think double-glazing salesmen, estate agents and used car salespeople probably fit into this category, but in recent years the government seem to have deemed landlords as a section of society that evoke little affection with the general populace, and are therefore an easy target to identify as a revenue raising target.

I have long argued that residential letting should become regulated, as there are far too many rogue landlords out there who simply abuse their tenants, and not just necessarily financially by charging high rents for living in squalor. Anyone who doesn't play by the book should have the book thrown at them.

However, if you are a landlord who is paying their taxes and looking after their tenants, you have my sympathy that you might be feeling victimised. Firstly, if you purchase a second property (which is what most buy-to-let properties are) there is an additional 3 per cent stamp duty to pay. So, if you are buying a two-bed semi in Luton, for example, with a cost of £300,000, you will have to stump up £14,000 which is an effective tax rate of 4.67 per cent Ouch.

I guess we can't really blame the government for interest rate rises, but if you're a landlord with a mortgage, the chances are, the cost of servicing that debt will go up over time, as I can't really see rates coming down.

In the good old days, the interest on that debt could be offset against the rent for income tax purposes, but even that is being phased into a less favourable scenario whereby you'll get a tax credit on your mortgage, having been taxed on the full rental amount. Trust me, it's not the same.

In the last budget, there was a rather sneaky change which seems to have gone under the radar, but which will affect landlords looking to sell a property that they have previously lived in. Currently, the gain which they make is liable to Capital Gains tax, but the calculation is pretty generous as you are only liable on the proportion of the gain on the years that you didn't live there. Coupled with this they knock off the last 18 months and then there's the £40,000 'lettings relief' you can subtract off the gain after that.Now it's been announced that the 'lettings relief' will be as good as scrapped by April 2020, resulting in a much larger tax bill when it's sold.

> "IS THE BRITISH LOVE AFFAIR WITH PROPERTY BEGINNING TO WANE?"

Is the British love affair with property beginning to wane? If you are looking at investing in property, my feeling is that the easy money is long gone.



Getty Images / VictorHuang

JON COBB BIOGRAPHY

Jon Cobb runs financial advisory business Trinity Wealth Management. He is a keen runner, ex-white collar boxer, passionate Portsmouth supporter, speaker and writer.

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Sorted. MAGAZINE



RICHARD HARDY

Family

THE GREATEST CHALLENGE



If I were to ask you what is the greatest challenge of being a parent, I wonder what you would say?

Maybe you haven't thought about it. Maybe it is getting them up in the morning, or getting them to eat broccoli, or tidy their bedrooms. Maybe it is something more serious that takes you time and attention – dealing with serious illness, or disability, or rebellion.

Maybe, truth be told, it is all you can do just to get through the day and that is challenge enough. If that is you, I sympathise. Parenting of itself and in itself is a challenge and sometimes just getting by *is* victory enough. If that is you, then I applaud your patience and stamina.

Just remember not every day will be as tough as this day, and there will be fun and laughter along the way. Don't miss those moments because you are so locked into the tension and trouble to experience the joy.

Back to the main theme of this article – maybe the greatest challenge is connected to the greatest goal. Have you given any thought to the goal of your parenting? Someone once said, "If you aim at nothing, you will be sure to hit it." I sometimes wonder whether we give enough thought to what we are aiming at in our parenting.

Recently I was in a parent and toddler group and a parent said to me in the middle of the conversation, "Well, at the end of the day all I want is him to be healthy and happy." Is that a laudable goal? I hear it often enough. My involuntary reaction was, "Really, is that all?" Which I have to say took the parent aback a little.

Is that really what parenting is all about? Is that what you aspire to? Is it what you are working so hard for? I can honestly say that I am not. Now, don't get me wrong, I don't want my kids miserable and unhealthy; that is not what I am saying.

However, I don't want them happy if it means someone else's child's misery. I don't want them happy in an unethical world where some family struggles so that my child can shop cheap in the latest trendy discount store. I don't want them happy while some other father's child is sold into slavery or starves.

Part of my great challenge is a great goal to bring up children to be kind, generous, sacrificing and ethical. I want my children to grow up with a social conscience. I want them to open, honest people of integrity whose world is their bond. I want them to leave the world a little better than when they found it and when they walk into a room the temperature and light rises just a little. I want them to love and care for the least and the lowest. I want them to love like a boss.

When my son was five, we were out in the city centre and as we were walking down the high street, I spotted a homeless guy I had met a number of times before. He was sitting with some mates around a big bottle of cheap cider. I went over to say hi.

He introduced me to his mates and David hid behind my legs, being a little shy, and peeked out. I introduced him to my friend and we chatted for a while. As we walked away, my son said to me, "Why is that man so dirty, Daddy?"

This was it a learning opportunity. One of many along the way. A moment to model something and a moment to reinforce a big value that hopefully would contribute to the higher goal. So, I told David something of man's story and said, "Don't judge him too harshly, because had you had his life, you might find yourself in his clothes." I also told him to be kind to everyone he could.

Do you know, now as I look back, I am so glad for those moments. You see, it is not the daily routine that makes the difference, though it may provide the backdrop; it is the times when you can stop and share something important that become pivotal in a child's progress to a big goal. The challenge is to be there for them and the make the most of them when you can.

I am pleased to report that while my kids are their own people and are making their own mistakes in life, they have grown up to have a far greater social, ethical and environmental conscience than I ever had. They are putting their convictions into practise. My prayer is that in due time their children, and yours, do likewise. However, it has to start somewhere, and it must be with you. ■

"Part of my great challenge is a great goal to bring up children to be kind, generous, sacrificing and ethical."



RICHARD HARDY
BIOGRAPHY

Richard Hardy is a Baptist minister and director of the Entheos Trust, which encourages leaders and enables churches to engage with their communities. Richard has spoken on community engagement, marriage and parenting at many national conferences. He has also written extensively on community and family issues. Visit theentheostrust.org.



MARTIN THOMAS

Making Sense

POWER OR INFLUENCE?

It's the New Year... and I've got power on my mind. And a question for you. "What would (or do) you prefer, power or influence?" To help you a bit, here's a couple of dictionary definitions:

POWER: The ability or capacity to do something or act in a particular way.

INFLUENCE: The capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behaviour of someone or something, or the effect itself.

Perhaps it's not such an easy question to answer. Going on the above definitions I'd probably want to choose a bit of both. I want to have the ability and capacity to get things done. And for that, I need power. But I also want to be a part of shaping something significant and the people around me. And for that, I need influence.

Power can be given in a variety of ways: through an election, interview panel, family titles, land, business empire, money, yes... even being a parent. However you choose to self-define your power, you probably (hopefully) have the expectation of yourself to use it carefully – with great power comes great responsibility as Peter Parker's uncle would say. Sadly, we all know from our own personal experiences, and from the world of politics, business and media, what happens when power is not used carefully.

Influence, on the other hand, can be just as powerful as actual hard power – but in a very different way. One interpretation is that it has to be earned – *not through position or status, or even expertise, but through the consistent and faithful demonstration of character and values.* For me, this makes influencing actually harder than simply having power and the ability to get things done. Because it's something that you have to really work hard at. And doing it consistently, for the good of the other, and not for what you can get out of it.

I have my own love-hate juggle and struggle with power and influence. But one thing I've learned is that not being in a position of power or control over things, others and even myself, can be incredibly liberating and lead to greater impact in my own life and the lives of others.



> "POWER CAN BE GIVEN IN A VARIETY OF WAYS: THROUGH AN ELECTION, INTERVIEW PANEL, FAMILY TITLES, LAND, BUSINESS EMPIRE, MONEY."



New Year questions:

- How can I be more responsible in the areas where I hold power?
- What things or people do I want to help shape during 2019?
- How can I be consistent throughout the whole year?

Happy New Year.

MARTIN THOMAS BIOGRAPHY

Martin Thomas is a children's author at LittleElephants.co.uk and director of external engagement for SAT-7 UK. He and his family live in Oxfordshire.

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LYNDON BOWRING

Politics

DANGER ONLINE

In the middle of the night I received an anonymous email saying that if I didn't stump up £5,000 in bitcoin within 24 hours, deeply embarrassing film footage would be sent to all my personal and work contacts. The sender claimed to have "hacked into an X-rated pornography website, and captured evidence that you visited it. As you viewed these videos your system gave me access to your web cam, which clearly showed that it was you who was watching. Then my software collected every single person on your contact list..." Fortunately, I hadn't accessed any questionable websites, so knew this was a total phishing exercise and I had nothing to fear. But my heart goes out to anyone receiving similar emails who does have a problem and can't be sure the threats won't be carried out.

Extortion of money by email is a worldwide scourge so let's all be warned to be vigilant and spot and delete suspicious emails, especially those with attachments that if opened may attack your computer and do untold damage. And to anyone who has problems with online pornography, I beg you for God's sake, stop now.

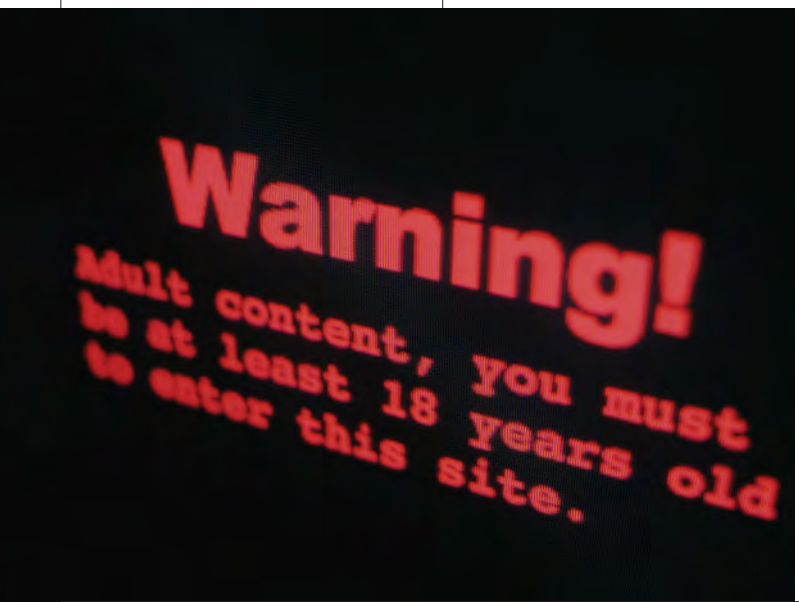
Mark Kastleman's book *The Drug of the New Millennium* (Granite, 2001) describes the Four As of internet pornography: Accessible, Affordable, Anonymous and Aggressive. It's possible to view porn for free, but the habit's addictive nature means people soon pay for more extreme stuff. And anonymity? Nowadays we have no idea who has information about our online data and the sites we visit.



People are at last waking up to the terrible consequences of pornography use. The Women and Equalities Committee in Parliament's recent report recommended: there should be clear warnings about the impact on wider society; pornography should be treated as a public health issue – like smoking; ministers should launch an advertising campaign to discourage people from watching it; and viewing it should be banned on public transport. We give thanks to God for this.

"Nowadays we have no idea who has information about our online data and the sites we visit."

From its inception CARE has fought tirelessly against pornography, recognising the damage it does and helping those who've become ensnared. CARE partnered with brilliant Naked Truth Project to train church leaders to tackle this through 'P-Word Conferences' in Belfast, Cardiff, Glasgow and London. We work closely with parliamentarians on the crucial issue of online safety for children and are deeply thankful to God that through the Digital Economy Act 2017 the government now requires robust age-verification checks for porn websites. So please pray for CARE, as we continue to fight against this evil onslaught – one of Satan's most effective strategies to ruin lives because of the secrecy, deceit, debt and emotional turmoil it can create. And get help if you need it – thenakedtruthproject.com



LYNDON BOWRING
BIOGRAPHY

Lyndon Bowring was born in Wales and studied at London Bible College. He is an associate minister at Kensington Temple, and has been executive chairman of CARE for more than 25 years. His hobbies include watching rugby, exploring London's restaurants and developing friendships. He lives in London with his wife, Celia, and they have three children.



LEE AND BAZ
Cut to the Chase

NEW YEAR NEW YOU, NEW ME



Getty Images / Peter Macdiarmid

> "I AM CHOOSING TO BE MORE POSITIVE, CARING AND ENCOURAGING TO WHATEVER LIFE THROWS AT ME EACH DAY."

BAZ GASCOYNE

Well, here we are in 2019, and what does this New Year have in store for you and me? I can vividly remember standing on a hillside with my wife and friends 19 years ago watching fireworks light up the skies with an array of colours and noise across the city of Sheffield as we entered the new millennium, wondering what lay ahead for each of us.

Due to the media hype, many people worried about what was going to happen at midnight: actually the most shocking thing for many is remembering who they kissed under the mistletoe as the clock struck 12, along with holding hands and singing a song most of us don't know all the words for or the meaning of.

No doubt thousands of New Year resolutions have already been broken as we hoped to change the way we behave, look or even sound. Many of us, including myself, frequently wish we or our lives could be different this year as the previous years. Regrets can and do cause us a lot of pain. I wish I could say with all confidence and truth what John C. Calhoun said:

'In looking back, I see nothing to regret and little to correct.' (https://www.brainyquote.com/topics/regret, accessed 14.11.18).

My challenge to myself and to you is to learn from our mistakes and regrets and then to walk a different path: one where we are more gracious and kind to ourselves and others. When we do let ourselves or others down, let us humbly admit our errors and ask for forgiveness quickly, and then let's pick ourselves up, dust ourselves down and once again get on with this thing called life: "Forgiveness is a transformative act because it asks you to be a more empathetic and compassionate person, thereby making you better than the person you were when you were first hurt." (Kamand Kojouri, goodreads.com/quotes/tag/new-me, accessed 14.11.18).

You may have a bucket list of things you want to achieve this year for various reasons. More than anything else, I am choosing to be more positive, caring and encouraging to whatever life throws at me each day, week and month, remembering what Dwight Howard said:

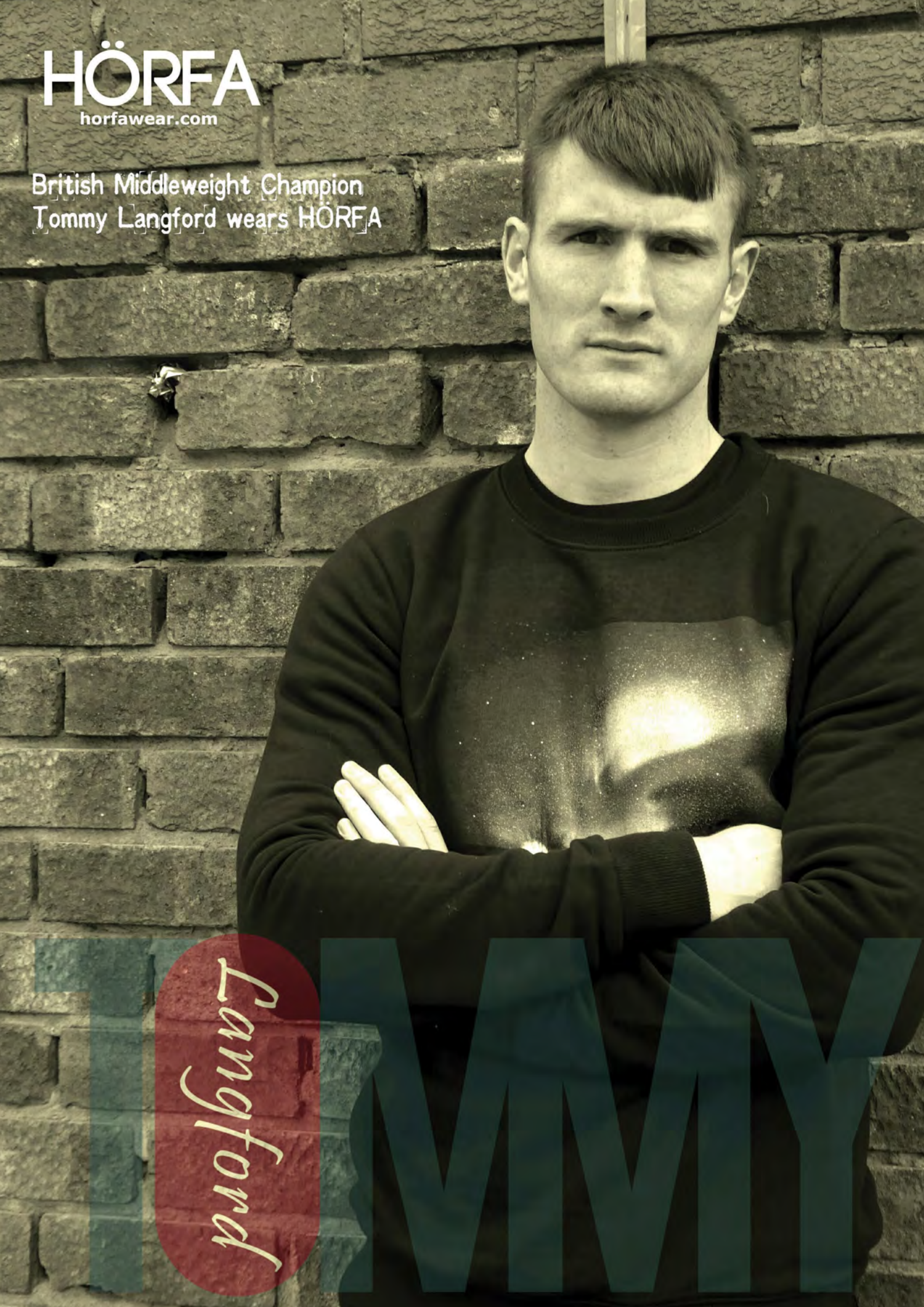
'Today is a new day. Even if you were wrong yesterday, you can get it right today.' (wiseoldsayings.com/new-me-quotes/, accessed 14.11.18).

So what is the New You going to look like? I know with God's help I want to be more at peace with myself so I can be more at peace around others.

Happy New Year and Happy New You.

BAZ GASCOYNE
BIOGRAPHY

Baz Gascoyne is married to Linda and they live and work in the city of Sheffield.


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HOW TO BE A FOOTBALLER
PETER CROUCH

BY STUART WEIR

This is just the best, funniest, more readable football biography in years. Peter Crouch's declared aim is to take the reader inside the crazy world of the ridiculous houses, cars and bizarre tattoos which are essential parts of the life of the modern Premier League footballer. It is a world where crimes against fashion, taste and behaviour norms are accepted and even encouraged.

Fed up with strangers telling him that he is tall, he had a business card printed which he gave to such people. The card said:

- Yes, I am tall
- Yes, I am 6'7"
- No, the weather isn't different up here
- No, I don't play basketball
- I'm so glad we had this conversation

The book includes chapters on cars, tattoos, clothes, haircuts, houses, music, nights out and how you have to behave to fit the stereotype of being a modern professional footballer. The book is written with brilliant humour and is a satire on the excesses of the modern player.

One of the best chapters is on cars where he explains how the car is the first status symbol. Here he pokes fun at the players he knows:

1. The one whose sports car constantly got stuck on the speedbumps;
2. The one who bought a vehicle which was too big to get into the underground garage where the player lived;
3. The one who was transferred from a Spanish club to a Premier League club and who forgot to bring his Porsche.

Crouch also explains that the further forward you play, the more flash your car has to be. Strikers' cars are always more impressive than defenders'.

The player's house ought ideally to be mock Tudor, detached, out beyond the orbital motorway but never into the sticks with a bit of land, a swimming pool with concrete paving- stone surrounds, snooker room and bar. Ideally, it should also have a large and aggressive dog, and a large and aggressive sports car.

When it comes to clothes, he describes the great conundrum. How can footballers with money, youth and a good body consistently get clothes-buying wrong? He recounts his own tale of choosing a sweater in Harrods, finding at the till that it cost £800. Not wanting to lose face he paid without a blink and then hated the garment ever after. The problem was, as he explains, that he should never have been allowed out to shop on his own in the first place "without a wingman or a woman".

He explains how footballers never need to grow up because the club or the agent does everything for them. Thus, it is an unreal, not quite adult existence, how everyone has their place on the team coach according to their status and that sitting in someone else's seat or sitting too far forward – or back – are serious offences.

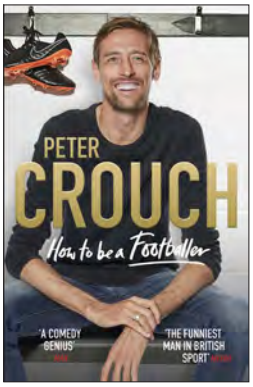
Alongside the satire, there are some really interesting sections, like his analysis of all the managers he has played under, his experience of playing for England. He also notes that he is often said to have a good touch for a big man – which leaves him wondering why the fact that his foot is a few inches further from his brain than most people's should make a difference. In a chapter on defenders he names and shames opponents who have committed career-threatening fouls on him.

There are some great one-liners:

Steve Bruce, the most incredible nose in British football

Mario Balotelli looks like the gangster penguin in Wallace and Gromit's The Wrong Trousers when he's disguised as a rooster with a rubber glove on his head

The book finishes with a reference to Steven Gerrard, who, Crouch suggests, managed to navigate the life of the footballer and get it right, being successful on the field without embarrassing himself off it.



How to Be a Footballer
Peter Crouch
London: Ebury, 2018

> "THE FURTHER FORWARD YOU PLAY, THE MORE FLASH YOUR CAR HAS TO BE. STRIKERS' CARS ARE ALWAYS MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN DEFENDERS'."



© Karis Kennedy

BEST FOOTBALL BOOKS 2018













White Hart Lane

Martin Lipton

London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2018

The book is tribute to the memories of White Hart Lane stadium. The author is a professional writer, a detached journalist and a committed lifelong fan. He brings these perspectives together well. He includes copious quotes from managers, players, directors, fans - including one who had watched 800 games at "the Lane".

World Football Records

Keir Radnedge

London: Carlton, 2018

The 10th edition of World football records is a goldmine of football records, facts and trivia, complete with literally hundreds of full colour photographs. The material is arranged in seven sections with two appendices.

The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Football

Keir Radnedge

London, Carlton, 2018

In 272 pages, the Ultimate *Encyclopedia of Football* has six main sections:

- History of the game
- Major international competitions
- Major multinational club competitions
- Football nations
- Great players
- Famous clubs

I particularly enjoyed the history of the game which had narrative accounts of different periods but also picked out key incidents, year by year. Reading the first known laws of the game – there were just 11 – shows how complicated we have made the modern game!

Between the Lines

Michael Carrick

London: Blink, 2018

The opening words of the book are "I didn't just play for Manchester United. I lived for them" which sums up the intensity of playing for a club which has to win every week. The book charts his career from West Ham through Tottenham to Manchester United and England.

He writes honestly about what made Alex Ferguson's team so successful but also about his battles with depression and his struggles with being selected for England (a boyhood dream) yet knowing he was unlikely to play.

YouTube Football Fantastic

Iain Spragg

London: Carlton, 2018

The book describes itself as "The only football book that lets you see all the goals, gaffes, and incredible incidents for yourself". It is catalogue of YouTube clips which you can access via a URL or QR code. What an ingenious idea.

My Life in Football

Kevin Keegan

London, Macmillan, 2018

A reflective autobiography of one of England's greatest ever players, who was less successful in management.



Getty Images / Steve Powell

STUART WEIR
BIOGRAPHY

Stuart Weir is passionate about Jesus Christ and about sport, and he spends his life trying to help people make the connection. He has written several books about sport and Christianity and has worked as a sports writer at Olympic, Paralympic and World Championship events. He has been to three football World Cups and was Togo's Olympic attaché at the 2012 Olympics. Married to Lynne, he has two grown-up children. He is a member of Kidlington Baptist Church and Frilford Heath Golf Club.

@stuartweir

"The only football book that lets you see all the goals, gaffes, and incredible incidents for yourself."

LONDON BRONCOS

BETFRED SUPER LEAGUE

2019 FIXTURE LIST

JANUARY

20TH	SUNDAY	15:00	DONCASTER RLFC	V	LONDON BRONCOS	KEEPMOAT STADIUM (FRIENDLY)

FEBRUARY

3RD	SUNDAY	15:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	WAKEFIELD TRINITY	TRAILFINDERS SC
10TH	SUNDAY	15:00	SALFORD RED DEVILS	V	LONDON BRONCOS	AJ BELL STADIUM
17TH	SUNDAY	15:00	HULL K.R.	V	LONDON BRONCOS	KCOM CRAVEN PARK
23RD	SATURDAY	17:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	CASTLEFORD TIGERS	TRAILFINDERS SC

MARCH

3RD	SUNDAY	15:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	WIGAN WARRIORS	TRAILFINDERS SC
8TH	FRIDAY	19:45	ST HELENS	V	LONDON BRONCOS	TOTALLY WICKED STADIUM
15TH	FRIDAY	19:45	LEEDS RHINOS	V	LONDON BRONCOS	EMERALD HEADINGLEY STADIUM
24TH	SUNDAY	15:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	HULL FC	TRAILFINDERS SC
31ST	SUNDAY	15:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	HUDDERSFIELD GIANTS	TRAILFINDERS SC

APRIL

5TH	FRIDAY	19:45	WARRINGTON WOLVES	V	LONDON BRONCOS	HALLIWELL JONES STADIUM
13TH	SATURDAY	TBC	CHALLENGE CUP 5TH ROUND			
18TH	THURSDAY	19:45	LONDON BRONCOS	V	CATALAN DRAGONS	TRAILFINDERS SC
22ND	MONDAY	15:00	HUDDERSFIELD GIANTS	V	LONDON BRONCOS	JOHN SMITHS STADIUM
27TH	SATURDAY	15:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	SALFORD RED DEVILS	TRAILFINDERS SC

MAY

2ND	THURSDAY	19:45	WIGAN WARRIORS	V	LONDON BRONCOS	DW STADIUM
11TH	SATURDAY	TBC	CHALLENGE CUP 6TH ROUND			
18TH	SATURDAY	15:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	WAKEFIELD TRINITY	TRAILFINDERS SC
26TH	SUNDAY	TBC	MAGIC WEEKEND			

JUNE

1ST	SATURDAY	TBC	CHALLENGE CUP 1/4 FINALS			
9TH	SUNDAY	15:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	ST HELENS	TRAILFINDERS SC
15TH	SATURDAY	18:00	CATALAN DRAGONS	V	LONDON BRONCOS	STADE GILBERT BRUTUS
20TH	THURSDAY	19:45	LONDON BRONCOS	V	HULL K.R.	TRAILFINDERS SC
30TH	SUNDAY	15:30	CASTLEFORD TIGERS	V	LONDON BRONCOS	THE MEND-A-HOSE JUNGLE

JULY

6TH	SATURDAY	15:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	WARRINGTON WOLVES	TRAILFINDERS SC
11TH	THURSDAY	19:45	HULL FC	V	LONDON BRONCOS	KCOM STADIUM
21ST	SUNDAY	15:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	ST HELENS	TRAILFINDERS SC
27TH	SATURDAY	TBC	CHALLENGE CUP SEMI FINALS			

AUGUST

4TH	SUNDAY	15:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	SALFORD RED DEVILS	TRAILFINDERS SC
10TH	SATURDAY	19:30	CASTLEFORD TIGERS	V	LONDON BRONCOS	THE MEND-A-HOSE JUNGLE
17TH	SATURDAY	18:00	CATALAN DRAGONS	V	LONDON BRONCOS	STADE GILBERT BRUTUS
24TH	SATURDAY	TBC	CHALLENGE CUP FINAL			

SEPTEMBER

1ST	SUNDAY	15:00	LONDON BRONCOS	V	LEEDS RHINOS	TRAILFINDERS SC
8TH	SUNDAY	15:00	HULL K.R.	V	LONDON BRONCOS	KCOM CRAVEN PARK
15TH	SUNDAY	15:00	WAKEFIELD TRINITY	V	LONDON BRONCOS	MOBILE ROCKET STADIUM

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LONDON BRONCOS

London Broncos are back in the Super League after a four-year absence. The club's media partnership with *Sorted* magazine will continue this season to ensure Danny Ward's men are covered more comprehensively than ever before. Ross Heppenstall speaks to the club's key figures for *Sorted*, whose sponsorship of the Broncos' scholarship squad has also been extended into a second season.



BY ROSS HEPPENSTALL

Nomadic perhaps best sums up London Broncos' existence since their formation as Fulham in 1980, coming and going from various homes and suffering an on-field decline in recent times.

Trying to convert Londoners to rugby league at places like The Valley, Griffin Park and the Stoop has often involved heads and brick walls.

The Broncos fell out of the top flight along with Bradford Bulls in 2014 and have struggled badly for crowds at Ealing Trailfinders RUFC.

Yet they are now back in the Super League, a rich reward for the commitment of long-standing owner David Hughes, a Mancunian who grew up watching Swinton before making his fortune as an oil trader.

Hughes, who joined the Broncos' board in 1996 and became owner in 2001, has covered losses of up to £2m a year to keep the club afloat.

"The size of my overall investment makes me faint, but it must be in excess of £20m," says Hughes.

"I should have retired many years ago but I worked until I was 70 because I was conscious of what I was putting into the Broncos and didn't want to rob the family pot.

"I'm 73 now and to be playing the likes of Leeds, St Helens and Wigan again means everything to me.

"As a club we've done it tough on very poor crowds – last season we were lucky to get 1,000 – but I've never considered throwing in the towel.

"The size of my overall investment makes me faint, but it must be in excess of £20m."





"My dearest wish now is that we double and possibly treble our gates. Ealing is a fantastic facility."

When Andrew Henderson jumped ship for Warrington last season, Hughes promoted Danny Ward from assistant to head coach.

The playing budget was cut and former Great Britain player Garry Schofield tipped the Broncos in print for a 10th-placed finish.

Yet Ward took players with a point to prove, stirred in some homegrown spice, and blended his side into a well-balanced, well-motivated force.

They finished second in the Championship to secure four home games in the Qualifiers before an outstanding defensive effort saw them win 4-2 in Canada on October 7.

Ward says: "I was always confident we could achieve something special, but I can't lie, I was pretty shocked with how well the season went.

"We had a lot of debuts for London kids but many stayed in the team and became a big part of what we achieved.

"In the Million Pound Game, Alex Walker, Kieran Dixon, Will Lovell, Daniel Hindmarsh, Matt Davies and Rob Butler played having all come through our system. As coaches and as a club it made us proud."

Players such as Tony Clubb, Dan Sarginson, Louie McCarthy-Scarsbrook and Mike McMeeken rose to prominence at London before heading north to leading Super League clubs.

Another homegrown player, forward Matt Davis, recently joined Warrington, underlining the challenges the Broncos face in keeping their finest talent.

Ward and assistant Jamie Langley have nurtured many of the club's best young players in a thriving youth development system.

Rob Powell, head of youth, says: "We now pick up a wider geographical spread of players from a greater number of community clubs such as Eastern Rhinos in Colchester, Sussex Merlins, Oxford Cavaliers and Rutlish Raiders in Wimbledon.

"The standard of scholarship players is as strong as it has ever been and we're producing lads who are capable of playing at academy level, which is the benchmark.

"This year we signed 10 of our Under-16s into our academy and we're looking for a good crop of those to push for Super League contracts from the Under-19s.

"All this probably reinforces the view that the game needs to look at players outside its northern heartlands, which in the grand scheme of things is a small pool.

"Others had talked about giving homegrown London lads a chance, but last season Wardy actually did it. What he achieved shouldn't be underestimated."

The Broncos' close-season recruitment has so far been modest and the squad number stands at around 25, although the acquisition of St Helens centre Ryan Morgan on a season-long loan set pulses racing.

Survival next season – finishing bottom under the new structure would signal automatic relegation – would represent an even greater feat than promotion in 2018.

London are the bookies' favourites to go down and are likely to be among the lower spenders in Super League this coming season.

Yet positivity drips from Ward, who signed for the club as a player under Brian McDermott in 2008 and has remained in the capital ever since.

The gregarious 38-year-old from Dewsbury, who won a Grand Final with Leeds in 2004, said: "London is such a fantastic city and it's great to have a Super League presence here again.

"I don't want to just see the Broncos surviving, I want to make them one of the best clubs in the world.

"That has got to be the long-term vision. I might not be there to eventually oversee that, but hopefully we can get there as a club and a city."

Ward's squad lacks Super League experience but captain Jay Pitts previously played in the top flight for Wakefield, Leeds, Hull and Bradford.

"Sometimes winning a game of rugby comes down to simply who wants it more."

In 2015, the 28-year-old back-rower was part of the Bradford side who lost at Wakefield in the inaugural Million Pound Game.

Last month's victory in Toronto healed the scars for Pitts, who played every game for London in 2018.

Pitts said: "I always had that desire to get back to Super League and to achieve that after four years away feels unbelievable.

"Sometimes winning a game of rugby comes down to simply who wants it more.

"When we were diving everywhere to stop Toronto scoring, we looked around and just knew we had each other's backs. In the end it showed."

That sort of resilience and collective desire will be needed at places like Headingley and the DW Stadium in 2019 as the Broncos seek to defy the odds again.



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FITNESS
WITH **PHIL BAINES**

HAPPY NEW YEAR

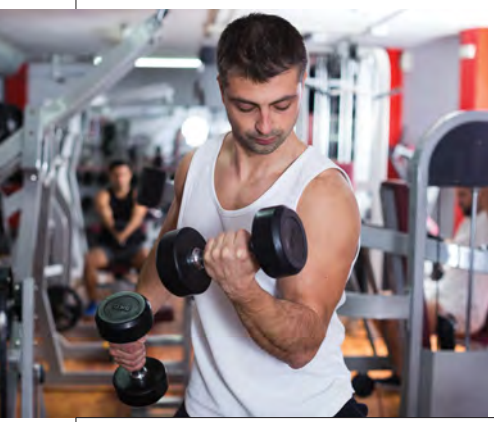
Out with the old, in with new. 2018 is left behind, 2019 lies ahead. Time moves on, but do we move on with regards to our exercise? This is the time to make New Year resolutions. Give up this, give up that, start doing this and stop doing that. But how about our resolution to keep changing?

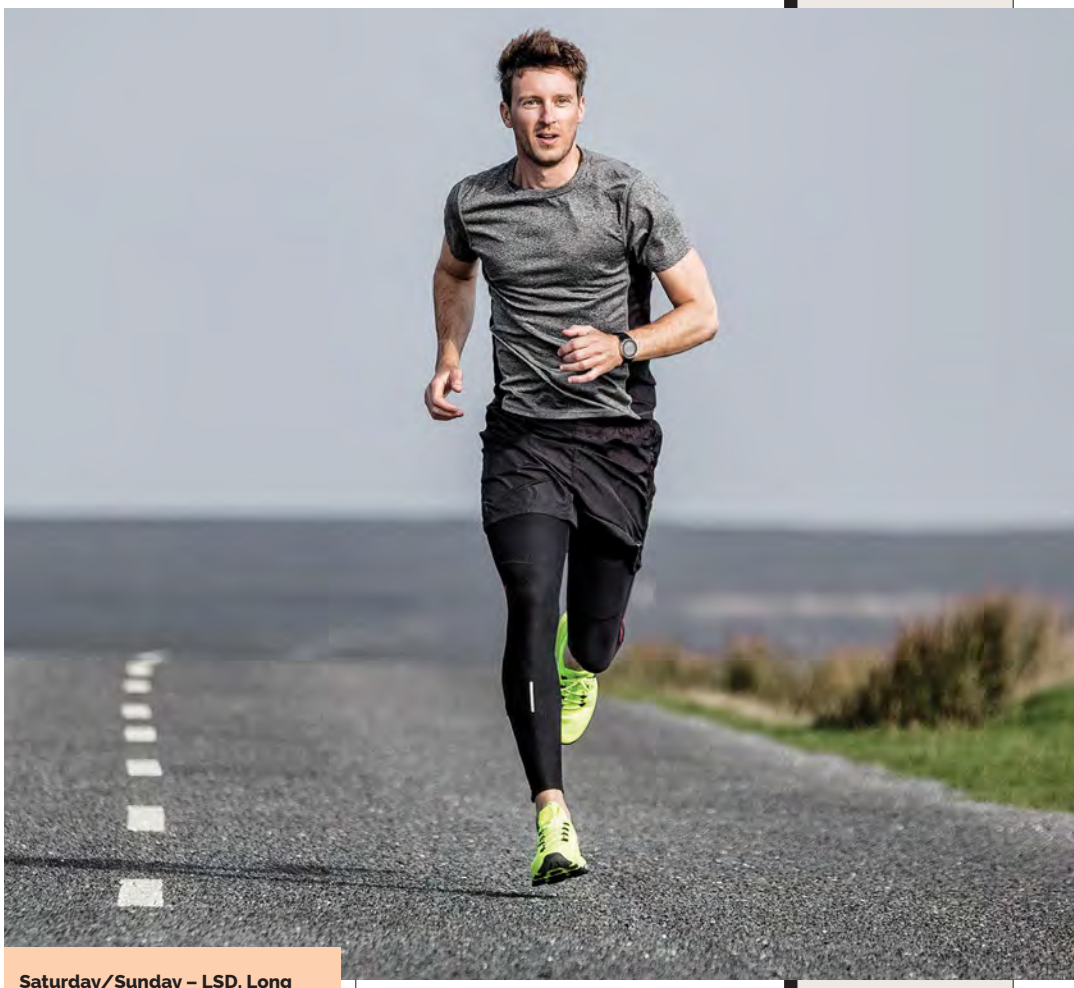
Everything in life changes, so why not our exercise?

To elicit the best changes in our physiology, muscles etc., the best programmes are for about six to eight weeks. After this period, we need to adapt our routines. It may just be increasing the weights, i.e. if we were doing bicep curls with 10kg weights we up it to 12kg. It could be increasing the reps, the number of times we perform a specific exercise. Using bicep curls again, we may increase from ten reps at a certain weight to 12 or even 15 with the same weight. It could also mean changing the programme for new exercises. If you do your workouts in a gym, ask the gym instructors for ways to change your programme.

The reason for this change is important. Our bodies, particularly our muscles quickly get used to doing the same exercise with a certain weight. If we continue to do this, the muscles will not keep benefiting from the exercise.

This is true for all exercise. If we run it is important to mix up the runs. Try to avoid always doing the same route. The body gets used to this and we won't see quite the same benefits. Even just doing the route in the other direction is better for us. I know that for many of us we like a routine, but it is much better to change things up. A good weekly run routine would be:





Saturday/Sunday – LSD. Long slow distance: use the weekend to do your longer run but resist going at race pace. Better to go slower and longer, particularly in the winter months when you want to get miles into your legs.

Tuesday – intervals. This is where you run at speed. The intervals can be anything from 200m repeats to 1k intervals. The idea is to run as fast as you can, allow three to four minutes recovery to allow the heartrate to get right down again. Repeat these four times and build up from there. It is really good to build speed endurance.

Thursday – hill work. Find a hill you can run up in four to five minutes. Run up as hard as you can and then recover on the down. Repeat three to four times to begin with. You could also do hill sprints. Find a hill you can sprint up at speed for ten to 15 seconds. Jog down and recover for two to three minutes. Repeat four to five times to begin with. Your legs will thank you when you run on the flat again.

Within these constraints change things up. Go off road, mix up the time to run up the hill, change the interval times, alter the routes. You can obviously run on other days, but on days following hill work or intervals, do recovery runs. Remember to build slowly with speed, hills etc. I know how tempting it is to do, but if you go too hard too fast or too long too soon, in your running, this is a recipe for injury.

So rather than giving something up, starting something, make the resolution to keep changing. Your body will benefit in the long run.

Let's get fitter in 2019, whatever our age.

Happy New Year.

"Everything in life changes, so why not our exercise?"

PHIL BAINES BIOGRAPHY

Phil Baines is passionate about fitness and sport. He recently began a venture called Fit 4 The Challenge (f4tc.co.uk), which offers a range of physical challenges for diverse abilities. Phil organises each challenge and trains individuals and teams to complete them, either for charity or for personal achievement or both. Phil is married with two teenage sons.


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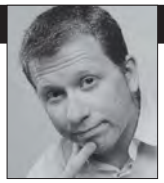
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PAUL KERENSA

Kneel-down Stand-up

NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

There once was a golf club – let's call it Shady Pines, because that was its name. A go-to place for local men of a certain boredom threshold, with a board in the foyer ranking who was best at golf/staying away from home. The board had removable and interchangeable name slots, topped for some years by Bob Flincus. Bob was married to Sue, but his true love was golf – actually no, it was *winning* at golf.

Then Derek Yammond joined. Yammond was effortlessly good, preferring not to parade in the Members' Bar like a gloating peacock. Bob may have milked every victory, but Derek just shuffled home, barely glancing at that board that proclaimed Bob Flincus as second best.

One Sunday afternoon, Flincus saw red. After one shandy too many, he challenged Yammond by the Scampi Fries. "Yammond! You, me, 18 holes. Winner fixes their name above the other's – forever! I'll even buy the superglue," Flincus smirked, opening some Scampi Fries, before realising he'd have to pay for them. He recalled Sue's favourite author, Iris Murdoch, who'd written something about success not being enough unless others failed too. Yeah, that was him.

Yammond quietly agreed to the challenge, and despite dark grey skies, they jostled to the first hole. After Flincus' birdie came Yammond's eagle, and by eight holes in it was neck and neck. Onlookers hollered encouragement: Flincus' glory days may not be over yet, dodgy knee withstanding. By the 12th hole, rain scattered most watchers; by the downpour at the 15th, the last few observers raced to the clubhouse, urging the rivals to call it a draw.



> "BY THE DOWNPOUR AT THE 15TH, THE LAST FEW OBSERVERS RACED TO THE CLUBHOUSE, URGING THE RIVALS TO CALL IT A DRAW."

The duel continued, referee-less. Clubhouse witnesses only saw mist descend, remarking that the 16th hole would be played from memory. A ball was spotted slicing from the 17th tee into the Shady Pine Woods, then both players seemed to dart into the trees. Neither returned. When the weather cleared, that's where Flincus was found. Derek Yammond silently emerged elsewhere from the woodland, his five-iron wiped clean.

Even at the trial, Yammond never spoke of what happened. Club members gossiped of his new residence at Her Majesty's Pleasure, but now realised they never knew where he'd come from. 'Derek Yammond' was removed from the foyer's wooden board and thrown in the dusty cellar, till it was cleared out 60 years later when the club was turned into a Center Parcs.

Bob Flincus' name lived on – not on the board, but on a towering sign above the entrance to what was now the Bob Flincus Memorial Golf Club (at least till it became that Center Parcs).

For the funeral, Sue insisted on Iris Murdoch and a passage from Philippians, in which Jesus was name above all names – "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (2:10, NIV). Sue recalled Bob's dodgy knee, but hoped he'd bow. She pictured him looking up at Jesus' name atop the leader board, wondering if Bob might accept that name above his own.

The moral of this story then? Don't play golf. ■

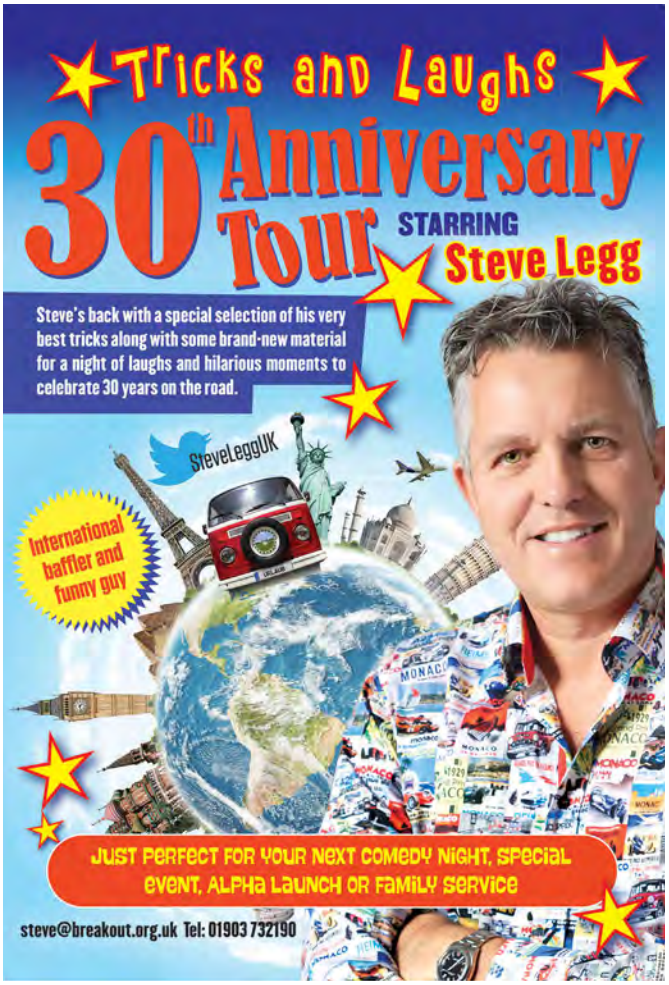


PAUL KERENSA BIOGRAPHY

Paul Kerensa is an award-winning stand-up comic and author of the book *So a Comedian Walks Into a Church* (DLT). He co-won a British Comedy Award for writing on the BBC's *Miranda*, and the Royal Television Society (RTS) Award for *Not Going Out*, as well as working on other shows that history has thankfully forgotten. Visit paulkerensa.com to find out more.

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TONY VINO

In Vino Veritas

MODERN MANNERS



"The ironic thing is that my phone is now a barely used app on my phone."



I was getting a lift from my friend Mark who is a vicar when he got a call from someone in his church, let's call him Bill [because that's his name]. Bill asked Mark for the mobile number of someone else in the church. Mark dutifully pulled over, found the number in his contacts and read the number out loud to Bill who in turn wrote it down (slowly) and then read it back (even more slowly) to Mark, which was weird as Mark was the one who gave him the number in the first place. I could tell the interaction had annoyed Mark. With vicars you must watch out for subtle clues of annoyance, what I like to call "sign of the *slightly* cross" or "getting hot under the dog collar".

It wasn't requesting the information that was the problem. It was the fact that Bill had rung which was the issue. Had he simply texted, Mark could have responded when not driving and our conversation would not have been interrupted. Bill had inadvertently broken a modern convention – don't call if a message will suffice. To be fair, Bill is in his 70s and may have never got the memo (or tweet) on this piece of social etiquette.

It got me thinking, I'm now in my 40s and barely coping with the dizzying plethora of communication mediums I have on my phone, so perhaps I unwittingly transgress modern media manners. I find myself slightly irked when someone rings me on my phone through a secondary app like Skype. Is that me being a technophobe or is that a genuine faux pas? To me, it feels an uncouth way of making contact, a bit like someone coming to my house then instead of knocking on the front door, they decide to come around the back and climb in through the bathroom window.

I can't keep up. On my phone I've got the usual tools such as email, Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and Instagram. The ironic thing is that my phone is now a barely used app on my phone. I'm so desensitised to instant communication that if I ever get a handwritten letter through the post, I panic, thinking someone has died or it's a ransom note.

I've got one messaging app called Snapchat which seems completely pointless. I have never thought to myself "what this message needs are bunny ears". For the life of me I can't see why someone would communicate using that platform; messages disappear after ten seconds never to be remembered again. Saying that, apparently one way God speaks to us is through our dreams and I always forget them within five seconds of waking up.

The rules were simple when it was just face-to-face. You just had to use please and thank you. If someone could write a definitive guide to social media etiquette, that would be helpful. Like when is it inappropriate to use emoticons: "Sorry to hear about your loss. [inserts random picture of a frog]." As a bloke I didn't know I had such a range of emotions until I scrolled through the Emoji facial expressions. Are they only for friends and relatives, or can you use with business associates? If so, the ancient Egyptians were ahead of the curve with hieroglyphics being an early form of emoji-based social networking: "See you at the Nile later Nefertiti, don't forget the bandages, luv Tut #ScarabBeetlePicLOL".

Just because we don't have to look people in the eye to communicate, is lying OK all of a sudden? Nowadays "I'm on my way" actually means "I'm just getting ready to leave the house" and "I'm outside" means "I'm actually five minutes away but I don't want to have to wait for you when I arrive".

For me, the most definitive guide on communication was encapsulated in one line from an ancient letter written by the apostle Paul to a bunch of Colossian Christians. He says 'Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt' (Colossians 4:6, NIV). Now, that is class. Whether you use images of smiling cats, selfies with bunny ears, or insist on getting information dictated to you over loudspeaker by vicars, do it with grace, style and take everything I say with a pinch of salt. ■

TONY VINO BIOGRAPHY

Tony Vino is a professional comedian who straddles the world of comedy clubs, festivals and churches. For more information see tonyvino.co.uk.

@tonyvino



JEFF LUCAS

Lucas Aid

A FEW WARM WORDS OF GREETING

One lady wandered up to me after I had preached and enquired whether I had suffered a stroke, seeing as, she said, "when you smile your face only goes up on one side". I do indeed have a grin that is, shall we say, crooked. "No, I haven't had a stroke," I wanted to warmly reply, "I'm just seriously ugly, darling – what's your excuse?" Of course, I said nothing of the sort: I'd actually like to look like Tom Cruise, or the handsomely elderly Pierce Brosnan, but alas, the gene pool decreed it not to be.

And I'd *love* a full head of hair, instead of the elderly broom with a growing pink peninsula at the front hairstyle that I'm stuck with. I used to have a flourishing head of hair with a big bouffant that stuck out at the front. But it's all gone now, vaporised by the years and too much bewildered head-scratching. The only good thing about my hairstyle is that no one ever accuses me of wearing a wig. Believe me, you wouldn't buy a wig like this.

Alas, life is just not fair. It's just appalling; at least I can look at the handsome, multimillionaire film stars and tell myself that they're not really happy, what with their superficial living and all (though most of us would fancy a go at a superficial life onboard a £20 million luxury yacht).

And I'd quite like to be a bit sporty, even in one of the less energetic pursuits, like golf. Recently I managed to drive a ball into, not one, but two luxury golf course homes. My hopelessly sliced ball went sailing towards a huge – and correspondingly expensive – plate glass window. I received no trophies that day.

Away with these superficial and temporal ambitions. Let's talk about *spiritual* stature. I quite fancy a new description that is currently in vogue: "Christian statesman." Mmmm. Sounds very dignified, and highly noble. But it won't happen. Many people that I meet the first time start to laugh out loud immediately they meet me; perhaps it *is* the nose...

I'd like to be Martyn Lloyd-Jones (but not dead) and be an erudite preacher of unfathomable depth.

I'd like to be widely quoted, a sage of wisdom, move over *C.S.* Lewis, and *G.K.* Chesterton, here comes *J.R.* Lucas.

Without I hope sounding like Frank Sinatra ('My Way' and all that tosh), I'm just me. A faintly idiotic bloke who gets himself into more than his fair share of embarrassing scrapes and clumsy mishaps. I find some of the 'simpler' procedures of life to be quite difficult – like opening a door. It's supposed to be easy. But I always push when I should pull, pull when I should push, don't twist the handle when it should be twisted, and if there's the horror of *double* doors, then I try to open the one that is bolted shut. Is anyone else out there as prolifically dysfunctional with doors as me? There's a simple conclusion: I am fairly stupid.

> "I'D ACTUALLY LIKE TO LOOK LIKE TOM CRUISE, OR THE HANDSOMELY ELDERLY PIERCE BROSNAN."



Getty Images / Jeff Spicer

I even have big trouble with those little plastic bags on rolled dispensers that supermarkets provide us to gather our vegetables in. One time I stood there, fumbling around, trying to crinkle the top of the plastic bag open for about ten minutes. One chap who had 'A' level bag opening wandered up to my side, ripped a single bag off the plastic roll (when I did it, 20 of them landed at my feet and the roll fell on the tomatoes) and then opened it in a millisecond – one-handed; he was surely a master of dexterity. I flushed tomato red and mumbled my pathetic excuse: "These things are a real pain, aren't they?"

But I do like to think that I do quite well as a people watcher; I love to mull over the laughter and tears that make up life – and I enjoy telling my little stories, as my friends and family will tell you, them having heard them billons of times over, and having been healed many times of insomnia as a result. ■

> "I STOOD THERE, FUMBLING AROUND, TRYING TO CRINKLE THE TOP OF THE PLASTIC BAG OPEN FOR ABOUT TEN MINUTES."



JEFF LUCAS BIOGRAPHY

Jeff Lucas is an international speaker, broadcaster and author of 22 books. He loves to communicate using humour and storytelling. He is a monthly contributor to Premier *Christianity* magazine and writes daily Bible-reading notes, *Life Every Day*. Jeff holds a teaching position at Timberline Church in Colorado and is married to Kay.

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NATHAN BLACKABY

The Last Word

HATE LESS

Last year, Renzo Rosso (such a cool name) the CEO of Diesel set out a new campaign, called Hate Couture. Basically, in a clever play on the words, Rosso and his team of designers and marketers came up with Hate Couture, and they set a new slogan: "The more hate you wear the less you care." (Haute Couture being a term used to describe the genre of posh clothing.)

Now, the reason for doing this was apparently about Rosso trying to take on the hatred in social media and flipping it all on its head, having a pop at those who just hate on all things.

But I think the messaging actually does the reverse; of course, Rosso is about selling a brand so let's not forget the marketing and comms strategy here being linked to revenue and sales. "The more hate you wear the less you care" is a slogan that is so utterly void of any counter voice helping us break free, and in my opinion just compounds the problem.

I was hosting a men's day in Liverpool recently and a lady walked past me in a green coat and on the back it said 'hate everyone' in bold white letters. I get it, that the subtlety here is: "I'm having a pop at all the haters out there, go and hate everyone." But I think the flip side of this is that if we buy in, we are parading a slogan and brand that still perpetuates hate (oh, and sells millions of pounds of designer label clothing.)

The point here is, we can't combat a culture of hate by sticking our fingers up at the hatred we see around us by wearing branded clothing only a minority can afford that uses clever word play to sell more clothing.

We actually have to do the harder work, the process of loving and forgiving, being men who daily walk a path of countering the waves of hatred we see smashing into our society and communities.



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Hate culture is more than trolls and social media warriors who live behind screens frantically vomiting out their toxic words and hatred; we see communities, families, neighbourhoods gripped in a deep hatred of each other that in some instances has spanned decades and generations.

What do we do? Well, you can go online and buy a coat if you think it will help, or we look somewhere else. For me, as a Christian man I have decided to look to the life of Jesus.

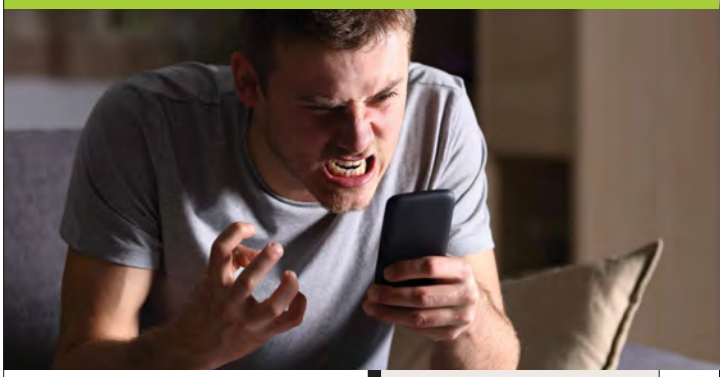
Here was a man who didn't only speak love, forgiveness, hope, grace, mercy, peace and life, he lived this stuff even at the most brutal moments of his life when he was abandoned, beaten, left alone, mocked and murdered! He still modelled the most compelling life and example against a culture of hatred that we will ever see. There hasn't been and will never be anyone who takes on hatred like this; Jesus dealt with it all.

For me, I am trying to be more like Jesus. I don't want to go through all he went through, hear me right, but I am willing to. I am not following Jesus because it is the easy option, that would be more like buying a coat. I want to be a man who counters hate in the world by living like Jesus, loving like Jesus, forgiving like Jesus, hoping like Jesus, trusting and calling out the good like Jesus.

As this New Year kicks off, what could it be like for you to hate less and love and forgive more? ■

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NATHAN BLACKABY
BIOGRAPHY

Nathan Blackaby is married to Jennie and they have two daughters and a son. Nathan leads Christian Vision for Men (CVM) and you can follow him on Twitter and on Facebook.

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