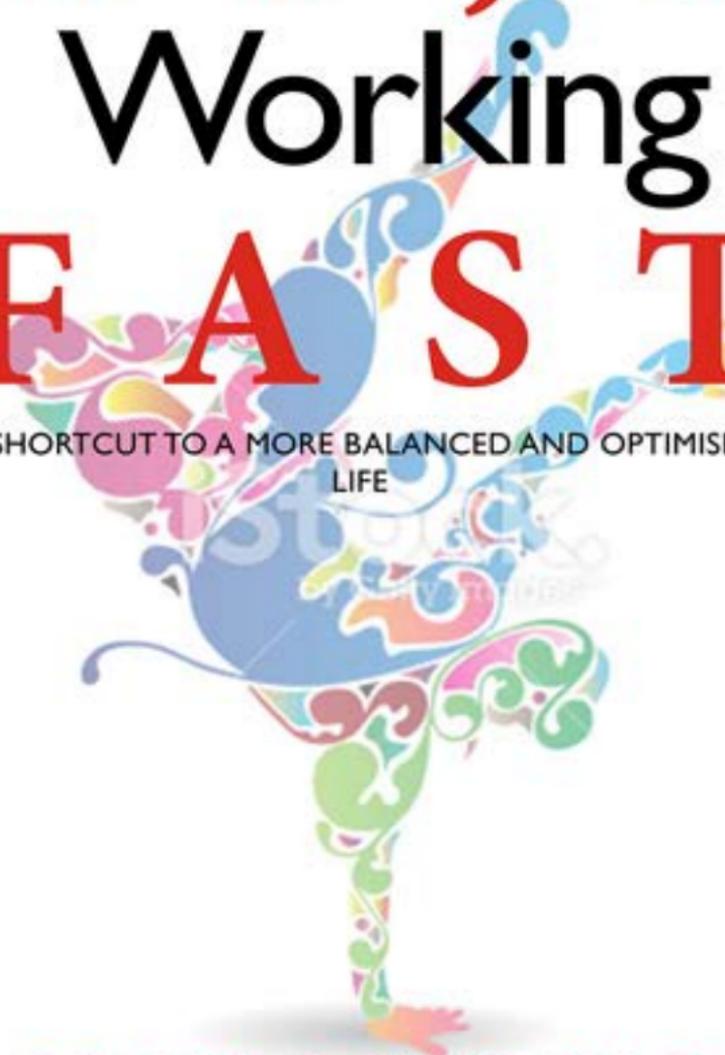


Get Your M O J O Working F A S T

A SHORTCUT TO A MORE BALANCED AND OPTIMISED
LIFE



B R I A N J C A N A V A N

Get Your Mojo Working

FAST

Brian J. Canavan

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my wonderful wife Fiona who has lived with me in and out of Flow and suffered the stresses of this journey as much if not more than I have. It is also dedicated to my two wonderful children, Emily and Connor who bring so much more joy and love to my MOJO.

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CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS MOJO?

This is the story of how I came to lose something and then find it, lose it again, eventually understand what it was, then learn how to claim and keep it in my life: my **MOJO (Modus Operandi Joyous Operation, or MOving with JOy)**

I'm also sharing with you the means to identify your **MOJO**, and how to use that knowledge to create a life of balance and joy that works for you, and not against you as mine used to and so many others still do.

This is NOT a book on the theories of living happily. This is a REAL EXPERIENCES book from my own life and the things that I have found that worked for me, despite some pretty serious setbacks.

It is also a workbook to help you get to grips with some of the basic formula ingredients for MOJO and for finding yours and living it.

I want to share my story and the shortcuts to simplify all of the various things I went through during the turmoil years (including living with clinical depression and suicidal tendencies), as I think of them now, so you don't have to.

There are exercises for you to do in each chapter that will help you to understand and find your own elements of your MOJO so that you can then live it.

Even if things have never gotten that bad for you as they did for me at times I know this book will show you the way to achieve a more balanced and optimized life both at work , in your career, or in your business if like me you happen to be a business owner.

I'm borrowing heavily from various other self-management books and courses that I've read and worked with to get my MOJO back, including

the works of:

- Anthony Robbins
- Jack Black
- Dale Carnegie
- Brian Tracy
- Melvyn Powers
- Jack Canfield
- Andrea Gardner
- Jay Niblick
- Daniel H Pink
- Mihály Csíkszentmihályi

A full bibliography of suggested reading is given for the journey (oooh get me being all guru with “journeys”) I am detailing on the accompanying website **www.yourmojoworking.com**

Now I didn't know what this was when I had it, or even when I started to lose it, but I'm going to share with you in this book what being in and out of what my definition of MOJO means for your performance in life; family, social or work.

MOJO,
for me, is that feeling of
everything working in the
right balance. Of living at
cause rather than effect, in
charge of your life and in
the direction you want it to
go.

So why is it so important?

Lack of MOJO drags you down

Well if you are out of MOJO you start experience what I call **drag**.

Everything becomes a drag. Your life starts to drag and the more drag there is on you the more energy you have to expend just to do the basics in life.

Taken to extremes this can cause stress, depression and even in extreme cases like mine, suicidal tendencies. (You'll have to read the rest of the book for the juicy details you macabre bunch).

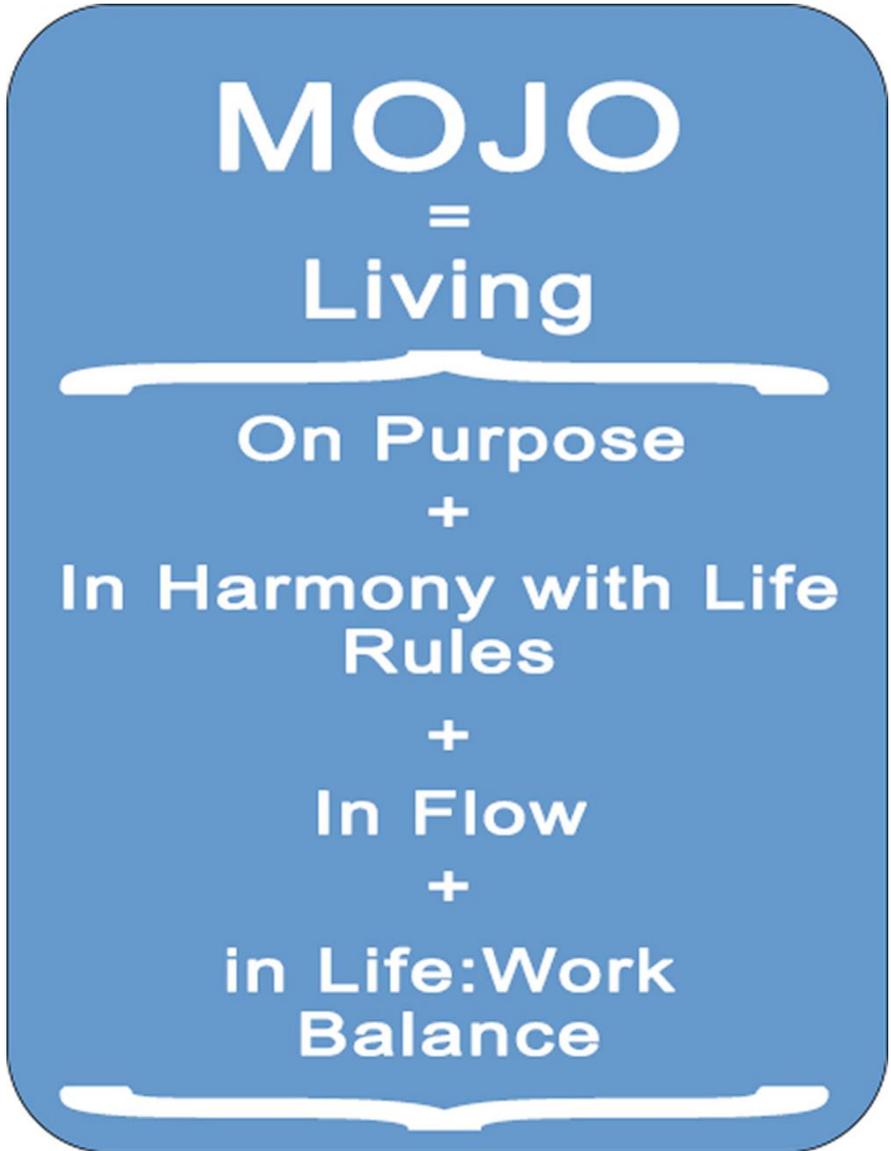
Working Your MOJO

Conversely, if you're working your MOJO you stand to have a happier life; better work life and be able to cope with those nasty wee setbacks

that life sends your way every now and then.

What makes Up Your MOJO?

I've got a great wee formula for MOJO that I think works, but hey we're all slightly different and you may wish to add or leave bits out, but then what would be the point of reading this book. C'ause it's my ball and my rules alright!



Sounds Good, Where Do I Sign?

That as they used to say is the \$64,000 question. (Hey I'm old enough to remember the comedians still using that line so forgive me).

Hold it there pal. It's not that easy. If it was we'd all be doing it already wouldn't we?

You have to suffer for your MOJO, get down and wrestle it until you beat it in to shape and...only joking...it's not like that but it does take a wee bit of insight and personal navel gazing to get to grips with the concept before you can apply it.

Time for some detail

First you have to get to grips with the various elements of the formula above.

So let's begin to look at each of these elements of MOJO in turn, telling you how it impacted and continues to impact me, plus some handy wee tips for finding your own answers.

But first I want today share with you a very personal story of just how bad things got for me in the darkest days to shed some light on how Mojo can be used to overcome some of the darker times in life as well as helping those more fortunate to fine tune their lives and achieve the joy that is getting your Mojo working.

CHAPTER 2: IF & WHEN IT ALL GETS TOO MUCH

If It All Gets Too Much – Seek Help NOW!

I'm going to share a story now that even some of my closest friends might find shocking about me.

I have clinical depression and have come very close to suicide on several occasions.

It all came to a head in 2012 while everything in life was actually going ok. Business was ok, not brilliant but ok, and my second child was about to have his first birthday.

I was sitting in my car in a local supermarket car park on a beautiful sunny day seriously trying to figure out ways to end it all that would still result in my wife getting the life insurance, insurance on the house etc.

I'd even thought of several ways to do it!

As you'll learn in this book I'd had stress related illness before never on this scale and never this severe.

A Bolt from the Blue!

I still have no idea where this came from though my doctor has told me that some part of it may be hereditary or learned behavior from my mother who was similarly afflicted in her forties.

In any rate the "black dog" of clinical depression came to stay and boy did he have an effect on me.

Thankfully. I saw sense and talked to Samaritans on the phone who

counseled me to seek medical assistance immediately.

Which is exactly what I did.

My doctor was very empathetic and seemed to know what I was going through the minute I started to tell her how I was feeling, or rather as it turns out not feeling.

I was surprised to hear, and later read, that **1 in 4 adults today in the UK has a mental health problem related to stress, anxiety or depression.**

There is still a stigma there. It is my experience that society is not yet ready to act as if it understands and can cope with working with people who have any form of mental health problem.

This is getting better. But it is still there.

You don't have to shout it from the rooftops as I am doing here but please do tell someone you trust and get help. There are innumerable free resources out there to help everyone no matter what your problem, style or attitude.

On the Mend?

My doctor prescribed, and continues, at the time of writing to prescribe, medication to help me feel again and to get some sense of normality back in my emotional life.

I hope soon to come off of this medication in the controlled and slow manner that is recommended.

I can honestly say if I had not done this I would not be here now typing these words now.

The High Note:

I've found that putting the Mojo formula to work really does help me feel and function effectively again. It guides my days and nights, my behaviors, compassion and gratitude for what I now realize that I have

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in life including a wonderful family, a good standard of living by any reasonable standards, and some very supportive friends.

So even if you have never been so afflicted as I was in those darkest days I'm sure you will find some techniques in here to help you fine tune your life to a more optimized and balanced way

I sincerely hope this book helps you to find yours too!

Onwards to find out more about the various elements of Mojo...

CHAPTER 3: BELIEFS RULES & HARMONY

One of the key things I didn't know about myself and others for that matter was that we operate under our key **Values and Beliefs**. Values and beliefs are what set our life rules.

"So what?" I hear you cry. Well, for one if you don't know your values, beliefs and rules how are you ever going to live a life based on them?

Why should you care?

I'll tell you...

Even if you're not overtly aware of your values, if you don't know your values you'll soon be **living your life according to someone else's and that way lies stress, anxiety, and depression**.

Your values and beliefs shape the "rules" you set for yourself and just about everything around you.

These are your thinking rules that set out how you will react to a given situation, negatively, positively or neutrally.

Your reactions determine your behavior and therefore your success in any given area of your life.

They also determine whether you will live a life in harmony with your rules or at odds with them. And I can tell you from firsthand experience that **living odds with your own personal rules is a sure fire way to invite major stress in to your life**.

What Not Knowing My Values Meant for Me

I've mentioned before that I kept stumbling from one job to another on

a rough career path, I liked to kid myself, without really understanding how I got there or fitting in when I did.

This meant I took jobs purely for the money, some status and a very little accidental purpose that left me in situations I wasn't really comfortable in.

Now that is not to say that I didn't have some fun along the way and enjoy parts of the jobs but eventually I ended up working to make very wealthy people even wealthier which really didn't sit well with me. I also ended up in cultures in which treating people as numbers and resources rather than as human beings with the requisite respect was seen as normal.

And again this ultimately left me feeling discontented and stressed in various positions I held.

It also lent itself to some seriously cowardly behavior on my part that strained relationships and lead ultimately to more stress in my life and a whole load of pain.

Basically I'd allow people to use me in whatever way they seemed fit without standing up for myself. I'd lost so much confidence in myself that I quite literally abdicated responsibility to others for how my life was going.

My rules were still there, and therein lies the rub.

My rules were still there in my subconscious and in my conscious mind at times but I was so lacking in confidence that I didn't dare push any of mine to the forefront for fear of upsetting someone or taken to the nth degree, losing my job at the time.

Some of this stemmed from a limiting belief on the scarcity of money which turned out to be a major influence in my life to that point.

There are ways to look at these limiting beliefs that we will deal with in the exercises in this chapter.

What This Could Mean For You?

By finding the values & beliefs that govern your thinking and actions you are able to ensure that you are aware of any rules that you want to keep and some that are holding you back.

Being aware of these rules, real and imagined and what impact they have on your thoughts, behaviors, and outcomes in life gives you the power to change any that don't suit or don't help you in life.

It's as simple as that.

A wee example:

I talked to two brilliant entrepreneurial ladies recently who both had a "rule" that you had to have so many years' experience and so many clients before you could call yourself an expert. But, what if one person says you're an expert after you've spoken to them. Whose rule is holding who back? And which one is valid?

Exercise: How to Find Your Values & Beliefs

There are various ways in which you could discover your values, beliefs and rules;

- A good coach could spend a few sessions with you to get you to identify your own values, beliefs and rules and which are valid or not so valid.

Whatever you do, you need to get a firm understanding of what your values are in order to shape a life you want to live and have rules that you want to live by rather than someone else's.

Exercise: So How Do I Find My Rules?

Your rules are the criteria for decision making that you have put in place based on your values & beliefs.

Ask yourself what values & beliefs do I have which will come in to play in a given scenario? Look at your behaviors for a day or a week and ask yourself the following questions.

- Why did I act/react this way?
- Is this valid?
- On what do I base this belief?
- Who says so?
- Why do I have this belief? - Toddler test it! (See later in book)
- What value(s) am I using here? – Toddler test these!

Remember: If you don't set the rules someone else will!

OK. I can hear you say, but I can't stop to do that every time I have a decision to make or in mid-conversation, so now what?

Well that's very true, it would both be very distracting and far too hippyish for most to do so.

But what about if we could, through time, get to analyze our actions and our thoughts and actions in retrospect?

Yeah, that we can do.

Exercise: How to Do It...

Keep a journal of your interactions and behaviors.

It's that simple.

Religiously keep that journal and at the end of every day/week ask yourself;

- Why did I behave that way?
- Why did I think that?
- What value or belief was I applying here?
- Why did I enforce that value/belief?

You'll soon come to understand your own rules that you've put in play,

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and eventually through mindfulness and repetition, be cognizant of your rules and how they shape your behavior.

You may also wish to Review the Dilts Ladder Purpose exercise, later in this book, with the findings of your values and beliefs exercise to see how these impact on your life and Purpose.

CHAPTER 4: PURPOSE

Purpose

for me is the reason you are here on earth. It is your main driver, your passion and your essential element to finding your own MOJO.

You may ask yourself: why do I act in this way or that, and more often than not we don't have the answers, unless we have done some serious navel gazing.

Thankfully for us all I've done enough navel gazing over the six years leading to the writing of this book to be able to shortcut the process for you.

What It Means for Me:

I eventually found out that my Purpose is to be a teacher/coach/facilitator for those around me to optimize their lives, careers and businesses while making a good living to support my family.

I literally and figuratively love it.

It's what makes me feel good, on track and in the zone.

Now, yes, some of this may be an ego thing, and quite frankly I can live with that, as I'm lucky enough to believe that I do some good as I go on my merry way these days.

What Happened When I Didn't Have Purpose?

Living without purpose is like living your life to others people's ideas of what your life should have been.

For me it was not becoming a teacher and instead following my mother's wishes and studying business studies. (Heavens! I know how mind numbingly boring does that sound, and yes it turned out to be that bad.)

I went along with her wishes to study something that might one day lead to a nice wee life with a reasonable and risk free income as a degree in the aforementioned subject used to bring.

I'd done so after seeing my mother, a single parent and factory worker, struggle to make ends meet, ruin her health and eventually become invalidated out of any reasonable employment at the time. (Can you hear those violins yet?)

I thought I owed it to her to repay her sacrifice in scrubbing floors to let me go to university by doing what she saw as a safe and less risky way in

life.

Great Fun at First...

Of course I had great fun during the studying part and the early bachelor days with no responsibilities or real cares in the world.

I thought I'd found my purpose; make enough money working for other people to allow me to get drunk at the weekends, go out to nightclubs and find the odd girl eager enough to share a moment or two with.

The Not So Fun Bit...

Now I'm not saying that wasn't fun at the time, but it did lead to problems later when I realized I was drifting from job to job without a real plan or reason d'être for my actions and that I was having to take what work I could find and be happy with whatever salary I got and worse still had to endure a great many people I simply didn't respect let alone like.

I'd done this by subconsciously sabotaging my chances of gaining work in these areas in numerous ways including getting myself fired, being the expendable one, and just being plain unlucky.

What This Could Mean For You

Your Purpose might be;

- Just what I had in the early days; having fun and enjoying yourself
- Or it might be a life of adventure and travel for you
- Maybe to help your fellow man or woman
- To live a life of harmony

Exercise: How to Find Your Purpose

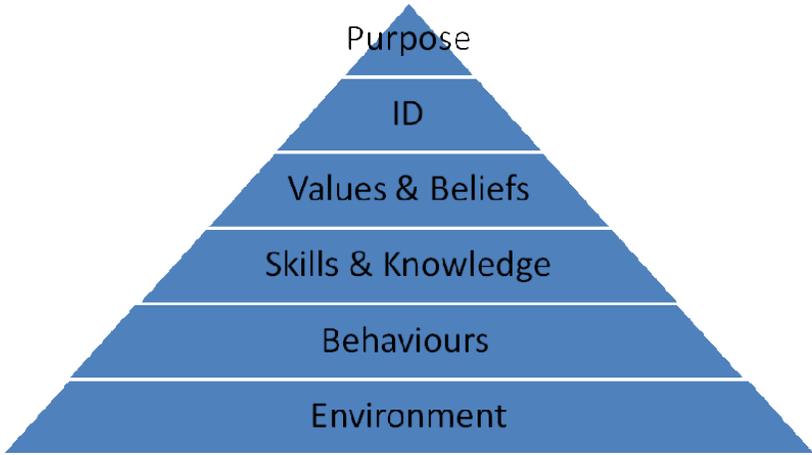
The thing you've eventually got to ask yourself is why? Or rather a few whys, whats, and wherefores:

- Why do I want the lifestyle I'm going to have in my Purpose?
- What is it about it that sets me alight inside?
- What values am I living by in this life? (of which more later in this book)
- Do I want other people to choose my Purpose for me or live a life on my own Purpose?
- Who do I want to be around in the Purposeful life?
- What do I want to experience?
- Where do I want to be at any point
- What emotions do I want to experience? (Believe it or not some folk like having the crap scared out of them – not me I'm a book and fireplace kinda guy)

Exercise: The Dilts Ladder

There's a great coaching exercise which can help you in finding your Purpose; the Dilts Pyramid or Hierarchy). Here it is:

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You will want to imagine an outcome or lifestyle or situation that you want at some point in the future.

Start at the bottom and ask yourself as many questions as you can about what you want to encounter at each level until you get to the top of the pyramid.

Remember to be as specific as possible with your answers...

Environment:

- Who do I want to be around?
- With whom will I interact?
- Where do I want to be?
- What will be around?

Behaviours

- What do I want to be doing in this situation
- What will I actually be physically doing

Skills & Knowledge

- What skills & knowledge will I have at this time
- What skills and knowledge do I already have that can help me in this?

Values & Beliefs

- What values & Beliefs will serve me in this?
- What rules do I have for the way I will be in this?

Identity

- If I were to label myself what am I in this?
- What labels might others give me in this?
- What do I want to be seen as in this?

Purpose

- Why am I doing all of this?
- What is my real end purpose in doing all of this?
- What is my ultimate goal in this?

The Toddler Test

In fact using the Toddler test; asking **why** around 5 times for every one of your answers is a great way to get to the root of any issue.

If you do this and run out of answers you've either found the truth behind your answers or you're kidding yourself about the original answers themselves.

***Deep man. Very deep. But it works** (– and no I don't care about using a conjunctive at the start of a sentence so please don't send the grammar police around as I really don't give a flying whatsit)*

So if you've done this exercise properly and had your fair share of the toddlers whys then you should have an answer as to what you want your purpose to be. Right?

What Else can I do?

Seriously, it does help to have someone who knows what they are doing to use clean language as you go through this exercise, perhaps even a few times if you are lucky enough to have the resources to do so.

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You should come out of the end of the exercise knowing what your primary Purpose in life is. Though I'd suggest if you find your Purpose is to simply to have fun you keep asking why?

Ok onwards...

CHAPTER 5 FINDING YOUR FLOW

Flow

is the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity. In essence, flow is characterized by complete absorption in what one does.

Wikipedia

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flow_\(psychology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flow_(psychology)))

The observant among you will have noticed that I mentioned the idea of flow in the equation but haven't yet told you what it is yet.

Well here goes...

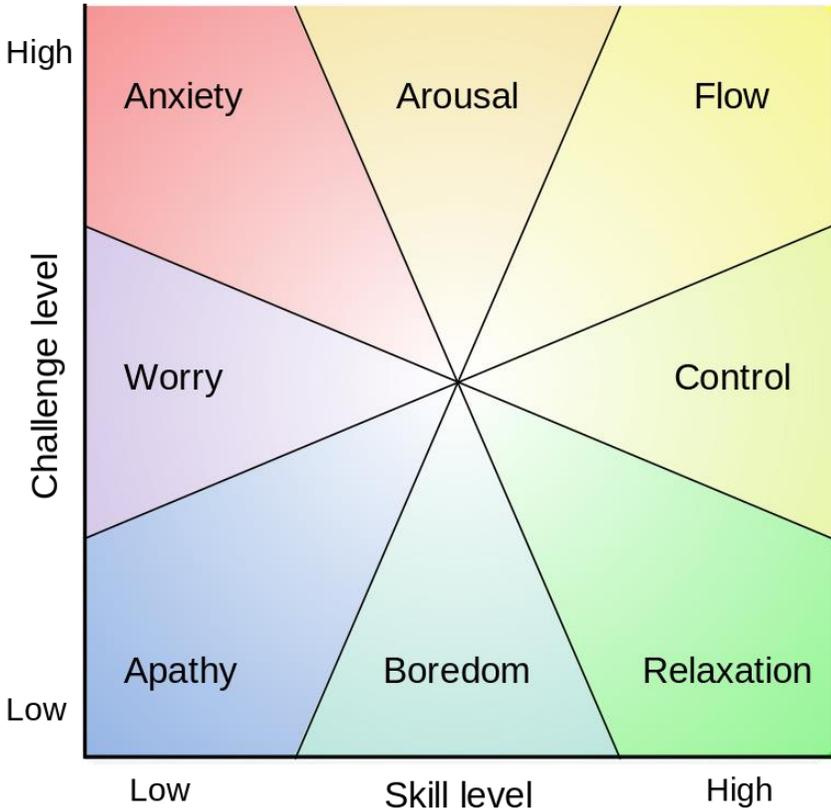
Simply put it means being in that state where time seems to move very fast. There's no clock watching and you are totally in to what you are doing.

Flow is the brainchild of Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, fully documented in his book of the same name.

Now that all sounds well and good but you have to realize two major things about the idea of Flow.

1. It aint that easy to describe until you've experienced it and
2. It requires just the right level challenge and skill usage in your life as exemplified by the diagram below.

You can see from the diagram below that Flow only really occurs when you've got the challenge level and your skill level at high levels.



Flow is the endgame in your work, the result you should aim for to make it worthwhile and fun. It really is. And it's also a damn good way to think about what you want to be spending your time in especially as it relates to work.

After all you spend a good portion of your life at work. So why not make it something you enjoy rather than endure.

What this Meant For Me...

As I mentioned previously, I'm a fairly intelligent guy and can turn my head to most things if I'm given the time to work on it and come up with a solution.

However this doesn't mean I've been in flow in all of the jobs I've had.

Indeed in many of them my skill level was too low and the challenge too high or even worse for me, my skill level very high and the challenge very low.

So from the diagram you can see I spent a great deal of time vacillating between Anxiety and Apathy. Not a good place to be for optimal performance.

Don't get me wrong I did a pretty good job in all the positions I held but only in some did I personally experience flow.

Being out of flow doesn't sound so bad, right? But that anxiety we mentioned can soon turn in to hindering stress and a feeling of worthlessness if not checked.

I've now created a life in which I'm in Flow in most of my work.

We all still have the odd few jobs that we have to do which are tedious but I've found a way to reframe (see more on Reframing Problems later in this book) that in my mind to allow me to do it with at least satisfaction if not Flow.

What This Might Mean For You?

As I mentioned before you spend a lot of your time at work and it has a major impact on your wellbeing and livelihood.

Wouldn't it be great to ensure that you achieve flow in your career?

Otherwise you will spend the rest of your life clock watching and counting the slow agonizing seconds until you can break free from the tasks which you either see as too difficult or too boring.

Poorer Relationships At Work

I've also found that because I'm out of flow I often have slightly less optimal relationships with the people around me at work than I may

otherwise have had.

This is because negative stress brought on by not being in flow makes us disengage from the environment we are in.

In short most of us aren't nice people when we are not in flow.

So What Can We do About It?

To be in Flow you must as Socrates was quoted as saying, **“Know Thyself”**

You must know what your real skill level is now and what capacity you have to attain a higher skill level as you move up and onwards in your career.

I'm not just talking about technical skills levels here but also what are so wrongly titled the “soft skills” of communication, relationships, management, and leadership.

You have to be very honest with yourself here and ask some really searching questions about where you already are in life, what skills and knowledge you've gained and where that can be best used and built upon.

Exercise: So to start with ask yourself:

- **What is my Purpose** here on earth? (remember this is your guiding star for all other actions and plans – to live out with it leads to inauthenticity and stress)
- **What Values** will I use to guide me in my career?
- **What beliefs do I have** about myself and others that I can use to help me along the way?
- **Where do I want to go** in my career?
 - Physically?

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- Ambition wise?
- Is it in alignment with my Purpose?
- **What am I willing to give up** in the short term in order to get to where I want to go to be in Flow?
- **What skills and knowledge** do I have right now and what can I realistically expect of myself in the future?
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY: What am I not willing to do?**
 - Where will I not put myself in order to live my values & beliefs?
 - Where will I not go in order to ensure I live a life on Purpose?

You may want to refer back to the Dilts Ladder exercise we did on finding your Purpose earlier for some of these answers.

Exercise: How Do Others See You?

Another great idea is to get a handle on how others perceive you.

There are various tools you can do for this including confidential anonymised questionnaires, 360 evaluations etc.

There are a few of these online but I happen to like the one proposed by Jennifer Holloway in her book; *Personal Branding for Brits*, (for some reason we tend to be a shy lot when it comes to shouting about our good points).

www.reachcc.com/360v5Register

This will give you an anonymised account of how people really see you and what they think you are capable of.

Accentuate the Positive

Whatever the results try to focus on the positive aspects and do not

dwel too long on the negative unless they run contrary to your personal perception of yourself.

I say this as focusing on the positive is a much easier route. However, if you have a strong belief that you are good at something and others do not perceive it you may have work to do on changing your behaviors.

Build On Your Strengths & Minimise Your Weaknesses

You should then use this to begin to work on building any strengths and positive traits you may have and minimizing your weaknesses or indeed learning some new skills.

Working with a good coach is a great way to get your head straight about these ideas and to keep you on track.

How to Minimize the Weaknesses & Get Time to Work Your Strengths

Jay Niblick in his book ***Working Your Genius*** has a great way of thinking about how to minimize weaknesses using a simple tactic he calls ***"Dump, Barter, and Grab"***

Essentially what we are going to do here is to:

- **Dump;** delegate or outsource tasks that we are not good at.
- **Barter;** away with another colleague or partner the bits we aren't great at but they are and vice versa.
- **Grab;** other responsibilities that we know we can excel at and add value for our employer or client.

Bartering is a great way to get things in the modern economy, especially if cash is tight. I myself have bartered with a fantastic book coach to write this book in return for some business coaching from me.

So now you understand what gets you in *Flow* and how to go about getting it.

If you're employed, ask your employer to consider some of the strategies above to get everyone in Flow in your department or division.

If you are self-employed, you have *no excuse* to sit there doing work you are not suited to as you now know the tactics to shape your work and get your life in to *Flow*.

Reframing a Problem

So what happens if your boss doesn't go for it, or you can't afford to offload it and you're stuck with the task less suited to you?

You may have heard of the idea of reframing a problem before. It is a fairly common problem solving and coaching technique.

To reframe a problem we are again going to ask a questioning technique to find a way to align our values, beliefs and rules with the less glamorous task at hand.

Exercise: Reframing, Questions to Ask Yourself

- Are there any of my values that I can use to make this task seem worthy of my time?
 - E.g. if you are highly altruistic you could see it as part of helping your fellow worker. Or if you are highly economic you could see it as a way to gain favour with the boss for taking on a task no one else is exactly volunteering to do.
- By doing this task am I adding value to anyone, including myself?
- Can I see that doing this now will allow me to learn more and put me in better position in the future?

CHAPTER 6: BALANCE

A lot has been said recently about the need for *Balance* in terms of work and life.

I'm going to make a suggestion here that some might see as quite radical, especially if, like me you were brought up under that Calvinistic work ethos:

I believe we've got the equation wrong!

It's not about work: life balance it's about **LIFE: WORK BALANCE**.

There is a subtle but major difference in how we frame the idea of how we earn a living and live our lives.

Too many of us now see work as the major pivot point of our lives; that which everything revolves around.

Wrong!

Work is a means to an end. Not the end in itself.

Now some of you out there may take umbrage at this idea as we have been brought up to work hard, do as we're told and things will be less risky, safe and prosperous.

Money is the enabler for the life you want to lead not the end in itself, and ergo your work is that means not the end in itself.

An aside for Entrepreneurs

The entrepreneurs and would be entrepreneurs out there might be screaming as they read this book at this point as often they see work as their life, as do many others who have lost sight of what life is about.

By all means find your **Purpose** and align your career or business to it. But please do not lose sight of that **Purpose** in the making of money for material things.

What Losing Balance Meant For Me

This is the part of gory bit for those of you that have been waiting for it. This is where it all finally came to a head.

So grab a snack and a drink and settle down for the real humdinger of car crashes in a person's life.

The Allure of More

I had been merrily working away trying in my own haphazard way to further my "career" and gain more salary, more benefits – just more of everything really.

I'd been doing an ok job of it too if you only measured my progress in terms of my salary and benefits.

What happened eventually was that I was working 15 hour days trying to fit in to a role I was culturally and personally unsuited for but that came with the promises of a bigger salary, bigger car etc.

Oh I could do it alright. I'd have to work with people I didn't like let alone respect (there's that phrase again you may have seen before) and ultimately lost sight of why I was making the money.

The Meltdown

My first child was due in March 2008. I was working mad hours, never at home, travelling for work at a time when my wife needed my support more than ever and I was miserable.

I'd already had insomnia caused by 5 years of stress and inauthenticity, working in a job where my employer seemed happy but I didn't feel I was adding value, and it was taking its toll on me.

Now, I know that we all want to give our loved ones the best we can but we have to understand that chasing more without questioning why only ever leads to stress imbalance in life. Even for the strongest and most purposeful among us.

Working to Death

The Japanese have a word for working to death. It's called **Karoshi**. How scary is that. They actually have a single word for it in their lexicon!

In fact it damn near killed me in more ways than one.

I remember one night after having visited multiple sites for my employer the day before in an 18 hour day, doing another 15 hour day then driving home on the motorway in our lovely Scottish winter weather, (wet, dark and dreech – a great Scottish word!)

I literally fell asleep at the wheel. Now thankfully it was nose to tail and slow crawling traffic and I merely nudged the car in front but had I been driving faster I could have done serious harm to the other driver and myself.

The Silent Killer: Insomnia

I had also been suffering from insomnia for around 5 years at this point and receiving medication to help me sleep at night. All due to work related stress.

You see I'm a very conscientious person and because of my lack of confidence, the fact that I didn't perceive the value that I was adding to my employer, and my perceived scarcity of jobs here in the UK I'd allowed myself to take roles where I simply wasn't in **Flow** and was unable to gather the gumption to assert myself and change the roles for fear of losing the employment altogether.

Being conscientious I was even more stressed as I knew if only I'd grown a pair at the time I could have done something about it and done a better job too.

(This all stems from a misplaced idea of scarcity which we've already mentioned – You did read that bit right?)

Now, as I mentioned I'd been receiving medication on and off for years

to help me sleep but without treating the root cause of the symptoms it was a losing game.

If any of you have ever been unlucky enough to suffer a bout of insomnia you will know that it does some crazy things to you:

- You start to lose focus on tasks simply through being too tired.
- You lose the ability to concentrate.
- You begin to question your own judgment.
- Your mind plays tricks on you.
- You may even hallucinate.

In short, you begin to unravel at the seams.

The culmination of lack of confidence led to lack of assertion, and ultimately cowardly behavior which only made me more stressed. The stress led to loss of performance and eventually dwindled in to a downward spiral from which there was no apparent recovery.

The Sun Shines Again

Ok that bit was gory and utterly depressing for me and probably you too reading it but there is a happy ending or at least interlude (yip, there's more even scarier stuff later)

The date was 5th March 2008 and my daughter was born and I was on paternity leave as her birth was a planned C-section.

I was present at the birth and cried my eyes out with joy as all real men do when their children are born.

I called the now grandparents and everyone else I could get a hold of to tell them the joyous news.

Respite and a ray of sunshine in the gloom that my life had become.

The Straw That Tilted the Balance

My joy was to be interrupted within a day or so, (I was so caught up in my new baby girl and my wife who was subsequently quite poorly with complications arising from the birth that I honestly can't remember the day), by my boss at the time asking me to come in to work as our CEO was paying a visit to one of our sites.

I stupidly and cowardly agreed to go in despite my wife needing my support and help now more than ever.

It was the straw that broke the camel's back. I resigned the next day.

Now for some of you that might seem like the cowards way out. Especially as my daughter had just been born and we needed the money more than ever.

And yes, I still question myself to this day as to whether I could have done more.

My wife and I had discussed it and she was the one who eventually got me to take a stand for myself for once and say *no more*.

It was the biggest relief of my life; not to have to go back to being inauthentic, working with people I disliked and didn't respect and getting some breathing space to decide what to do about the mess I'd managed to make of my life.

What Balance Could Mean For You

There's only one thing for it folks – commune living!

Kidding!

I'm not asserting here that we should all suddenly pack in our jobs and go live in a commune. Far from it

The point of telling you my story is to show you, how when taken to

extremes, the loss of balance or even awareness of it, in our lives can lead to harmful and certainly less than optimal results in life and work.

How This Might Manifest with You:

Loss of balance for you might manifest itself in many ways depending on your values and beliefs including:

- **Not spending much if, any time, with your family.**
- **Constantly hooked to an electronic device when with your family or friends just in case someone at work needs something.**
- **Losing out on your social life and time with friends**
- **Taking jobs that are unsuited and lead to stress in the pursuit of more.**
- **Being unable to go on holiday for fear of looking bad to the boss.**

How Can You Maintain Balance?

To maintain balance you must first know what balance is young Grasshopper. Sorry, couldn't help myself I came over all guruish there.

Essentially we have to be mindful (on which more later too) and acknowledge that which we are willing to do, and not do, in order to live in Balance in our lives.

Exercise: Awareness for Balance

Ask yourself the following questions:

- **What is important** to me (See your values and beliefs as discussed in Chapter 2)

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- **What is it I want to gain from life?** Be specific about what will be enough for you and your family.
- **What is my Purpose** in life and am I aligning with it in my career, roles, business?
- **What am I willing to sacrifice** and for how long to attain my goals?
- **When is enough, enough?**
- **What are you hiding from** in your personal life when you are at work?

CHAPTER 7: ATTITUDE AND ALTITUDE

I think I've so far managed to avoid the overused idea of positivity in this book but you knew that was too good to last.

I'm afraid I am one of those people for whom you need to be *realistically* positive in order to realize your dreams and objectives.

OK, I qualified that there with the word ***realistically*** but you have to allow an old cynic some leeway folks.

No matter how much you rail against the idea of positivity as just too schmaltzy and Pollyanna, it is an inescapable fact that being open to positive outcomes make these outcomes more likely to come about.

As Mr. Ford is oft quoted as saying:

"You can have any colour you like as long as it's black"

Ha, just kidding again (me and my sense of humor again folks, sorry.). The correct quote is of course...

"If you think you can or you think you can't, you are probably right!"

If you do not believe in your heart of hearts that you deserve and can achieve your goals then more than likely you won't.

So How Do We Maintain A Positive Attitude?

Much of this has to do with your own self confidence. After all isn't your future in your own hands?

Building Self Confidence

So how can we go about seeing ourselves in a more positive light?

There are countless books and resources available to you on this subject

but again I'm going to give you the quick shortcuts that I used to help me instil my self-confidence and to help others do likewise.

If you've been working your way through this book, (you have haven't you?) you will already have done the *peer review exercise* and the *Dilts Purpose/Mission Ladder* that shows all of the wonderful skills & strengths that you possess already and that you can attain in your own development plan.



Where the two sets overlap is where not only you but your peers also perceive you to have strengths and see value in them (i.e. they have a financial or emotive value). So that can only be a good thing.

And as for those that lie out with your personally perceived set, well that is even better news as you obviously don't realise just how brilliant and capable you are.

The only issue lies in those that you perceive in yourself or can attain and these are just down to you showing them off more often for all to see.

Embedding Positivity and Confidence

You can also use a set of simple exercises such as positive affirmations and anchoring to embed the positive messages about yourself in your subconscious.

Embedding in your subconscious is important you will not always have or indeed inclination to stop and use your logical brain to make decisions on your behaviours and thinking.

Your subconscious brain takes care of all of those ideas for you. As Daniel Kahneman details in his book *Thinking, Fast & Slow*; we have effectively two systems for thinking our (subconscious embedded) *intuitive Fast brain/system* and our *logical Slow brain* which we use consciously to solve more complicated issues.

The idea of anchoring and affirmations is to embed these positive messages in to our fast brain so that **we don't second guess ourselves** constantly as to our ability for things that we know we are good at and to ensure we can act quickly in the various situations that life throws at us.

Exercises: Embedding The Positives

There are a couple of very simple technique for embedding the positives in our conscious and subconscious.

Gratitude Lists

I ask all of my coaching clients to do a gratitude list every day. Some do these for morning and afternoon to keep them going throughout the day.

Simply make a list of three things that you are grateful for each day.

If you are struggling compare your life to that of a homeless person or someone living in a 3rd world country. I'm sure you can find something to be thankful for even if it's just running water.

Anchoring

Anchoring is a basic auto hypnotic suggestion that we can consciously or subconsciously trigger in a similar way to self-hypnosis.

Basically you use a physical trigger to "instill a suggestion or feeling" of say confidence upon touching e.g. a forefinger and thumb together.

Some advanced practitioners need only a visual reminder or to bring to mind a certain mental trigger like walking through a door or the colour dark green to trip their triggers and anchors.

There are countless videos on YouTube that show how to do this technique properly and certainly better than I can here. Go check em out.

Self-Hypnotic Suggestion

I learned self-hypnosis a very long time ago and have to say it is probably the most effective coping tool that I have in my arsenal.

From relaxation to living with pain and instilling emotional balance this, to me, is possibly the best tool you can ever master.

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My suggestion to you would be to read **Self Hypnosis (a practical guide to self-hypnosis) by Melvyn Power**. This is a rather old book but it teaches the essentials in a simple and uncomplicated way.

P.S. Of course the watch has nothing to do with hypnosis or self-hypnosis.

CHAPTER 8: PUTTING IT ALL BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

Just like a good song, your MOJO is made up of several elements as we have seen in the previous chapters.

My experience has been that having awareness of the various elements that allow me to live my MOJO and to be cognizant of when they are out of alignment allows me to refocus and get my MOJO working more often than not.

What it Meant For Me?

I've read a great deal of the personal management books and gone on various courses to be able to help me get my life back in shape since those horrible days when it all went wrong.

The Roman Method

I've used what I euphemistically call my Roman method; Romin' all over the place and as the Roman's did taking elements that they liked and resonated with them in to their own culture, to support my MOJO. (I know it's a terrible pun but I like it ☺)

As I stated at the start of this book my intention was to share my personal experience of using some of the techniques I have learned with you in the hope of short cutting the process for you to get your MOJO working quickly, effectively and efficiently.

As well as these main aspects of MOJO there are some other fantastically useful ideas to keep in mind when focusing your life and on any goal or problem that I'd like to share with you here.

Remember these are my methodologies and you may find others to help you but please do find what works for you and stick to it.

You Know When You Know

That sounds like a daft wee truism there and it is, but it really is true.

If you are serious about living a life on **Purpose**, aligned with your **Values**, in **Balance** and with your **MOJO** working then you need to have an awareness of when things are going right or wrong.

You should now be aware of the many pitfalls involved in not living to these tenets or else reading this books been a bit of a waste of time eh!

Hey it's your life and your energy so please be my guest to pass up the chance to get it working again. After all, I've already got your money.

How Do We Know?

How do you know the answer to anything? By using your own cognizance to check against received wisdom, in this case your answers to all of the questions in this book and being Mindful of when you are off track.

There are literally thousands of books and resources on Mindfulness out there on the market and my job is not to rewrite these here.

Instead I will tell you what worked for me.

Exercise: Write it Down & Commit!

I did all of these exercises in this book and many more and have the answers written down somewhere I can refer to them often.

I know my baseline; my purpose, my values, my beliefs, and my rules that I will not compromise in order to live my MOJO..

Writing them down gave them solidity for me. It made them real, not transient. Just having that evidence for me adds strength to my resolve and capacities.

These are my tenets that I adhere to and my guiding star in times of

confusion or choice and I live by them and with them in mind.

Now, ok we can't keep running back to our little white book to check on every decision but being aware of them is in itself a part of the cognitive decision making process.

Score Yourself

Give yourself a score out of 5 (on a zero to 5 scale) for the following in each day of your journal that we spoke about earlier.

- Alignment to Purpose
- Balance: **LIFE**: Work
- Flow
- Authenticity

Give yourself a total score for the day and see how it adds up over time. Just doing this exercise will keep you on track as you see the numbers go up and down.

You can download a worksheet to help you do this and see the results on a graph at www.yourmojoworking.com

Give Yourself Time to Think & Be Mindful

Again there are many ways to do this and to increase cognitive ability and mindfulness and I'll only tell you what works for me.

Diarize it

I diarize thinking time into my weekly schedule. Yip, it's there on my Google diary as time I must spend just contemplating, thinking or meditating. And if I have to move it for a client then I make sure it's given the same amount of time elsewhere in my day.

Mediation

I meditate daily. For at least 15 minutes a day. It's not for everyone and you don't have to be able to get in to the lotus position to do it. I'd personally end up in an emergency room if I tried to get my limbs in to that posture.

I use a wee app on my phone to guide me through it and allow my somewhat overactive mind to be still. There are lots of free and good value apps out there for all platforms.

Try to get one that has guided meditation audio if you are a novice.

People around me know not to disturb me during this time and it is rigorously enforced by me as an important part of my day.

It gives your mind the chance to pause and reset. To clear down and get ready to tackle whatever else is coming your way.

Resources for Meditation:

If you want good wee primer on meditation, read ***Learning to Love Meditation* by Carol Bowman.**

Don't Over Think

Don't overdo the thinking though. Like all things in life a wee bit in moderation does you good but over thinking leads to procrastination and more stress as you never get round to sorting the problem or putting the actions in place to get to your goal.

Slow Down Your Responses

We live in such a fast paced world that pausing to take breath can sometimes be seen as a luxury but it is one that will stand you in good stead.

Giving yourself permission to take time to respond; to emails, questions from colleagues and just in conversation has the elegant

effect of letting you gather your thoughts and respond meaningfully and adding more gravitas than the chattering of other less mindful people.

You are also less likely to put your foot in it or over commit yourself if you slow down your responses.

Commit to Action

Yes, you have heard this before from no less a luminary than Anthony Robbins (I told you I borrow from others in this book in my *Roman methodology*).

If you are truly serious about making changes in your life to get your Mojo working you must have a good idea of where you are going and also how you are going to get there.

So go write down those targets, goals, objectives now and remember to make them SMART(S):

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Attainable**
- **Realistic**
- **Time Bound**
- **Self-actualizing**

I've added the extra **S** as I want to you to be sure that the targets and goals you set for yourself are within your own ability to influence.

If you are still relying on others to fix things in your life then you are not going to have your MOJO working for long.

If you are having trouble deciding what you want from life and what your goals could be start by asking what you don't want and what the

opposite of that would be.

The Dilts exercise earlier in this book and at www.yourmojoworking.com is a great starting point to walk you through how to shape your life.

Get Accountable

One of the best things that ever happened to me along this crazy journey was having a coach ***who made me accountable to myself***. She would ask me to set goals for myself for the next session and check these with me every week.

Now my coach didn't have any authority over me other than what I gave her in agreeing to have her work with me, but it did give me a sense of **accountability** even if only to myself.

Basically you end up feeling like you've wasted that person's and your own time if you do not do the tasks that you have set yourself in whatever period.

Tell People Your Goals

If you can't afford a coach you could just let people know your goals. Just putting it out there has the effect of holding you personally accountable.

After all who wants to have to avoid the questions at every social outing when they ask you how you're doing with that script, movie, book, program you said you were going to do?

Caveat: Watch Who You Tell: Pick the Right People

Most people won't understand the "journey" (there I go again coming over all guru on you) that you are on in life. They are too busy overcoming their own obstacles and getting on with their own lives.

Some may be downright jealous that you have committed to changing, some ambivalent and some downright hostile.

Hopefully you will have some open, positive, and supporting people around you that you can trust to remain positive in sharing your confidences with.

Beware the naysayers who will drag you down.

It may sound callous but try not to surround yourself with too many people who are depressed, negatively inclined, troubled or unsupportive (note: not all depressed people are unsupportive) as it is my experience that more positive and open people are likely to support you in your quest.

Set Up An Accountability/Mastermind Group

Gather a group of like-minded and determined people who need help to ensure they stick to their goals and meet regularly; face to face or virtually over the internet to check in with each other to ensure that you are sticking to your plans. That way you support each other and it shouldn't cost you much to do.

Basically you become each other's accountability friend and this also has the added bonus of giving you many minds to work on a problem if any of you get stuck.

CHAPTER 9: MORE TIPS FOR A BALANCED AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE

De-Cluttering the Mind with Time Management

I've already talked about how I diarize thinking time in to my schedule in order to be able to just think rather than reacting to everything around me.

I found the book *Eat That Frog* from Brian Tracey invaluable in learning what was and wasn't critical and urgent in my life and business in terms of prioritizing everything I had to do.

I now use a very simple system to work out what I'm doing going forward and in my week.

I use a default diary which looks something like the diagram below to help me concentrate on key issues in my week.

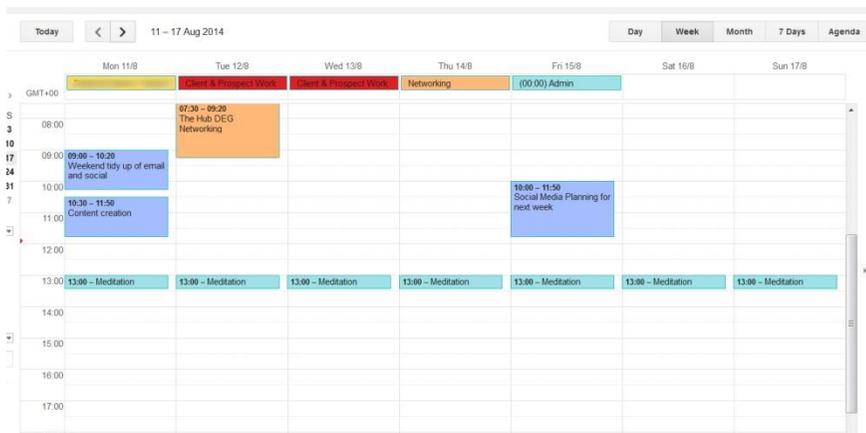


Figure 1: Default Diary before adding Changing To-Dos

I'm self-employed and have a wee bit more freedom over this than you may have but it might impress your boss and your team at work if you were to suggest a similar methodology for managing time at work. Just a thought!

Prioritising Your Life and Work

I also use a to-do list that has thinking time and priorities built in to it.

I use the ABC system of priorities as per Brian Tracy's book *Eat That Frog* but you can use any system you like as long as you have a system.

Obviously you do the A tasks first and then the B's and subsequently Cs etc.

Priority	Task	Thinking Time	Doing when?
B	Adm in for business	N/A	Monday
A1	Invoice customer x	N/A	Monday
A2	Finalise contract with customer y	Tuesday 8:00	Tuesday
B2	Read latest management book	N/A	Bed time this week

Thinking Time is a Must

You may notice I have thinking time in there. Like many people who suffer from stress, depression or insomnia I found that I had an overactive mind and one of the key ways for me to quiet that mind at night was to actually “park” an idea, worry, or whatever was going on in my mind until a certain time in the not too distant future.

This has the beauty of allowing your subconscious to continue to work on the problem in the background while allowing you to focus in other tasks and in my case get some much needed sleep.

Helpful Hint:

It may help you to keep this in a spreadsheet or document so that you can re-order it by priority each day as new things are added and items are scored off.

Again there are lots of apps that will let you keep track of your tasks and priorities and it is simply a matter of taste and style as to which you use.

Be Authentic

There is nothing worse for your mental well-being in this life than living a lie.

I've found out the hard way that living someone else's expectations of

me is the surest way to disaster.

Get to know yourself as deeply and clearly as possible. If you don't know yourself, your values, your beliefs and your ultimate purpose in life then someone else is going to set it for you and heaven help you if it is not aligned with who you really are.

That may sound melodramatic but I assure you, dear reader, that I've been down that path and it's not one you want to go down.

Yes, I know I've already mentioned authenticity in this book and I want to ensure that you didn't miss it and to reinforce the importance of the message as many times as I can.

So. Decide who you are and what you stand for. Write it down. If need be tell other people what you are. Let the world know so that they know what to expect of you and what not to expect from you.

If I asked you to describe yourself what labels would you give yourself?

You may already have done this in the Dilts exercise earlier in this book. Take the time to consider those labels and titles you gave yourself and indeed what order you give to them.

Here's my self-description:

Husband, father, friend, life coach, business owner, business/people optimizer, strategist, and wannabe good egg.

You may notice that my personal labels come first and that's because I make a conscious decision that **my LIFE comes before my work.**

Yours I'm sure will vary, but be honest with yourself about what comes first and be prepared to take a stand to ensure your authenticity in everything you do.

Believe me once you are cognizant of this, life will go better for you.

Resources for Authenticity:

If you want to know more about authenticity and how to manifest it and keep it in your life go Google Brené Brown and read her book *The Gift of Imperfection*.

Grow a Pair

Be prepared to say no and to take action that will help you live life in congruence and alignment with who you are.

In essence be braver about taking control of your life.

I know first-hand that living a life of fear; fear of disappointing my mother, fear of not getting into university, fear of failing university and fear of losing various jobs that I've had have led me to lose myself as I gave others the power to control my life.

And the worst thing about all of that is that I allowed it to happen.

These things were not done to me.

I allowed people to have that power over me and to allow my fear of consequences, real and imagined, to determine the outcome which ultimately led to my breakdown in 2008.

Please, dear reader, do not let this happen to you. Find your courage.

Finding Your Courage

Allow yourself to see that life for you may be different from what everyone else says is good for you and stand up for yourself and what you believe in.

- **Speak out** when others try to undermine your beliefs and values
- **Say no** to bullies

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- By all means **listen and understand** where others are coming from and **retain your position if it is important to you**
- **Have the courage to say I don't know** when asked something you don't have the answer to. People will respect you more for it than you trying to do things when you have no clue
- **Have confidence that you can be right and have the right to decide** especially when it comes to your life

CHAPTER 10: WRAP UP & CALL TO ACTION

Well that's it for now folks.

I've given you my formula and shortcuts to a more balanced and positive life based on my experiences.

You have the formula for finding and living with your MOJO, and some simple yet effective exercise to do to get you there.

The rest really is up to you.

Are you going to take charge of your life?

Are you going to live the life potential that you were born with and have every right to expect?

Can you commit to doing the exercises or are you just going to sit back and let others dictate your life for you?

What Now?

Just bloody do it!!

I'd love to know how you got on with the exercises in this book and maybe some of your own ideas and experiences of finding your MOJO.

Please do share them with me and others on the [FREE Community resource Facebook page](#). You can also find out more at my website.

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Working with me:

At the time of writing I am building a host of tools and resources for you to work with which deal with the issues in this book and all will be available at

www.briancanavan.com

I'd also love for you to join my free Facebook community [Life Even Better](#) for more resources and free training sessions to help you live your best life.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Brian Canavan is a husband, father, life coach, business owner, business and people optimizer, and self-styled all around good egg who likes to help where he can.

Brian lives with his family in Glasgow, Scotland