UNCOVER

your

POTENTIAL

You Are MORE than You Realize

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The wealthiest spot on this planet is not the oil fields of Iraq or Saudi Arabia. Neither is it the gold and diamond mines of South Africa, the uranium mines of the Soviet Union, or the silver mines of Africa. Though it may surprise you, the richest deposits on our planet lie just a few blocks from your house. They rest in your local cemetery or graveyard. Buried beneath the soil within the walls of those sacred grounds are dreams that never came to pass, songs that were never sung, books that were never written, paintings that never filled a canvas, ideas that were never shared, visions that never became reality, inventions that were never designed, plans that never went beyond the drawing board of the mind, and purposes that were never fulfilled. Our graveyards are filled with potential that remained potential. What a tragedy!

As I walk the streets of our cities, my heart frequently weeps as I encounter and observe the wasted, broken, disoriented lives of individuals who, years before, were
talented, intelligent, aspiring high school classmates. During their youth they had dreams, desires, plans, and aspirations. Today they are lost in a maze of substance abuse, alcoholism, purposelessness, and poorly chosen friends. Their lives are aimless, their decisions haphazard. This enormous tragedy saddens me. What could have been has become what should have been. The wealth of dreams has been dashed into the poverty of discouragement.

Only a minute percentage of the five billion people on this planet will experience a significant portion of their true potential. Are you a candidate for contributing to the wealth of the cemetery? Ask yourself the following questions:

Who am I?

Why am I here?

How much potential do I have?

What am I capable of doing?

By what criteria should I measure my ability?

Who sets the standards?

By what process can I maximize my ability?

What are my limitations?

Within the answers to these questions lies the key to a fulfilled, effective life.
Preface

One of the greatest tragedies in life is to watch potential die untapped. Many potentially great men and women never realize their potential because they do not understand the nature and concept of the potential principle. As God has revealed to me the nature of potential, I have received a burden to teach others what I have learned.

There’s a wealth of potential in you. My purpose is to help you understand that potential and get it out. You must decide if you are going to rob the world or bless it with the rich, valuable, potent, untapped resources locked away within you.

You are more than what you have done.
INTRODUCTION

The brilliant summer sun poured its liquid heat on the windswept island of the Caribbean paradise as the old village sculptor made his way to his humble home outside the village center. On his way he passed by the great white mansion of the plantation owner who, with his field workers, was felling one of the age-old trees that for generations had provided protection from the scorching sun. The old sculptor suddenly stopped and, with a twinkle in his eyes, called over the wall with a note of interest, “What will you do with those discarded stumps of wood?”

The owner replied, “These are good for nothing but firewood. I have no use for this junk.”

The old sculptor begged for a piece of the “junk” wood and with care lifted the knotted tree trunk to his shoulders. With a smile of gratitude, he staggered into the distance carrying his burdensome treasure.
After entering his cottage, the old man placed the jagged piece of tree in the center of the floor. Then, in a seemingly mysterious and ceremonious manner, he walked around what the plantation owner had called “useless junk.” As the old man picked up his hammer and chisel, a strange smile pierced his leathered face. Attacking the wood, he worked as though under a mandate to set something free from the gnarled, weathered trunk.

The following morning, the sun found the sculptor asleep on the floor of his cottage, clutching a beautifully sculptured bird. He had freed the bird from the bondage of the junk wood. Later he placed the bird on the railing of his front porch and forgot it.

Weeks later the plantation owner came by to visit. When he saw the bird, he asked to buy it—offering whatever price the sculptor might name. Satisfied that he had made an excellent bargain, the gentleman walked away, hugging to his breast with great pride the newly acquired treasure. The old sculptor, sitting on the steps of his simple cottage, counted his spoil and thought, *Junk is in the eyes of the beholder. Some look, but others see.*

Today there are many individuals whose lives are like the old tree. Trapped within them is a beautiful bird of potential that may never fly. Society, like the plantation owner, sees nothing in them but a useless, worthless person on his or her way to the garbage heap.
of life. But we must remember that one person’s junk is another person’s jewel.

Scientists in the field of human potential have estimated that we use as little as 10 percent of our abilities. Ninety percent of our capabilities lie dormant and wasted. It is sad that we use only a small part of our abilities and talents. Most of us have no idea how much talent and potential we possess.

Consider the life of Abraham Lincoln. His story is one of the most dramatic examples of a man struggling to release the wealth of potential locked up inside him:

He lost his job in 1832.
He was elected to the legislature in 1834.
He suffered the death of his sweetheart in 1834.
He suffered a nervous breakdown in 1836.
He was defeated for speaker of the State Legislature in 1838.
He was defeated for nomination for Congress in 1843.
He was elected to Congress in 1846.
He was rejected for the position of land officer in 1849.
He was defeated for the Senate in 1854.
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He was defeated for the nomination for vice president of the United States in 1856.

He again was defeated for the Senate in 1858.

He was elected president of the United States in 1860.

Everything in life was created with potential and possesses the potential principle. In every seed there is a tree...in every bird a flock...in every fish a school...in every sheep a flock...in every cow a herd...in every boy a man...in every girl a woman...in every nation a generation. Tragedy strikes when a tree dies in a seed, a man in a boy, a woman in a girl, an idea in a mind. For untold millions, visions die unseen, songs die unsung, plans die unexecuted, and futures die buried in the past. The problems of our world go unanswered because potential remains buried.

We are responsible for the potential stored within us. We must learn to understand it and effectively use it. Too often our successes prevent us from seeking that which yet lies within us. Success becomes our enemy as we settle for what we have. Refuse to be satisfied with your last accomplishment, because potential never has a retirement plan. Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do. In essence, what you see is not all there is.
Chapter 1

Everything in Life Has Potential

All people are sent to the world with limitless credit, but few draw to their full extent.

It is a tragedy to know that with over five billion people on this planet today, only a minute percentage will experience a significant fraction of their true potential. Perhaps you are a candidate for contributing to the wealth of the cemetery. Your potential was not given for you to deposit in the grave. You must understand the tremendous potential you possess and commit yourself to maximizing it in your short lifetime. What is potential, anyway?

Potential Defined

Potential is:

• Dormant ability
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• Reserved power
• Untapped strength
• Unused success
• Hidden talents
• Capped capability
• All you can be but have not yet become
• All you can do but have not yet done
• How far you can reach but have not yet reached
• What you can accomplish but have not yet accomplished

Potential is unexposed ability and latent power.

Potential is therefore not what you have done, but what you are yet able to do. In other words, what you have done is no longer your potential. What you have successfully accomplished is no longer potential. It is said that unless you do something beyond what you have done, you will never grow or experience your full potential.

Potential demands that you never settle for what you have accomplished. One of the great enemies of your potential is success. In order to realize your full potential, you must never be satisfied with your last accomplishment. It is also important that you never let what you cannot do
interfere with what you can do. The greatest tragedy in life is not death, but a life that never realized its full potential. You must decide today not to rob the world of the rich, valuable, potent, untapped resources locked away within you. Potential never has a retirement plan.

The Potential Principle

To simplify this concept, let’s look at one of the most powerful elements in nature—the seed. If I held a seed in my hand and asked you, “What do I have in my hand?” what would you say? Perhaps you would answer what seems to be the obvious—a seed. However, if you understand the nature of a seed, your answer would be fact but not truth.

The truth is I hold a forest in my hand. Why? Because in every seed there is a tree, and in every tree there is fruit or flowers with seeds in them. And these seeds also have trees that have fruit that have seeds—that have trees that have fruit that have seeds, etc. In essence, what you see is not all there is. That is potential. Not what is, but what could be.

Don’t Settle for What You Have

Nothing in life is instant. People think success is instant, but it really is not. Achieving success is a process. You are full of potential. Potential is always present, waiting to be exposed. It demands that you never settle for what you have accomplished. Oddly, one of the greatest
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enemies of your potential is success. Never accept success as a lifestyle—it is but a phase. Never accept an accomplishment as the end—it is but a mark in the process. There are many selves within you that lie dormant, untapped and unused. Your primary problem is that you do not think about yourself as having even greater potential.

You can maximize the potential within you. You are not yet what you are supposed to be—though you may be pleased with what you now are. Don’t accept your present state in life as final, because it is just that, a state. Don’t be satisfied with your last accomplishment, because there are many accomplishments yet to be perfected. Since you are full of potential, you should not be the same person next year that you are this year.

There are many selves within you that lie dormant, untapped and unused.

You should always be looking for what is not yet visible. There is more inside you than is evident on the outside. On the other hand, humankind is often satisfied with what we have—at least if not satisfied, we think there is nothing better. Thus we settle for what we have. Do you?
Everything in Life Has Potential

Therein lies the tragedy of life. The minute we begin to settle down and be satisfied with what we have, we lose the possibility of revealing what is really inside us. Too often we die without exploring the gifts, abilities, and successes that lay hidden within us. Our thoughts, ideas, and possibilities are not used. We fail to realize the vast potential that is stored within us. We are like batteries in a radio that is never played—our potential is wasted.

Suppose...

Suppose Shakespeare had died before he wrote his poems and plays—the potential of Macbeth would have been buried. Suppose Michelangelo had died before he painted the Sistine Chapel or DaVinci the Mona Lisa—the beauty of their paintings would have been lost. Suppose Mozart had died with all that music inside. Or suppose a world without women like Joan of Arc, Emily Dickinson, Amelia Earhart, Helen Keller, Florence Nightingale, Queen Isabella, or Mother Teresa.

Can you imagine how many great works of art, music, and literature are buried in the graveyard near your house? Can you imagine how many solutions to the problems we face today are buried with someone you knew? People die without getting out their full potential. They fail to use all that was stored in them for the benefit of the world.
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Don’t Die With My Things!

I wonder what would have happened if your father had died before you were conceived or your mother before you were born.

What would the world have lost if you had not been born? What will the world lack because you fail to live out your potential? Will you carry songs, books, inventions, cures, or discoveries to your grave?

What would the world have lost if you had not been born?

Our teens are committing suicide. I wonder who they were supposed to be and what they were supposed to do that we will never know. Have we lost some great leaders? Was your grandchild’s professor or another Martin Luther King Jr. among them?

Everything in life has the potential to fulfill its purpose. People who die without achieving their full potential rob their generation of their latent ability. Many have robbed me—they’ve also robbed you. To die with ability is irresponsible.

Perhaps you are wasting your life doing nothing with all you have. There are skills, talents, and unique aspects
of personality packaged in you for the good of the world—use them. We will never know the wealth planted in you until you bring it up. There’s always something in you that we haven’t yet seen. Release your ability before you die. Use the power and strength within you for the good of yourself and others. I believe there are books, songs, art works, businesses, poems, inventions, cures, and investments in you that are intended for my children and future grandchildren to benefit from and enjoy.

**New From Old**

Consider this: Innovation does not create new raw materials. All of the raw materials are already created. Innovation recombines them in fresh ways. Everything that we call “new” is a new grouping of old things. The exact combination and the timing of the combination may be new, but the raw materials are not new.

Everything necessary to invest in the next new thing is already present in the world. Innovation enables someone to see old things with new eyes and to combine them in new ways for new purposes.

When you go to the store and buy a new pair of shoes, it is an old cowhide that has been cut and stretched and stitched and soled. When you buy a book, the cover and the pages have been made from a plant. When you buy a new suit, it is old sheep wool, “reformatted.” When you buy a beautiful new wooden dining room table, it is not as new as you might think because it is really an old tree, worked
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over and changed into a table. When you buy a “new” car, it is a combination of old metals, petroleum products, and so forth. Things and people can be re-purposed. But do you know what your purpose really is?

Who Are You?

Who am I? Why am I here? Where did I come from? What was I born to do? What can I do? Where do I fit? Why am I different? What is my potential? Where am I going? Why did I come to this planet?—are universal questions that haunt every human being. Each of us must find the answers to these questions of purpose if we are going to enjoy a meaningful, effective, fulfilling life.

Purpose and fulfilling our potential are keys to life. Without purpose, life has no meaning. There are millions today busy making a living, but they experience very little of life. If your goal in life is to be wealthy so you can retire, you have embarked on a depressing journey to nowhere. If your vision for life is measured by status, your upkeep will be your downfall. Vision is buried in purpose. Without knowledge of purpose, life becomes an endless string of activities with little or no significance. Like a rider on a rocking horse, life without purpose makes much motion but no progress.

A World Without Purpose

A lack of purpose and the impending tragedy that results from its absence is found not only in people but in
all things. When elements of nature lose their purpose, chaos and destruction are the results. When nations, societies, communities, organizations, friendships, marriages, clubs, churches, countries, or tribes lose their sense of purpose and significance, then confusion, frustration, discouragement, disillusionment, and corporate suicide—whether gradual or instant—reign. Purpose is the master of motivation and the mother of commitment. It is the source of enthusiasm and the womb of perseverance.

Purpose gives birth to hope and instills the passion to act. It is the common denominator that gives every creature an element of distinction. This guiding sense of purpose is more than an orientation toward a goal. Rather, it is a deep awareness that a common vision encompasses all life and existence. Without this vision, we can only exist. We feel no passion for living—neither do we have a reason to wake up in the morning.

Purpose gives birth to hope and instills the passion to act on fulfilling your potential.

Thousands of years ago, a king known as the wisest man who ever lived stated, “Meaningless! Meaningless! ...Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.” This was his conclusion after years of observing life, activities,
plans, and achievements apart from a sense of personal and corporate purpose. These words and their sad echo have returned to haunt us nearly six thousand years later. We face a world that acts like a spaceship that has lost its flight plan.

Planet Earth is like a mother whose children have lost all sense of direction and all value in life. Globally speaking, everything is in motion. Mergers and acquisitions, deregulations and changing agencies of control, information technologies, and international competition all alter the shape and thrust of our economies and the way we do business. Changing demographics, realigned industry structures, new strategic alliances, innovative technologies, unaccustomed modes of working, and the volatility of stock markets demand a fresh approach to commerce. Increasing competition, the shrinking of the world into one large global village, the move toward freer markets in former communist countries, and the reality of the European Common Market alter the way we deal with the world and it deals with us. Many industrialized nations are being transformed into Third World states as numerous people migrate from underdeveloped nations.

Long-established ideologies are evaporating in the fires of revolutionary changes. Institutions long held sacred are crumbling under the weight of social pressure. In almost every nation, the situation is the same. There is political confusion, ideological frustration, social unrest, economic uncertainty, moral bankruptcy, institutionalized
corruption, and disillusionment with religion. All inhabit an environment of fragile diplomacy.

The world has become an incubator of stress, depression, hopelessness, and fear. It seems that the kingdoms and the governments of this world are bankrupt. They no longer offer innovative solutions for these ever-increasing problems. Industrialized nations are as fragile as Third World nations. The tremendous changes in national and international situations, and the economic, political, social, and cultural transitions that have accompanied these changes, now present a totally different global equation.

There is also a generation in every nation that seems to have lost its sense of purpose. They are out of touch with the values, morals, and convictions that build strong families, secure communities, healthy societies, and prosperous nations. Thus, the moral fabric of most societies is being stretched and tested to its outer limits. In every nation, the concern is the same. Many of the time-weathered institutions of the industrial states are being tried by challenges that threaten to transform tradition and demand creative and innovative responses.

**Hope Through Potential’s Purpose**

There is the great hope, though, for the world as we recognize the potential and purpose in all people and things to be fulfilled by combining and putting some of the already-created things together in a new way. Don’t
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limit your potential by thinking that there is nothing new under the sun. Don’t give up until you have lived out the full extent of your potential, because you have no right to die with my things. Don’t rob the next generations of the wealth, treasures, and tremendous gifts buried deep within you.

- If you want to succeed, strike out on new paths. Don’t travel the worn paths of accepted success.

- No one can climb beyond the limitations of his or her own belief. Every day sends to the grave obscure men and women whom fear prevented from realizing their true and full potential.

- Failure is not the absence of success. Failure is the neglect of trying.

- What you see is not all there is. There is potential in everything.

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*What you have done is no longer your potential. Potential is what you can do but have not yet done.*

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Consider, for a moment, a rose. In the spring before the rose bush blooms, it is ugly. Thorns cover the stems
and tiny, hard green things stick out among the leaves. After a few weeks, these little green things slowly begin to open until you can see the color of the petals. Then the bud begins to open and the individual petals become visible. Still, the rose is not what it yet can be. It has not reached the height of its beauty. There comes a point when the fully opened rose reaches perfection. It can be no more beautiful.

Its shape and color are in perfect harmony. After perfection is reached, death and decay set in. The flowers whither and brown until the petals fall from the bush. It fulfills its purpose and then naturally dies.

Nothing—and no one—should die until its purpose is fulfilled.
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**Principles**

1. You were created with potential.
2. Nothing in life is instant.
3. Everything in life has the potential to fulfill its purpose.
4. Don’t be satisfied with what you now are.
5. Don’t die without using your full potential.
6. The greatest threat to progress is your last successful accomplishment.
Chapter 2

THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

Transforming ideas into action.

Everything in life was created with potential and possesses the potential principle. Creation abounds with potential. All we now see was once in an invisible state. Everything that we have ever seen first existed in an invisible state. (Please note that invisible does not mean nonexistent.)

All the buildings we see and the businesses we frequent—people making money and investing money—all that stuff began as ideas. We couldn’t see them because they were in somebody’s mind. The stores where we shop, also everything on the shelves and racks in those stores, began as ideas in someone’s mind. They didn’t exist before, yet they did. Although they weren’t present in their current form, they existed as lumber and concrete and nails, cotton and wool, flax, steel, and pulleys and motors.