

The background of the entire cover is a vibrant sunset or sunrise sky, transitioning from deep orange and red at the top to bright yellow and white near the horizon. In the foreground, the silhouettes of four tall, rectangular pillars of varying heights are visible against the bright light of the sun. The pillars are dark and stand out against the glowing sky.

THE 4 PILLARS OF LIFE

TAKE BACK CONTROL
AND
LIVE A LIFE WORTH LIVING

By

John Rosel

For Louise, without whom none of this would ever have been possible.

*For my girls Jess, Lon, Rach, I hope this inspires you to
Live a Life Worth Living.*

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THE 4 PILLARS
OF LIFE

What is this book all about?

We all want to Live a Life Worth Living, live an adventurous life, and have a story to tell when we are older, but too many of us just 'get by'. We watch as other people seem happy and content, or are successful, and all we do is look for reasons why it doesn't work for us. We have regrets about the past, we worry about the future, and we just let the adventure of life slip by.

This book is a gathering of my own thoughts and experiences. It is not intended to be an unshakeable truth. It is however meant to open your mind to alternative ways of thinking and to create debate within yourself about how you can take control of your life and live it to the fullest.

This book is a journey of self-discovery through the maze of what makes a Life Worth Living. It is a guide to living a richer and fuller life, and a course of action to being a better man, in a world where the image and expectations of what a man should be, has been distorted beyond recognition, and beyond the achievement of the average *Old Boy*.

This book identifies the 4 Pillars of a great life–

1. Mind
2. Body
3. Soul
4. Living

Each of these 4 Pillars are dependent on each other and are intrinsically intertwined. While being independent areas of our life, they impact each other and create balance, or imbalance, throughout our life depending on our attitude and how we view the world at various stages of our lives.

The biggest issue we face is that we live our lives subconsciously. We have, through a life time of experiences, developed a set of beliefs and preconceived ideas, on which we automatically act and react to the world around us. We rarely think for ourselves and because of that we are often living someone else's goals and dreams and wonder why we feel so unfulfilled.

Who is this Book aimed at?

Whilst this book can be a valuable resource for anyone, you will notice a leaning towards what I refer to as '*Old Boys*'.

So who or what is an Old Boy?

Firstly it is not an age, it is a state of mind. The opposite of an Old Boy is an Old Man and there are Old Men who are 25 and Old Boys who are 70. An Old Boy is at that stage of his life when he starts to question what it's all about, he has a feeling that there is more to life but he just can't seem to work out what it is? An Old Man by comparison has thrown in the towel and doesn't try anymore, is happy with a mediocre life, and happy to tell everyone how good he once was.

Old Boys have a growing career, a growing family, growing responsibilities, and the carefree life of their youth seems a distant memory. But surely there must be more to life than this. It's an age when men are susceptible to depression and is a time when men can feel lost.

Old Boys tend to be a forgotten breed. Society dictates that men don't talk about personal issues and if they do they are seen as weak, and as such they just shut up and get on with it.

This book is an opportunity for Old Boys to have a look at themselves and their lives, in their own time and in their own way, and hopefully provides some guidance on those issues that affect all men, but that are never spoken about. It aims to allow us to take back control of our lives and live a life worth living.

What is Mind?

Mind is a reference to the way we think, our cognitive self, both conscious and subconscious. How have we been influenced to think the way we do? What impact does our thinking have on our lives? How our subconscious has the greatest impact on our lives, and we don't even know it. How modern media impacts how we see the world. What do we control in our lives? How do we stay motivated in tough times? Why is goal setting so hard? And why is it easier to stop trying and just go with the flow, rather than persevering? Why do we view the goal as more important than the journey?

What is Body?

As we grow older and 'life' starts to get in the way, our physical health can often take a back seat. The longer we lose focus on our physical health the harder it is to get back into shape, and when we try we train like we did in our youth and wonder why injuries and a lack of motivation are playing havoc with us.

This part of the book provides some concepts and guidelines, based on my own training experiences, that can help you not only get back into shape, but most importantly to maintain your physical health over the long term.

What is Soul?

Soul is often closely linked to Mind, but the difference for me is that Mind is mechanical for want of a better word. It is how the mind works, how we think, what impacts us, and how we can influence.

Soul is intangible. It is the meaning for existence. The reason we get up in the morning, and the reason we want to keep pushing forward when things aren't so good.

There are a million books on spirituality, and I've read a lot of them, but this is not one of them. But it does take a look at the 'Why' question in some detail, and offers some insights into my own philosophy as a **Backyard Buddhist**.

What is living?

Of the 4 Pillars, Living is the one that locks them all together. After all, this is what life is all about.....to really live.....not just to exist like so many people do. This doesn't mean that by getting Mind, Body and Soul right that Living will fall into place. Living is its own Pillar and is perhaps the culmination or 'icing on the cake'. That doesn't mean you don't start Living until you have the other 3 Pillars perfect, in fact it is crucial you start living now to help bring the other 3 Pillars together. The 4 Pillars of Life are not mutually exclusive and one without the other creates disharmony.

Living in this context covers many things including –

- Comfort Zones
- A Sense of Adventure
- Travel
- Living in the Moment
- Career and Work
- Financial Status
- Status Anxiety
- Relationships
- Food, Wine, Beer and Song

Who are you taking this journey for?

Take a moment to think about who you are taking this journey of self-improvement for?
Your wife, your kids, your friends?

There is only one person you are taking this Journey for.....**YOU**.

If you won't commit to self-improvement for yourself, you certainly won't be able to commit to do it for others. As the best coach the NRL has ever seen (Wayne Bennett) said once, "If you won't go out and play hard and tough to prove a point to yourself....you certainly won't do it for your team mates".

Improvement of the self leads to improvement of others. Be the change you want to see.

About the Author

I was born in 1969 and I'm 47 years old at the time of writing. This book has come about through the 40 odd years of experiences I've had while making my own way in the world. I had a fairly standard family life until I was 12 when I was sent away to boarding school, and I've been making it up as I go along ever since then. I've made an amazingly large amount of mistakes along the way because I was never one to ask for help or guidance and I prided myself on being independent, until at a point in my life I started to realise there were other ways of doing things, and just maybe, I wasn't always right and everyone else wasn't always wrong.

After I left boarding school I worked in the finance industry for 10 years before entering the property development industry where I still am today. I had 10 years with a major national property developer, trying desperately to climb the corporate ladder, before I struck out on my own and started my own Project Management Company. That was 13 years ago and I am still working for myself today. Whilst the last few years of the Global Financial Crisis have been difficult for all of us, the personal growth that the hard times have given me is beyond worth, and is a major contributor to the thoughts and guidelines in this book.

Sport has always been a big part of my life and I have been involved in Athletics, Gymnastics, Rugby League and Martial Arts for most of my life. I hold 3 Martial Arts Black Belts including a 4th Degree in BJC Muay Thai, a 1st Degree in Tae Kwon Do, and a Black Belt in Zen Do Kai Karate, and I run a club called '*Old Boys Thai Boxing*'.

I am blessed with a beautiful wife and 3 beautiful daughters (no sons, I think someone upstairs has a lousy sense of humour). My life hasn't been extraordinary but I have also had some experiences that few people have, and for some reason I feel the need to share my thoughts on life, and of taking back control of your life. I really hope that this book gets you to question your life, where you are, and opens your eyes to the possibilities of living a life worth living.

How to get the most from this book

This book is structured into the 4 Pillars of Mind, Body, Soul and Living. Each of the Pillars are then broken down into a 12 step journey. Each step explores another aspect of that Pillar, an aspect that impacts our life on a daily basis. Many of the steps have suggested tasks and actions that you may want to try, to assist you on your journey of self-discovery.

The book is meant to be a journey and each step builds on the last. You don't need to work through in the order of Mind, Body, Soul, Living, and in fact start at whichever Pillar you want to work on first, but treat the whole book as a package. Remember the 4 Pillars work together to build a great life.

I really hope this book gives you even just one thing that sparks a difference in your life, and that your journey is great one.

John Rosel

www.the4pillarsoflife.com.au

MIND

MIND

The First Step on the Journey....

Where's your head at?

They say the start of any journey begins with the first step.....well I don't agree. The start of any Journey begins with lifting your head up above the crowd and having a good look at where you are. If you don't know where you are, how can you get to where you want to be?

We need to stop and take some time out from our everyday lives. We all live on auto-pilot 90% of the time and this is a major stumbling block to living a life we can be proud of. We don't think for ourselves. We don't stop to smell the roses.

But I think for myself, I hear you say! I am my own person! Really....? Every day you do the same thing as you did yesterday because you accept that this is what you do and you can't change the circumstances of your life. Everyday your thinking and attitudes are influenced by what you read in the newspapers and magazines, what you see on television, and what your friends and colleagues opinions are for that particular day. Even when you disagree with someone and have an opinion, are you really thinking for yourself, or are you justifying a stance that subconsciously makes you feel superior to that person?

The Journey starts when you lift your head above the crowd and ask "Where the hell am I?"

Having an opinion is NOT thinking for yourself. The more you think for yourself, the more you realise the world is a complex and unpredictable environment, and that there is rarely any black and white, rather the world is shades of grey. This does not mean having an opinion is wrong, but the more you think for yourself and see people and circumstances from another's perspective, the less vigorously you hold onto fixed opinions.....and when you are confident enough in yourself, to have less fear about being 'right', this is a truly enlightening moment.

When doing any self-evaluating exercise, always start with the negatives first and finish on the positives. It's a small thing but has a big psychological effect. It's the same reason athletes always want to finish a training session with a good effort or with a good technical movement. Don't leave any situation in life on a negative if it can be helped.

So first up we need to brainstorm. I recommend buying an A4 notebook and a pen and keep this notebook specifically for this journey. I am a big believer in handwriting when working through a self-analysis process. It is slower and helps you think better. It is also more personal and provides a clearer picture in your mind's eye. It allows you to take the guides from this book and put things in your own words, which is clearer for you to comprehend. If you only have access to a computer then it's ok to write notes in digital format, but a special note book, handwritten, will produce the best results by far.

Whatever you do though, DO NOT read without taking notes.....It is so important in this process to write and put things in your own terms. What is read is quickly forgotten. What is written down has a significantly higher potential to be retained cognitively.

The Self-Analysis Process

It's important to do this exercise (and all the exercises throughout this journey) in a place where you won't be disturbed, with enough time that you don't feel pressured or your attention is focused on something else. Leave the mobile phone somewhere you can't reach it and turn off the sound. If you want the best results, then you have to focus your attention, which means limiting outside interference.

So with your notebook and pen at hand, a coffee/beer/wine (or beverage of choice), and seated in your 'Happy/Not to be Disturbed' place.....let's begin.

Clearing the Mind

At the commencement of each session, I like to run through a quick breathing exercise that helps relax the body and clear the mind. It's a simple process and is something many athletes and fighters use before competition.

Our world in this age is so interconnected. We are always in touch with friends, and the world, through social media. Through email and text our work lives have blurred the traditional 9 to 5 lines so much it's barely visible anymore. Technology is changing far more rapidly than we as humans are evolving, and as such the importance of mental 'time out', or being able to slow the pace in the mind, is becoming paramount to our mental health.

This simple process is not the solution, but it is a technique that can be used before any event, important meeting, commitment that is making you nervous, or at any time during the day when you need to clear the mind and refocus. It is also an excellent tool for the aftermath of a bad meeting, a bad day, or a confrontation that has left you angry or frustrated.

'Old Boys' who haven't done this sort of thing before tend to have a feeling of "This is stupid"...."God I hope no one sees me"....."What is this New Age crap?"

Firstly this is a key reason to find a place you won't be disturbed. A place you won't be 'found out' as if you're doing something bad.

Secondly...Why do you give a crap about what others are thinking? Are you taking this journey for them or for you?

There are 3 keys –

1. Circular breathing
2. Focus points
3. The breath

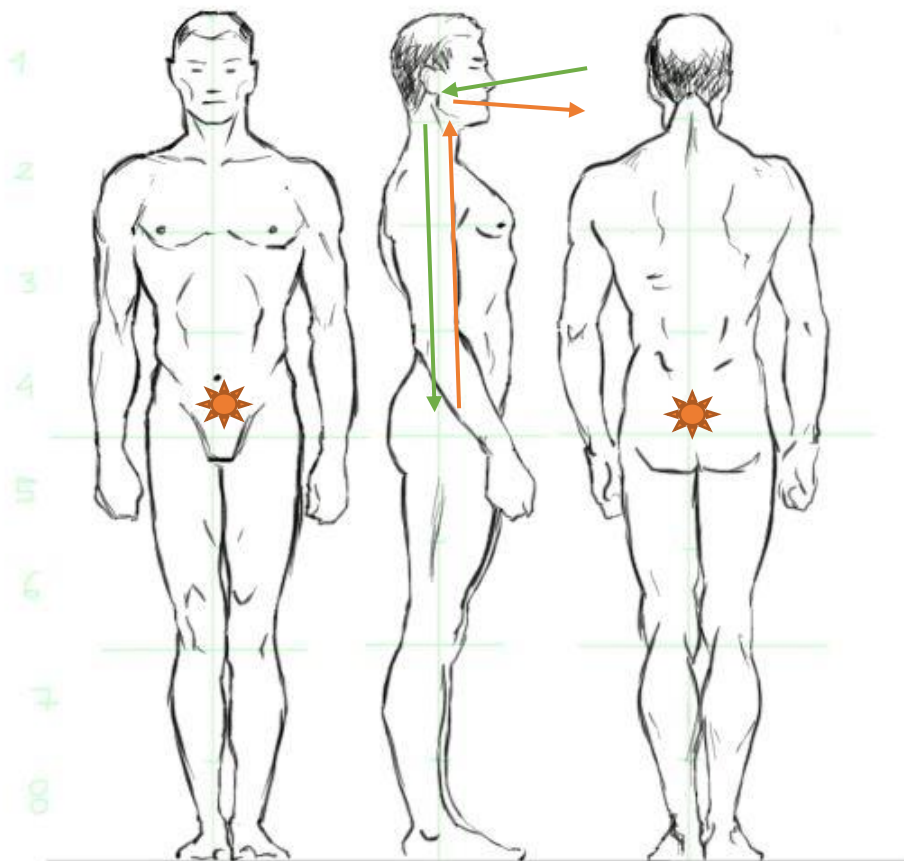
A lot of books say you need to be seated in the Lotus position, or on your knees (*Seiza* in Martial Arts terminology), or have the hands folded into a certain position.....I don't care what position you're in, it's all about the mind not about how the body is positioned. Besides

how many 'Old Boys' can get into the Lotus position? If you do, make sure you have the Ambulance on speed-dial!

The only caution I would suggest is don't lie down flat. This tends to induce a feeling of sleep and that's not really what we are after. Seated in a chair, sitting on the ground, leaning against a tree....it doesn't matter. Just make it comfortable.

So you are now in a comfortable position. Just for the next 3-4 breaths focus your mind on the breath. Feel it entering into your nose, the cool air on the way in and the warm air on the way out. Now close your eyes and take your first circular breath.

To circular breathe, breathe in through the nose and imagine the air is a white light. It passes through your nose and then travels down your spine. As it travels down the spine actually imagine you can feel it lighting the spine up as it moves down. At the bottom of the spine the air/light enters your Dan Tian which is the area between the navel and the groin. In Martial Arts and eastern practices this is considered the centre of the body.



 **Dan Tian**

As the air enters the Dan Tian it begins to fill the area with an expanding light until the lungs are full. Then you start to breathe out through the mouth.

The next step is a tricky part to get used to, but just try. Imagine the breath leaving the mouth is black smoke, all the toxins, and negativity, that is stored in your body, leaving the body. At the same time the light in the Dan Tian expands into all parts of the body to replace this 'black smoke'.

Once you have taken one 'Circular Breath' you may find in the first few times you do this that you are puffing a little. This is because by focusing on breathing into the Dan Tian, it is making you breathe to the bottom of your lungs. This is something we rarely do as we tend to breathe shallow and don't use the full capacity of our lungs. After the first circular breath just breathe normally again for a few breathes, and then when you are ready, do another circular breath.

Do this for 3 circular breaths, then on the exhale of the last one, open your eyes and start to work on the first thought exercise below.

If this seems all a little weird and 'New Age'.....just man up and try something different. Part of your reluctance to try something a little different, is a symptom of the rut we get caught in in our lives. There is no right or wrong way to do this, this is just the way I do it. Don't get frustrated as your mind continues to wander, just refocus back on your breathing.

The Analysis

The first part of this analysis is to work through each of the questions below that look to focus on elements and situations in your life that affect the way you think, and hence the way your mind is wired.

As you write down each issue that comes to mind, I want you to also write down how that issue makes you feel. Don't think too much, just write down how you feel immediately. I suggest setting out your notebook something like the following –

Self Analysis

The First Step in the Journey

What Troubles You?		
Situation/Thing/Person	Feelings/Emotions/Thoughts	Root Causes

What affects the way you think everyday?		
Situation/Thing/Person	Feelings/Emotions/Thoughts	Root Causes

The first two columns are what we are looking at in this stage. Identify the situation/thing/person, and then identify immediate feelings/emotions/thoughts that come up.

We will work through the 'Root Cause' column once our initial brainstorming is complete.

- **What troubles you?**

We all have issues that we think about constantly. Issues that keep us awake at nights worrying about what might happen. Brainstorm and identify these issues. Don't think about why, or look for solutions, just write them down and move forward. There will be issues that come to mind but you may dismiss them as silly or you should be stronger.....STOP.....Just write them all down. This is a brainstorm session, and review and editing is a separate process. Just get it all out of your head and down onto paper.

- **What affects the way you think every day?**

What does your day to day routine consist of? Think about what you do every minute of the day? What takes your attention and focus? Think about your circle of friends. How do they think and how do you feel about them? Think about your circle of acquaintances and work colleges. How do they make you feel?

- **What gets you angry?**

What really gets under your skin? What issues cause you to form a very strong opinion one way or the other? Initially write down what first comes to mind in terms of the reasons you get angry. Don't analyse too deeply, we'll get to that.

- **What frustrates you?**

What frustrates you? What can you see can be done better? Who do you see can be doing better?

Many of these topics overlap, but that's ok, just brainstorm in the first instance, get it all down on paper.

- **What are your weaknesses?**

Now don't beat yourself up with this part of the exercise. Try and be as detached as possible and identify areas you are weak in. It could be communicating with new people, you may get angry easily, you may get frustrated easily, you may put yourself down regularly, just think about situations in your life you wish you could address better.

- **Who are your circle of friends and acquaintances?**

Now identify 3 circles of influence as follows –

Inner Circle - People you love. Relatives. Close Friends. People you see every day.

Mid-Circle – Your acquaintances. People you know and see regularly. Work colleges.

Outer Circle – People you don't necessarily know but who you see or watch regularly and who influence the way you think. It can be negative or positive influence. Do you follow politics? Who? Do you follow sport? Who?

The Positives

....and now for the positives. This can be a difficult process for many people. Certainly it's harder than acknowledging our negatives because it's in our nature to focus on negatives and not positives. 'Old Boys' often find this especially difficult as we are programmed not to 'big note' ourselves, or talk about any of our strengths. Not being able to focus on strengths is one of the major problems with people's lives.

You may want to end the session with the negatives, and look to regroup and do the positives session separately. This can be helpful especially if you are feeling stuck on the positives. A fresh start tomorrow can be helpful.

As with the negatives, try not to apply judgement to yourself. Try to look at yourself as a separate being and look at recognising your strengths as elements of the whole you. Don't fall into the trap of writing down a strength and then judging and thinking that you really don't qualify for that strength. Just brainstorm without judgement.

What do you enjoy?

What makes you happy? What do you enjoy doing? Who do you enjoy spending time with? Who or what makes you laugh?

What are your strengths?

What are you ok at? What makes you feel like you have achieved something? What would your friends say is good about you, or what do they think you do well?

Root Causes

Well done on completing this brainstorming session. Don't think that it has to be 100% correct or that you can't go back to various sections as you progress and write further things down. As you start to analyse, other things will crop up and get you thinking in a new direction, this is what we want so if that happens, stop, go back and record, and come back again.

Now that you have the brainstorm session complete its time to go back and look more deeply at each of the items in your list and start to look deeper at what I call the Root Causes.

This process requires looking beyond the surface emotion or feeling that is felt in a particular situation and look to what is really happening. At their absolute core, negative emotions generally revolve around the Fight or Flight instinct, or the Survival Instinct.

Let me give you some examples from my own life and from an exercise I did some 10 years ago, that may help to explain what to look for.

What troubles you?

- **Situation/Thing/Person**
 - I don't handle conflict well in the workplace. Even to the point where a simple negotiation becomes a conflict in my mind.

- **Feelings/Thoughts/Emotions**
 - I feel I am being attacked personally
 - I feel anger and aggression

- **Root Cause**
 - As a child I was bullied badly. I often felt embarrassed and humiliated. That led to a deep fear of confrontation.
 - However I started to learn to fight back and I found even if I was beaten up I felt better about having stood up for myself.
 - This cycle of bullying, embarrassment turning to anger, to fighting, became engrained in me when I was at a vulnerable age.
 - I left home when I was 12 so lacked a strong guiding male role model
 - As such I had become so highly sensitive to people disagreeing with me that my mind assumes this is an attack on my person and my best course of response is to attack before I get embarrassed or hurt.
 - Fear of being embarrassed
 - Linking aggression (verbal not just physical) as the solution
 - Lack of confidence in my own self
 - Viewing the other person as attacking me personally, and not recognising, or trying to understand their position to see if we can work with them.

So from this analysis I have looked past the face value emotion that the other person is a dick and they are just trying to ruin my career. I have identified the core emotions of embarrassment and fear, which then comes from a lack of confidence in my own ability.

What troubles you?

- **Situation/Thing/Person**
 - I trust people too quickly and then feel let down easily.

- **Feelings/Thoughts/Emotions**
 - I want to build relationships with like-minded people so my life is easier
 - When I'm let down I feel anger

- **Root Cause**
 - This is again a cause of my earlier years of bullying and fighting
 - I try and trust people and form friendly relationships quickly because I am trying to avoid the conflict.

- However I see the first sign of disagreement as conflict and move from friendly to aggressive very quickly.
- It's a protection mechanism. Protecting myself from hurt and embarrassment

So from this analysis I see that even my trying to be friendly and trusting is a protection mechanism.

Now work your way through each of your issues and take time to analyse each. Don't fall into the trap of laying blame, "It was my father's fault..." or "If that hadn't happened....". Try to identify reasons but do not attribute blame.

At this stage it is enough to recognise and acknowledge what the root cause really is. You may also notice throughout the analysis that the same few Root Causes start to appear. This is the 80/20 rule cognitively in play. 20% of our subconscious Root Causes create 80% of our conscious problems. The key is to be able to shine a light into the unconscious and recognise what is really happening, and recognise the face value emotions as symptoms, not causes.

Don't look for solutions at this stage as that is to come in the next steps on the journey.

BODY

Body

The First Step on the Journey....

What is Old Boys Health & Fitness, and Why We Must Change?

Being an Old Boy can be a testing time in your life. You still think young. It only seems like yesterday that you were playing sport, running up and down ladders, and working out regularly, but life has gotten very busy and priorities change. This is a normal stage of life with growing families and careers. The problem lies in our mental state and the gap between what we think we can do and what we can do physically. Our mental ability starts to exceed our physical ability and what generally happens with Old Boys is that a few injuries start to occur, and we decide to either give it all away, sit on the couch and live on the stories of past glory, or we push through the injuries with dogged determination, get reinjured and push ahead again, until we get so frustrated.....we give it all away, sit on the couch and live on the stories of past glory.

Don't be the guy who the older he gets, the better he was.

The 5 Keys to Physical Change

There are 5 key areas we need to address in our quest for physical longevity and change –

1. Ego
2. Breaking Records
3. Consistency
4. Motivation
5. Nutrition

Ego

It's a time when our ego becomes vulnerable. A time when our sense of identity, of who we are, is brought into question. We used to be able to do certain things. We used to be able to lift certain weights. We used to be able to run that far. All our physical abilities start to become vulnerable to past injuries and new injuries. We ache in places we haven't ached before. We take twice as long to recover from setbacks. Our time is more limited as our priorities and responsibilities have changed with family and work commitments. All these elements take a toll on our ego. They question our abilities and can lead to a level of depression if left unchecked and if we don't adapt to our changing body.

Breaking Records

There was a time when every time we visited the gym we aimed for a new bench press record, or we looked for a new best time on our 5km run. But now every time we visit the gym or run we seem to be going backwards. This is the stage of our lives where our mental state has drifted far ahead of our physical ability to train and recover. The key is to become conscious of this process, accept the process, and manage your body to achieve a consistent long term approach.

Consistency

Consistency is the key. You won't break records every day. Understand that if you continue to push the boundaries, and you don't adapt to your changing situation, then you are on a short term path to injury, health issues, and depression. You must develop a total body program that addresses the key fundamentals that you can continue to do with consistency over the longer term.

Motivation

As we grow older our motivation seems to disappear as well. But what is actually happening is that our priorities have changed. As a younger man the motivation to be fit and healthy and look good is certainly higher than the fear of the pain of the training to follow. As Old Boys our focus is on different aspects of our lives, work/career, family etc. We'll talk more about motivation in terms of our physical health later in this section but at this stage it is enough to understand that motivation hasn't deserted us, it has just changed its focus as our priorities in life change.

Nutrition

Nutrition has been left to last for a reason.....its 80% of our problem! We all know that the biggest issue we face is our diet, but for the love of god we can't seem to say no to those chocolates, or that second/third/fourth beer.

There is of course an uncontrollable major problem with getting older and that is our metabolism slows down, we simply don't burn as fast as when we were younger and hence it takes more effort on our behalf to burn the same calories than a guy 20 years our junior.

However when you boil it all down, Old Boy nutrition consists of two key problem areas –

1. The type of foods we consume and the balance of Carbs, Proteins and Fats and;
2. Portion Size

We constantly tell ourselves we are starting to eat properly tomorrow.....but tomorrow just never comes. For such a major issue for our health and well-being it's amazing we just can't follow a decent eating pattern isn't it? Well therein lies part of the problem. We put so much emphasis on our diet, we see it as the most important thing, and subconsciously if it's not perfect then we've obviously failed, and when we fail we get disheartened. The pain of trying to eat healthy becomes greater than the desire to be healthy. The short term gratification of that chocolate and/or beer is a greater attraction than the potential pain of diabetes or cholesterol or heart disease in years to come.

Again we'll get into detail on what I have developed as *Old Boys Nutrition Planning* later in this chapter, but just keep one simple rule in mind at this stage....stop making it such a big deal and take the pressure brake off.

TASK:

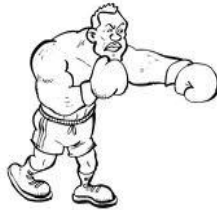
Have a look at your own life.

Where have you come from? What sports did you used to play? What did you do for physical activity that you know no longer do because of time/motivation/injury or other?

Be honest with yourself, what part does your ego or your sense of who you are, play in where you are now?

Look at your motivation, what part of your life has your motivation transferred to now?

Look at your nutrition and daily diet. What do you eat? How big are your portions?



Keep on Punching.....

SOUL

Soul

The First Step on the Journey....

What is Soul?

First and foremost....it's not Religion.

The word Soul is used by some religions to describe your life force, or that part of God in you. But Soul is also used to describe a type of music that engenders a feeling of connection and can take you away from the present moment.

These various different uses for the word Soul are not actually that dissimilar and they both try to explain something that is intangible but has deep feeling and meaning for us as individuals. As I said in the introduction, my definition is as follows –

Soul is intangible. It is the meaning for existence. The reason we get up in the morning, and the reason we want to keep pushing forward when things aren't so good.

Soul encompasses so many different parts of our nature, and has such personal significance once you open your mind and thinking to the notion, that it deserves to stand as one of the 4 Pillars of life.

Soul is an intensely personal Journey and as such is not something easily shared with others. Unlike the journey through Body and a lot of the Journey through Mind, where sharing your thinking and goals with others can be motivating and liberating, I believe that your Journey through Soul is something you would only share with someone who you have an incredibly close bond. It is such an intangible concept and is one of those things that you know what you mean deep inside but you find it very difficult to articulate into words. It is of course up to what is best for you, but I know from my own personal experience my Journey through Soul has not been something I have shared with others.

***Have an open
mind. There is no
black and white,
only shades of
grey.***

JR

But you're writing a book and telling the world, is what I hear you say. I have been on my Journey now for 47 years and it has never been something I have discussed with others, not even my wife. Even writing this book I am sitting in my lounge on a Saturday afternoon with the cricket in the background (Australia is 6/50 by the way!!) and it still feels intensely personal, but I feel I have reached a destination on my continuing journey, where I feel I have an obligation to share my thoughts with others. But believe me, this has taken a long time and a lot of personal growth to get to this spot.

This Journey through Soul will ask you first and foremost to be open to concepts that to some of you, may seem New Age or only for the realm of Hippies and Greenies. That negative attitude or Automatic Thought, is one of the key locked doors that are standing in front of you and stopping you from living a life worth living. It is an attitude that is closed to anything different, and why is that? When you boil it down it comes back to our basic survival instincts –

If something is different and I or my 'tribe' don't understand it, it may be a threat and hence we attack it to neutralise the threat.

Or looking at another angle, if I do something that is not understood by my tribe they may turn against me.

It's all about your basic instinct of survival, what will others think? It's got nothing to do with you genuinely thinking it is stupid and has no place in the world, that is only the defence mechanism.

Now I'm not asking all *Old Boys* to go out and join a cult, shave your head, and start chanting incantations, but what I am asking, (and this is fundamental to changing our attitudes and to taking back control of your life and living a life worth living), is to have an open mind. Look and learn without judgement. Not every way of life is for every person, but at least recognise that your way of life is not for everyone. Understand there are many great and happy people who have very different attitudes and lifestyles to what you have now. Take a step outside your circle of influence, broaden your understanding of the world and how other people live their lives.

TASK:

Think about your attitude to people who think differently. Are you set in your ways and everything is Black and White? Remember there is no Black and White, only shades of grey. Can you open your mind and look at other ways of living, without immediately judging them? This is such a fundamental element of changing your life for the better. It doesn't mean you immediately have to accept anything that comes your way, it just asks that you take a cautious little step out of the dark and into the grey areas.....

LIVING

Living

The First Step on the Journey....

Stocktake Time

And finally we come to Living and the completion of the foundation of our lives. Living is about having as many experiences with the time you have. It's about being open to new ways of thinking and having a purpose that makes your life worth living.

Mind, Body, Soul and Living are the 4 Pillars that hold up the structure of our being. The purpose of your life is to live the best you can within the 4 Pillars. The stronger your pillars are the greater your life.

They all work in unison and are not mutually exclusive. If one is damaged then the whole structure becomes unstable and all work needs to focus on the damaged pillar.

It's all about balance. The balance between the 4 Pillars of Life.

So the first step in the journey of living is to take stock of where you are at. As we did back in the first step on Mind, you have to know where you are, and understand from what base you are launching your life.

What activities do you really enjoy?

When was the last time you decided to learn something new?

When was the last time you were spontaneous?

What experiences or goals do you have that you really want to have or achieve?

Don't think because you haven't seen the Eiffel Tower or been able to achieve a Black Belt in a Martial Art that you have failed. Don't look for big answers to the questions above.

Remember it's not about the thing, it's about emotions. When you answer these questions think of the emotion that an experience gave you, that's what is important.

The last activity you enjoyed may have been hiking a track near your local town and being part of nature.

The last thing you may have decided to learn new was reading a book about self-defence.

The last time you were spontaneous may have been a weekend camping trip.

If even the smallest thing made you feel a sense of freedom or joy, even for a very short period, then that is what we are looking for. I'll repeat myself for about the 50th time in this book (but I don't care because it is that important), it's not the tangible material gains that are what makes your life have purpose, it's the emotions those tangible material gains give you.

De-Clutter

The point of a stock-take in a retail shop is to look at what stock you have left in the shop and understand what brands have sold well and what are not selling, and then to make adjustments and remove the poor performers and replace them with new and better options.

It's exactly the same with a life stock-take. We have a look at all the elements of our life. We look at what's working and what's not working. We decide if the things that aren't working should be kept and modified, or if we should get rid of them completely and replace them with something new and better. We also look closely at the things that are working. Just because something is working does not mean it is the right thing for us. You might be a high performer in your field of employment, respected by all, and making enormous amounts of money.....but it's slowly killing you emotionally and physically. 'If it ain't broke don't fix it' is a metaphor for mediocrity.

The key to a meaningful de-clutter of your life is *'if in doubt, throw it out'*.

Emotions – anger, resentment, jealousy, depression

Behaviours – aggressiveness, the need to defend my opinions, selfishness

Surroundings – Negative people, negative news, acquaintances

Goals – Things that were important once but are now only being held onto for sentiment

Every area and facet of your life should be examined, these are just a few examples above.

A Physical de-clutter is also an important process to undertake. Over the years we accumulate possessions and tangible things that we hold onto because we see them as part of who we are. All these things do is remind you of the person you used to be and not the person you want to be. Many people take comfort in these accumulated possession because it gives them comfort and by always looking back they don't have to look forward and face the changes that may be ahead.

Get rid of anything that is of no use to you anymore, emotions, behaviours, people, and possessions. The less you have in your life, the more room there is for new experiences.

*'If it ain't broke don't fix it'
is a metaphor for
mediocrity.*

JR