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THE LIFELONG PROJECT

ACHIEVE GOALS

CREATE JOY

FIND PASSION



One

Your Lifelong Project

What would happen if you treated the next year of your life like a project? Or better yet, what *could* happen if you treated the next year of your life like a project? If you have goals and ambitions to change your life, passions you want to rekindle, and a belief that you can change the world, then the Lifelong Project is for you. This isn't a book about setting goals – it's a book about achieving goals. This is your Lifelong Project.

Project management is about getting things done. It's challenging, methodical work to take an idea from the ether and create it into being – but that's what project management does. It takes people, organizations, and communities from the present state to a desired future state. It is creative work but it follows reason, a plan, and a mission.

So many companies rely on project management because project management works; it's a proven method to create, to change, and to grow. Project management created the pyramids, discovered cures, and built skyscrapers. And now you can leverage project management techniques to accomplish your goals. You can overcome. You can achieve. You can take charge. Project management is all business – including the business of life.

You're probably reading this with some idea of what you'd like to change, accomplish, or achieve in your life. You might have visions of a new career, accomplishing a physical goal, advancing your career or some other idea of what success means to you. You probably have some pictures in your mind about what you'd like to achieve, but you need a method of how you can move from where you are, to that desired future of success, accomplishment, and a more meaningful life.

Positive thoughts, wishes, and journals full of dreams just won't get it done. I know – I've tried those methods too. What works, what I have personally proven to work, is project management. This is a logical approach that demands dedication and commitment to identified activities to achieve your goals. You'll need to invest your time, your energy, and yourself to make your goals a reality.

Many people have a safe, distant vision of what their life could be like; it's sad, because they often think these are just good things that are for other people. They imagine happiness, a fulfilling job, love, fitness, and rewarding experiences – all for other, smarter, better people. What they're missing is that they too can have these things in their life, but it won't happen on accident.

You know that you are alive, but you might question if you're really *living*. Why shouldn't you have what you want in reality too? Why shouldn't your life be full of joy and bliss? Get this simple truth right now: this moment is your life. Your life is now. Every moment you waste through daydreaming, ignoring your goals, putting others down, and giving your time to distractions is time you have lost. Your life is made up of thousands of tiny moments that you'll never see again. Money is a two-way street, but time only goes one way.

What you do with your time speaks depths about you. Has anyone ever asked what you do? They want to know about your career and how you sell your time. Obviously work is a big part of your life, but it's not your whole life. And projects? Doesn't it seem that everyone is working on a project of some sort?

While this book uses the premise of project management to help you reach your goals and dreams, keep one thing in mind from this point forward: it's really all about you. I've learned in my life that the tools of

project management can be leveraged in the business world, but also in the more exciting, personal world.

This book is about you creating, doing, and experiencing all the good that your life has for you. This is a book about how the life you know today can blossom into a life with even more love, more joy, and more satisfaction than you've ever experienced or thought possible. This book is about *you getting things done*.

Creating a Lifelong Project

How many projects are you working on right now? If you're like most people, you have several projects in motion all at once: work projects, personal projects, projects around the house. And I bet you're helping your kids, family, and neighbors with their projects too. For most of us it's a constant barrage of things to do, all packaged and labeled as projects.

Technically speaking, a *project* is a short-term venture to create something. It's an endeavor that has a definite beginning and a definite ending. Chances are, all of your projects have a clear starting point and you've a clear idea of how the end result of your project, also known as the project deliverables, are supposed to turn out. When a professional organization creates a project, they usually start with a vision of what they want to create. Organizations first identify the reason why a project needs to exist and then identify what the outcome of the project should be, which allows them to measure their success.

If you've ever managed a project you're probably thankful that projects don't last forever – though you may have worked on some that felt that way. Project management is the planning, execution, and control of the events between the start of the project and the project's closure.

Life is like a project. You had a birthday that was your beginning point and then, somewhere out there, is your ending point. You have a good idea how life is going to end up. Your life is all of the business between your birth and your appointment with death. But isn't life, your existence, more than the space between birth and death? Isn't life full of love, excitement, wonder, creativity, friends, family, and all the good things? You know that life has its pain, misery, and sadness too; life is not all ice cream cones,

chirping birds, and walks on sandy beaches. Life is rich with experiences, lessons to be learned, and opportunities to savor.

All of us, regardless of our financial status, our race, our location, our religion, our health, our mental outlook, and our different human characteristics have at least this one thing in common: no one gets out alive. That's the only thing in life that is fair; for everything else you just have to deal with it, do the best you can, and take charge of your actions and reactions.

There is some good news though: you get to decide much of what happens between now and then. What happens between birth and death is largely up to you. You can make decisions and choices that will affect the rest of your life starting right now. You can decide to take control of your

***Do something or
endure the misery.***

life. You can decide that you've had enough with the "somedays" and begin to create a strategy to reach specific goals on specific calendar days. You can identify what it is you want and then you

can create a plan to get what you want into and out of your life.

Life is more than just sleeping, working, eating, and projects, projects, projects. I meet so many people whose lives are long stretches of quiet, assumed misery, dotted with occasional joy, occasional passions, and occasional escapes from a job they do not enjoy. Are you living for the weekend, the vacation, or that mystical someday that just doesn't seem to come?

Are you living for some foggy idea of what your life could be? Are you that person wondering what your work has to do with why you went to school? Maybe you're someone who likes some of their work life, some of their personal life, but mostly it's just another day, another dollar. Maybe you spend more than enough hours at work to escape the boredom, misery, and disappointment of a life you've lost.

Do you start each January with a laundry list of resolutions only to see them fade by March? Knowing what to do is one thing and doing it is quite another. In life and situations there are but two choices: do something or endure the misery.

You can create a life that's worth living. Yes, you can achieve goals that mean something personal to you, for your family, for your world. You

can define and achieve success, peace, and joy. You can find, create, and do work that benefits you mentally, financially, and personally. You can find happiness on a consistent basis – not just intermittently. You can do whatever it is you want to do, but there is a catch. The catch is that you have to know what it is that you want – and then take action to achieve it. Project management can help.

My Lifelong Project Story

Projects have been my life for a long, long time. I've managed mammoth projects and I've managed tiny projects. For years I taught others how to manage their work – how to start, plan, execute, monitor, and close projects. I taught management for universities, for corporate America, and for organizations around the world. I've written a few stuffy books on project management and I've showed thousands of people how they too can lead their projects from start to completion – on time and on budget. Project management has been good to me.

Yes, I love to successfully bring projects to closure. I love to deliver on my promises. I love to teach others about project management and show them that they can do what I've done. But I knew, deep down, that I wasn't in love with project management. I loved the paychecks. I loved seeing my books in bookstores. I loved the applause, the kudos, and the recognition.

But I wasn't happy. I saw my life as a sham and I knew that any day, *any moment*, someone was going to find me out and my business and career would come crashing down around me. So I decided to enjoy as much of everything as I could – certainly that would make me happy! I spent more than I was making. Every meal was at the latest, chic, overpriced restaurant. I drank too much, smoked too many cigars, gambled my earnings, experimented with drugs, and surrounded myself with the wrong sorts of people. My life was one big party. It was fun, but it wasn't meaningful.