



Welcome to the **Fired Up Life Guide!**

If I could, I would have the words on this page leap off the paper or computer screen and high-five you, because you have no idea how *huge* this is going to be!

Millions of lives could be impacted *forever* because of what you decide to do after going through this workbook.

I'm serious!

Here's why: For millions of years, human beings have been doing incredible things. When you look back over the vast expanse of time and space and society, think about where we've come: From living in caves and rubbing sticks together to make a fire to flying into outer space, landing on the moon and coming back in rocket ships! From not having language or words to communicate with one another as cave dwellers to using handheld, mobile devices to make live phone calls (with video, no less!) from almost anywhere in the world!

Today we carry computers in our pockets: iPhones and the like. Yet we forget we already come programmed with a supercomputer on top of our shoulders – our minds! We are literally walking miracles, achieving incredible feats, as history reminds us over and over.

This might sound a bit weird, or even creepy, but stay with me: *I know something about you*. It's the deepest, truest and most important thing about who you are and what you're meant to achieve on this planet. *Do you know what it is?*

Here's the answer: The only limitation, the only thing REALLY holding you back from living out your dream and potentially impacting countless lives as a result is YOU. What I mean is this: **It's the limiting story we believe or tell ourselves that holds us back or makes us think we're not capable of something.**

But when we stop doing that, and instead tell ourselves a different story, one where anything really *is* possible, mountains shake. The earth trembles. And our achievements can inspire countless others, even moving them to tears, awe and utter disbelief.

Consider Jim Abbott, who was born without a right hand. Not going to be a star athlete, right? It would have been easy for him to fall into a sad and familiar story – one filled with limitation, resignation and self-pity. After all, life had dealt him a bad hand. (Or in this case, life had *failed* to deliver one at all!)

Somebody forgot to tell Jim Abbott, though.

The Michigan native grew up to become a star baseball pitcher, teaching himself to throw left-handed while wearing his glove on the stump that was supposed to be his right hand. Jim Abbott was named the best amateur athlete in the entire United States when he was 19 years old. (Not the best “one-handed” athlete or best “athlete with disabilities.” Jim Abbott was named the best amateur athlete for his age group in the *entire* United States!) He went on to win a Gold Medal pitching for Team USA in the 1988 Olympics. He was a first round pick in the Major League Baseball draft and spent a decade pitching in the top professional baseball league on the planet, including throwing a no-hitter(!) for the New York Yankees in 1993.

When preparing to pitch the ball, Abbott would rest a mitt on the end of his right forearm. After releasing the ball, he would quickly slip his hand into the mitt, usually in time to field any balls that a two-handed pitcher would be able to reach. Then he would secure the mitt between his right forearm and torso, slip his hand out of the mitt, and remove the ball from the mitt, usually in time to throw out the runner at first or sometimes even start a double play. At all levels, teams tried to exploit his fielding disadvantage by repeatedly bunting to him; this tactic was never effective.

Batting was not an issue for Abbott for the majority of his career, since he played in the American League, which uses a designated hitter for the pitcher's spot in the batting order. However, he *could* hit, as evidenced by the home runs he smacked during batting practice. He also tripled and had multiple hits during his 21 professional at bats in Major League Baseball.

Jim Abbott did all that with only one hand.

And you still think you can't start a blog or lose 10 pounds?

Here's the secret: Once you start believing in yourself, once you are *certain* of what you can achieve and do in this world, anything is possible. Anything!

Mountains will tremble, stars will shine, seas will rise – you possess that type of power with the way your life can speak to others. The reason is this: **We were put on this earth to engage, inspire and impact one another. No man (or woman) is an island!**

And no matter how small your immediate sphere of influence might be right now, you cannot imagine the impact even the smallest action might have in the larger story unfolding around us.

Let's say, for example, you're a dog groomer. You picked this guide up hoping you can figure out how to launch a blog, and right now you're thinking to yourself, "Who the heck is this crazy Nemo guy and what does he see in me that I'm missing out on? I take care of dogs every day – I'm not out there trying to cure cancer!"

Stay with me for a moment on this.

Let's imagine that one of the dogs you take care of needs extra love and attention this morning. You can sense it because you're gifted with dogs and have a sixth sense about their feelings and emotions at any given moment. So, responding to that need, you give this dog extra TLC, using your grooming session to bestow on that dog a sense of dignity, grace and compassion that it will carry forward into its day. And when that dog is done, looking and feeling great, it will leap into its owner's arms with delight, licking his or her face and exploding with the type of unconditional love that dogs share so well.

Now, what you didn't know is that this very morning, the dog's owner was ready to kill himself. The depression that has haunted him for decades was worse than ever, and it felt like nobody in the world cared for him. Yet something, some small nudge, prompted him to pick up the dog at your grooming salon first. To say goodbye one more time, maybe.

But when that dog leapt into his arms, and licked his face, wagging its tail and regaling him with unconditional love, something happened. The owner snapped out of that trance, infused with a shot of love and compassion, reminded that he is *not* alone, that love is real and present in his life.

It might sound farfetched, but I assure you it's not. Studies have shown that dogs can have a measurable impact on the human condition, making us feel better, soothing us and lifting our spirits when nobody else can.

If you own a loving dog, you don't need me to cite scientific studies or psychology papers – you've experienced it firsthand after an awful day at the office. Seriously, how can you stay angry, frustrated and miserable when the dog hears you open the front door and rushes forward, tail wagging, eyes inviting, body vibrating, tongue desperately trying to give you kisses and affection as you kneel down to pet him or her?

Here's a real-life example of how one small action a perfect stranger took on a cold, dark November evening during the late 1970s ended up feeding more than 2 million people in 36 countries as a result.

It begins with the story of a young boy named Anthony, who grew up in a broken family plagued by alcoholism, poverty and abuse. One Thanksgiving, Anthony and his family had nothing to eat. No turkey, no trimmings – not even a box of macaroni and cheese! His mother and stepfather were arguing (again), screaming voices and anger filling the house on what was supposed to be joyous, family-centered holiday.

There was a knock at the door. Anthony answered, and a stranger was there. In his arms, he had baskets of food – turkey, trimmings and desserts.

“I came out of that experience with this sense of such gratitude that a stranger cared so much about me and my family,” Anthony said later. “I set a goal that when I had the ability, I was going to go out and feed other families. When I was 17, I fed two families. The next year I fed four families, the next year it was ten ... and now [our foundation] feeds two million people in thirty-six countries around the world.”

Anthony grew up to become Tony Robbins, one of the world's best-known motivational speakers.

I can't see your face as you read this, but I hope it is filled with a mixture of excitement and curiosity at the stories I'm telling you. **I hope you're beginning to realize how important you are and how much the rest of us on this planet need you running at full speed and living out your passion!**

Here's why: *There's only one you.* Nobody else – nobody! – can match your unique gifts, talents, personality and passion. You, my friend, have an irreplaceable role to play in this cosmic story we're all caught up in. And I wonder if you have *any idea* of what you're truly capable of!

“The opposite of courage in our society is not cowardice. It's conformity.”
– Earl Nightengale

In the introduction of *Fired Up!*, I reference a powerful movie scene from *The Matrix* – the one where an otherwise unremarkable man named Thomas Anderson takes the first step toward his true calling. In that moment, when Thomas Anderson chooses the red pill and embraces his true name (Neo), he takes the first critical step toward becoming a man whose heroism and courage literally help save human civilization!

There are countless more examples in film, story and everyday life of men and women leaving behind that limiting story we tell ourselves and instead stepping into one that is much larger, more powerful and (most important) more TRUE.

Why should you be any different? If this journey is to go anywhere, then we must start here: **Anything is possible.**

Repeat that out loud, right now: **Anything is possible.**

Here's why: God did not put you on this earth to live a second-rate life. He did not ensure you were “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14) so that you could slave away doing work you weren't passionate about, living a disengaged life and failing to craft a meaningful legacy.

FIRESIDE CHAT

What emotions or thoughts are rising to the surface as you read this? Journal below what comes to mind – don't edit yourself! Just let the words come out. Are you excited? Scared? Fired Up? Write down what comes to mind in the space below, and when you're finished, click on the green "LIVE" tab on the right-hand side of the document to begin the next section!

“Build your own dreams or someone else will hire you to build theirs.” – Farrah Gray

“The two most important days in a person’s life are the day that you’re born and the day that you find out why.” – Mark Twain

Where to Begin

The first thing you must realize is that we live in the single best time in human history to turn your passion into a sustainable income!

As I share in *Fired Up*, we now carry a portable television studio (iPhone) in our pocket. We have the ability to broadcast our own television show to the entire world for *free* thanks to outlets like YouTube. We have the ability to create our own personal printing press or online company thanks to blogs and websites. (Again, for free!) We can write and publish books on the world’s largest bookstore (Amazon.com) for free in a matter of minutes. We can locate, engage and network with leaders and decision makers at almost every large and small business on the planet (again, at no cost) thanks to LinkedIn.

The key is this: First, figure out *what* your passion is, and second, figure out *how* to leverage that passion into something people will pay money for!

Doing What You Love vs. “Work”

Let me ask you: How do you feel when you finish an activity that you’re passionate about? What’s your mood like? What’s your energy level like? What type of spirits are you in? Write what comes to mind below!

Now, contrast that scenario with *work*. How do you feel after spending hours on something that you *have* to do? What’s your mood like then? How about your energy level?

It's No Wonder



Have you seen *The Wonder Years* clip featuring Kevin Arnold's dad at the dinner table after a long day at work? If not, go to www.FiredUpLive.com/Live to watch it, and then I want you to tell me something: Can you relate? Do you feel like Kevin Arnold's dad at the end of the day? Why or why not? Write your answer below!

WAIT! What if I don't know what my passion or calling is?

Don't worry – that's the most common question I hear! My answer, along with all the resources you need to figure it out, are online at www.FiredUpLive.com/Passion. Go to that page right now, and you'll find the tools, tips and resources you need to discover what it is. And once you do, come back here and let's keep going!

With that in mind, let's start here!

What IS your passion? What's your calling? What, if you could draw up a dream job or career for yourself, would that look like? I want you to write out your answer below, and BE AS SPECIFIC AND DETAILED AS POSSIBLE! No limits! How much money do you want to make? How many hours do you want to work in a typical week? Do you want to start a company or work for someone else? Do you want to create a product or sell a service? (If so, what would it be? What type of benefit or value would it bring to others?) Or, do you want to focus on a certain group of people (single moms, for example) and have a specific impact on that group? Or is it just as simple as, "I want to get paid to do what I love – go fishing!" What's the ideal

situation for you? Write your thoughts in the space below, and be HONEST WITH YOURSELF ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT!

Keep in mind, with what you've written above, *there is no wrong answer!* Even if you wrote, "I want to get paid to do what I love – go fishing!" that's fine! We can make that happen! You can open up a bait shop, or become a fishing guide, or go on the professional fishing tour and compete in tournaments, or start a blog on fishing that shares your best advice, insights and tips, building an audience and selling advertising to support yourself! Or you can create fishing-related products or services and sell those online or in stores. You can write a book or create an online course on bass fishing that you market and sell to millions of people!

Do you see how exciting this is? Do you see how limitless the possibilities are? The only limitations are your imagination, passion and persistence! I'm serious! The technology and tools in place today make it easier than ever to achieve your dreams, but you still have to *achieve* them. You have to go out there and do the work! Nobody will hand you anything. That's why it's so important to make sure you're pursuing something that you love, something that makes you come alive, that you feel energized and excited to jump into, day after day, hour after hour. Otherwise you'll give up once the road becomes difficult (and it will!), or else, since you're doing something you're not passionate about, you'll offer a second-rate product, service or job performance to your audience or employer.

Don't chase money. Instead, chase your passions – the money will follow! Trust me – the money *will* follow! It is as inevitable as the sun rising in the East and setting in the West. It is impossible to fail when you focus in on a specific outcome or desire and are willing to do whatever it takes to achieve it. And the only way to get that type of desire and perseverance is to make your goal something you're passionate about!

What's Holding You Back?

Are you still sitting on the sidelines of life? If you are, why aren't you chasing your dreams and doing what you love? What's holding you back? Take a moment to jot down what comes to mind. Don't edit your thoughts – just let it flow onto the paper or screen below. What words are showing up?



Inciting a Change

Have you ever had an “inciting incident” in your life that caused you to change something dramatically? If so, what was it? What (or who!) happened to you? What changed as a result? Write your thoughts below!

“The biggest risk is not taking any risk. In a world that is changing really quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks.” – Mark Zuckerberg

“Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure ... than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much, because they live in a gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat.” – Theodore Roosevelt

Daddy Matters

The most powerful human relationship in the universe is the one between a Father and Son or a Father and Daughter. Our dads have a *massive* impact on our lives. If your dad was a deadbeat, or wasn't around, or walked out on your family, it had a massive impact on who you've become as an adult, correct?

Or, if your dad was warm, loving and affirming, your biggest supporter and the one who made you believe you were capable of anything, that had a massive impact on where you are today too, right?

Let's start here: Tell me about your dad. What kind of guy was/is he? What kind of role and impact has he had in your life? What's your relationship with him like? If your biological father wasn't or isn't in the picture, tell me about the impact his absence has had in your life up to this point. What did (or do) you miss most about not having a father around? Have you found a strong male influence or father-figure type that you've sought out to fill that void? If so, what's that been like? Write your thoughts below!

Risk – Your Dad's Approach

I want you to think about your dad for a minute. Which of the guys in the *Parable of the Talents* story from Chapter 2 of *Fired Up!* is (or was) he most like? And how has that impacted your approach to life and risk as a result? Would your dad be the type to bury the money under the front porch, avoiding all risk and playing it safe? Or would he go the other way?

Your Turn

Let me ask you something: What's the biggest risk YOU have ever taken, and how did it turn out?

Your answer to that question is more important than you know.

What you've risked tells me whether you're risking for good or just being foolish.

How you've risked tells me about your approach to life and the amount of faith you have in yourself, God and others.

Where you've risked tells me what you're focused on and where you're going.

When you've risked tells me about your background and your father's influence.

So, how about it? Journal about the biggest risk you've ever taken in your life, and how things turned out!

The Training Ground

In this chapter, I've shared some stories about the times I took childhood risks and succeed (starting my own touch football game) and other times when I failed (tattling on Joe the 8th grader). Can you relate? Do you have similar stories you could share with me from your childhood? Times of risk, reward and failure? Did your parents always swoop in to save the day? Did someone else fight your biggest childhood battles for you? If they did, how has it impacted your self-esteem and self-confidence? Take a minute and jot down what comes to mind. We will need to unpack those thoughts and feelings later on to get a deeper understanding of your approach and view of risk.

Will You Fight?



Go to www.FiredUpLive.com/Risk and watch William Wallace's battlefield speech scene from *Braveheart*. Then come back here and write down what it stirs up inside you. What are you feeling? Are you ready to charge into battle behind a leader like William Wallace? Or are you ready to run for the hills? Talk to me, Goose! (That's a "Top Gun" reference for those of you not alive in the mid-1980s to witness Tom Cruise's big screen greatness as an Navy fighter pilot!)

Who Are You?

Think for a moment about the movies you love and the characters you identify with. Jot down what comes to mind. What movies stir your heart? Which characters resonate most deeply with you and why?

Tell me: Do any of your favorite movie characters take risks? (If none of them do, that might say something about where your heart is at right now when it comes to risk.) What do you admire about your favorite characters in terms of their approach to risk? More important, how do THEY approach risk? Do they need someone (or something!) to prod them into taking a big risk, or is it just part of their personality to go for it?

Are You Ready to Risk?

I need to ask: **Where are you holding back in your life and career right now?** What aren't you chasing after? What haunts you in those quiet moments of the early morning, before the chaos of the day distracts you and keeps your heart and head occupied? Where have you been afraid to go? Write out your thoughts below!

Now: How does it feel seeing it written down on paper? What rises up inside you when you read what you just wrote? Jot what comes to mind in the space below.

Another question: What do you believe must happen for you to move you into taking the risks you need to in order to achieve your dreams? Share your thoughts below!

“I haven’t failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” – Thomas Edison

Once you reframe your approach to risk and “failure,” you set yourself free to create something special! With the goals or dreams you want to accomplish, how can you redefine the concept of “failure” as opposed to “another way that won’t work” like Edison did? Write down your thoughts.

Let’s finish with this: What’s the biggest risk you need to take in your life? Your career? Write it down below, and make it real. When you’re finished, read the chapter titled “Lead” in *Fired Up!*, and then continue on here in the *Life Guide!*

“A leader is a dealer in hope.” – Napoleon Bonaparte

“If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities.” —Maya Angelou

“It is absurd that a man should rule others, who cannot rule himself.” – Latin Proverb

Start Here: Who are some of your favorite all-time leaders? List them out below.

Look back over the list you just created. Are there any common qualities, traits or characteristics of the leaders you admire most? If so, list them in the space below!

The Man (or Woman) in the Mirror

We talk in this chapter about the power of self-image and how it can help – or hinder – our ability to lead. I want to ask: **How do others see you?**

More important, how do YOU see yourself? What are the things you love about who you are? What are the things you're most ashamed of? Journal about it below.

Looking Back, Moving Forward

My counselor told me something once I never forgot: "There are no perfect families. There are only healthy and unhealthy families."

What type of family situation did you grow up in? What were the messages your father and/or mother spoke over you? How did your family deal with conflict, drama and disagreements?

Author John Bradshaw talks about how, as little children, we literally view our parents as gods. From our perspective as a young, small child, our parents are these huge beings, towering over us, physically and mentally superior. In a very real way, we are at their mercy. So, without wading into the murky waters of a *Nature vs. Nurture* argument, know this: **Imperfect as they were, present or not, our parents had (and still have!) a massive impact on the type of person we believe ourselves to be.**

For instance, young boys have a very specific set of questions they're looking to have answered, according to Author John Eldredge.

Every little boy wants to know: Do I have what it takes? Am I the real deal?

The boy is a warrior, Eldredge notes, and you see this when you let young boys loose. Wrestling, climbing, jumping – the more dangerous, the more wild, the better! Young boys need to test themselves, to see if indeed they do have what it takes, especially in the eyes of their Father.

"Dad, did you see that?"

"Dad, watch this!"

Any Father of a young son has heard those words a thousand times or more during those formative years. I am raising three young boys, and whenever I stoop over to pick something up off the kitchen floor, I know chances are good one of them is going to make a flying leap from his chair onto my back, throwing his arms around my neck and demanding a piggy-back ride, or else hoping I'll react like an angry bull in the ring, trying to toss the cowboy off my back.

Whether they verbalize it or not, my boys are always asking that question: "Dad, do I have what it takes? Am I the real deal? Will I come through when I'm needed most?"

I want you to spend some time right now journaling about your father. I want you to go back to your earliest memories – was your dad around? Was he present? What type of man was he? Did he ignore your questions, or affirm you? Or, as is too often the case, did he tell you that you did NOT have what it took – that you were a wimp, a coward or worse?

As a man, I've found immense (and I mean immense!) truth, help and encouragement from John Eldredge's books on masculinity – in particular *Wild At Heart* and *Fathered By God*. No matter what your relationship with your father was (or is), these books, teachings and talks can bring you needed hope, healing and restoration. More important, as you heal and step into becoming the man you were meant to be, your wife and children benefit as a result! Find out more about John Eldredge and his books in the Resource section online at www.FiredUpLive.com/Resources or go straight to his website at www.RansomedHeart.com.

Ladies First!

Just as little boys do, little girls *also* have a specific set of questions they need answered, according to Eldredge.

Every girl wants to know: Am I lovely? Am I beautiful? Do you see me? Do I have what it takes to do amazing things with my life?

Those of you with young daughters, or who were once a daughter yourself, think about what little girls love – playing dress up, being a princess, trying on mom's shoes and jewelry, spinning around in a ballet outfit, wearing a tiara, going on a "date" with Daddy ... on and on it goes!

Boys and girls alike look to their Fathers to answer these crucial questions.

Ladies, I want you to spend a few minutes journaling about your dad. Was he around? Or was he always working? Was your dad checked out, newspaper in front of his face (if you grew up in that era) or staring at the TV after dinner? Or did he take you on dates, court you, tell you how beautiful, lovely and special you

were (and still are)? Were you daddy’s little girl, or was there hurt and abuse instead? Journal below. Unpack the raw feelings, emotions and beliefs that bubble up inside you as you ponder your relationship with your dad.

Mother, May I?

Mothers also play a massive role in our lives, of course. This is especially true in the areas of self-esteem, intimacy, affection, love and self-confidence.

Men and women alike, talk to me about your relationship with your mother. What was (or is) she like? Was she warm, loving and affectionate? Did she, as Gary Vaynerchuk says, instill you with an almost “illegal” amount of self-confidence? Or did your mom have the opposite effect? Was she even around? Write about it. Hold nothing back.

Author Stasi Eldredge (John’s wife) writes books and hosts events for women that dive into these questions along with the hope and healing that’s available. Her books are so good that even though I’m not a woman, I read them myself! In part, I love the fact that Stasi Eldredge does not sugarcoat or pretend she’s perfect, even now as she runs a Christian ministry with her husband. She’s real, she’s honest and (most important) she’s sharing the hope and healing available to both men and women. Her books for women include *Captivating*, *Becoming Myself* and *Free to Be Me*, among others. Learn more at www.RansomedHeart.com or in the Resources section at www.FiredUpLive.com/Resources.

Why Does This Matter?

Chances are, what I’ve been asking you to do in this section has been difficult – painful, even. But there’s a point to the pain.

“Self-image ... controls what you can and cannot accomplish, what is difficult or easy for you, even how others respond to you just as certainly and scientifically as a thermostat controls the temperature in your home.” – Maxwell Maltz

If we don't deal with first exploring and then improving the negative parts of our self-image, we'll remain limited in what we can achieve in a professional capacity. More important, we'll remain deprived of the genuine joy and freedom we deserve!

Let me say this: **Do the work.** Take what you've put down on paper here as a beginning. Go deeper with some of the books I've suggested, or else find some on your own that speak to your heart. Get with someone you can trust – a healthy friend, a pastor, a counselor – and start talking about this stuff. Trust me, friend, the journey is not only worth it, but your professional and personal happiness depend on you completing it!

The Real You

Let me ask: Are you showing the world who YOU are? What you're passionate about? Are you being true to yourself? Or do you feel like an actor most days, living out someone else's life or career? (The answers you give reveal much about the current state of your self-image.) Share below what surfaces in your heart when you contemplate these questions. Where have you held back? Are there certain parts of yourself or passions you have that you aren't sharing with others? Why or why not?

Big Dreams = Big Followings

Let's shift gears. Do you have a sense of a larger mission you want to invite others into, one that captures their hearts and moves them from disinterest and passivity into passion and action? Write that down. What would it look like? What would others feel, see or experience as a result of your product, your service or your organization?

Not sure? Do this!

If you need help tapping into your passions and discovering your true calling, visit www.FiredUpLive.com/Passion for ideas and resources aimed at helping you bridge that gap!

So, what do you say? What is it, here and now, TODAY, that you are SURE you're supposed to be doing? What makes you come alive? Write some thoughts out!

The Brand of YOU

Another important element to tap into is this: What makes you unique/different/better than others in your professional field? A unique skill set or unusual professional background? Are there elements of your personality you can draw upon to stand out from the crowd? For instance, do you have a great sense of humor? A compelling personal story of how you got to where you are today? Maybe it's your communication style? Your accent? It can be anything, as long as it is uniquely YOU! Write down what comes to mind.

Know Your Enemy

Your journey to joy and freedom is opposed. You know that, don't you? Up to this point in your life, how have you categorized the forces that often seem to align against you? Is spiritual warfare part of your worldview? Karma? Bad luck? Something else? Share your thoughts below, because it's important to categorize and classify your viewpoint on the obstacles and/or forces standing in your way.

If you really dug into the questions in this section, now might be a good time for rest. Likely, many emotions were raised. You might feel drained or hurt, stirring up old feelings and emotions you haven't felt in some time. It will help your heart to talk about it. Find someone you trust and process what's been coming out.

One other suggestion: Do something fun. Take a walk. Play a game. Goof off. Put on your sweatpants and a comfortable shirt and curl up next to the fireplace with a fun book or funny movie. It's okay to take your foot off the gas pedal for a bit! When you're ready, read the chapter "Show" over in *Fired Up!*, and then continue here in the *Life Guide!*

“If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten.” – Rudyard Kipling

“After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world.” – Philip Pullman

Powerful Prose

Think about the most powerful stories you’ve read or watched – are there any common themes that rise to the surface? In your mind, what makes for a great story? Share some thoughts below!

What’s Your Story?

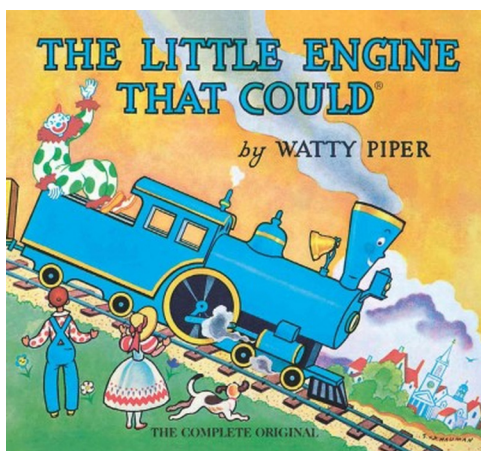
Whether you realize it or not, there’s a personal narrative attached to your professional career. When a potential employer looks at your résumé or LinkedIn profile, he or she is going to form a story in his or her head based on the information you share. Are you a job hopper? A one-trick pony? A rising star? Here’s the point: If you don’t tell your own story (and tell it well), someone else will do it for you!

Pull up your LinkedIn profile or grab a copy of your work history and look it over. Make sure it’s not just a list of boring, black-and-white information. (I worked here, I held this position, I performed these duties, etc.)

If it is, don’t worry – most of us were trained to do it that way! Either way, let’s spend the next few minutes turning your professional career into a personal narrative. I want you to add emotion, passion and themes to it.

The idea is to write out your work history as if it were a *story* instead of a set of facts. Examine how your core passions and talents came to the surface in each of your jobs, or how they impacted the career path you’ve taken! (For instance, don’t just say you helped rewrite a marketing plan for your company’s agricultural tools division, resulting in an 87 percent sales increase. Instead, say that your lifelong passion for studying the intersection of human psychology and sales inspired you to rewrite your company’s marketing plan for the agricultural tools division, resulting in a sales increase of 87 percent in the first six months your strategy was implemented in the field. Explain how, by going outside the normal scope of your job and delving into academic research on human behavior, you added several specific new wrinkles to the marketing plan, which in turn helped sales reps in the field achieve better results!)

See how it works? **Take some time and turn your work history into a narrative.** Who are you, professionally? What are you known for? (Or what do you *want* to be known for?) What drives you? How has that shown up in the professional arena? What unique traits, talents or techniques have you brought to your employers, and what's occurred as a result? Write out your professional story below, and then refine it so you can tell it well during a job interview or networking meeting!



I Think I Can, I Think I Can!

My favorite childhood book was called *The Little Engine That Could*. In the story, a little blue train engine is asked to do what seems like an impossible task – pull a long train of freight cars up and over a large mountain.

Here's a summary of the story: “A little railroad engine was employed about a station yard for such work as it was built for, pulling a few cars on and off the switches. One morning it was waiting for the next call when a long train of freight-cars asked a large engine in the roundhouse to take it over the hill.

“‘I can’t; that is too much a pull for me,’ said the great engine built for hard work. Then the train asked another engine, and another, only to hear excuses and be refused. In desperation, the train asked the little blue engine to draw it up the grade and down on the other side.

“‘I think I can,’ puffed the little locomotive, and put itself in front of the great heavy train. As it went on the little engine kept bravely puffing faster and faster, ‘I think I can, I think I can, I think I can.’

“As it neared the top of the grade, which had so discouraged the larger engines, it went more slowly. However, it still kept saying, “‘I-think-I-can, I-think-I-can.’”

“It reached the top by drawing on bravery and then went on down the grade, congratulating itself by saying, ‘I thought I could, I thought I could.’”

“Whether you think you can or think you can’t, you’re right.” – Henry Ford

We are what we think about all day long. So I need to ask you: What DO you think about all day long? What types of internal conversations do you have with yourself? What types of seeds are you planting and watering inside your mind each morning? If I could listen in on your internal dialogue for a day, what types of conversations would I hear? What would the tone be like? What type of story are you telling yourself? Take a few moments to write your answer below!

If you’re unhappy or unsatisfied with some aspect of your life, you need to change the story you’re telling yourself! Go to www.FiredUpLive.com/Show for some tips and links to resources on how to change the internal narrative that goes on within you each and every day. **I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to change the negative story you’re telling yourself!** If you want to change your future, change your thoughts!

No Limits

What limitations have you put on your life and career so far? Why? What have you told yourself about how much you can – or can’t – achieve, and why have you believed it? Write out what comes to mind below.

Are You Certain?

One of the secrets to achieving a goal is to act as if it were already a reality. Here’s why: **Your mind cannot tell the difference between what you THINK is reality and what actually IS reality!**

Remember Thomas Edison and the light bulb? Because he was *certain* he would create this amazing invention, Edison did not view failure as indictment on him personally or an indication that the desired outcome would never occur. Rather, he viewed each failed attempt as a stepping stone (“I never failed – I just found 10,000 ways that didn’t work”) that moved him closer to the finished product, which he was certain he would attain.

Gary Vaynerchuk talks about a meeting when he pitched *Virgin Airlines* executives on the idea of playing episodes of his Wine Library TV show as in-flight entertainment. The executives told him they were intrigued by the idea and appreciated his enthusiasm, but they didn't see his content being a fit. Vaynerchuk's response was classic Gary Vee: He held up his left arm, rolled up his sleeve and began tapping his watch.

"It's just a matter of this, guys," he said, looking at the executives in the room. "It's just a matter of time, because I'm certain my show is the *perfect* fit for your passengers!"

Vaynerchuk's tone wasn't arrogant or belligerent. Rather, he was matter-of-fact, because he felt *certain* the *Virgin Airlines* executives would realize what a great fit his show was for their audience.

And you know what? Eventually, they did, and *Wine Library TV* began being offered as in-flight entertainment! Gary Vaynerchuk did not take their initial refusal as the final verdict, because he was *certain* he would attain his goal no matter how long it took!

What's something in your life or career that you need to be certain about? What's a "should" in your personal or professional situation that needs to become a "must"? If you can't move yourself into that state of mind, you'll never achieve your dream! Write below about one specific area of your life, work or career that you know you need to start acting with certainty about!

Info-tainment

One of the biggest mistakes I see in the working world is the assumption that we have to be ultra "professional" in our approach or presentation, meaning there's no room for humor, entertainment or fun.

Even if I'm in a room of high-powered executives, I still break out my *Vanilla Ice* impressions and 1980s references during a presentation. And here's why: Despite what their job titles might indicate, each person in that room still has a sense of humor and likes to be entertained while they learn! They're still people! Everyone in that room was once a child, and can relate to the funny stories or memories I share of certain eras that they grew up in. In fact, my approach really stands out because it offers such a stark contrast to the typical dry, boring "presentation" of information and facts they typically receive.

Yes, we need to know our audience, but I don't care what anyone tells you – people, no matter what their station or standing in life, still love to be entertained!

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." – Maya Angelou

What are some ways you can bring info-tainment into your professional life and presentations? Without going too far over the top, what are some fun anecdotes or metaphors you can draw on to illustrate a trend or make a point? Let your imagination guide you, and have fun with it! If you're having fun, your audience will too! Write out some ideas below of ways you can do this with your next presentation, meeting or job interview!

More Than a Feeling

It is critical that you make others *feel* something about your product, service or personal brand.

“People value relationships – and even material goods – based on the meaning they evoke,” Nancy Duarte says in her book *Resonate*. “The value of one’s belongings or even their life is not based on what it physically is; the real value comes from the meaningfulness associated with it by another person.”

What is the unique story or value others can associate with YOU and your personal brand? Or with your product, service or organization? What will others walk away *feeling* after interacting with you, your product or your service? Write what comes to mind in the space below!

Problems and Solutions

What are the key problems you can solve for your employer, customer or target audience? **Write out a list of problems your target audience has and the solutions you can provide.** Be as specific as possible – the more specific and detailed you can be in describing a certain problem, the better you can position and explain your solution!

Remember, we need to **sell transformation first and foremost** when it comes to our audience. So, let's get to it: What IS the transformation you can sell? Not the features or benefits of you or your product or service, but the transformation? What is the end result, accomplishment or *feeling* someone will get from hiring you, or else using your product or service or partnering with your organization? Write out some examples below! (Here's one simple example if you need help to get started. Think about how a weight loss company never talks right away about how its product actually *works*. Instead, it starts with the *transformational* element – Linda lost 38 pounds, Chuck went from a size 44 waist to a size 32, and so on. Only later (sometimes much later!) does the weight loss company bother to tell you how the product or service actually works. The reason is, we need to be sold on the transformation part of things first!)

You Can Do It, Too!

Before you can sell someone on your product, service or organization, you have to sell that person on *himself*! What I mean is, if someone thinks your product or service is too hard to use, or that he or she isn't smart enough, or talented enough, or doesn't have the time to implement it, he or she won't buy it! No matter how perfectly your "solution" might solve his "problem," your prospect will walk away if he isn't sold on HIS ability to utilize it!

So let's get to it: Is your product or service *easy* to use? Or is it only for a certain type of person? Do I need a certain level of education, experience or talent to really benefit from what you're selling me? Or can "anybody do this" because it's so user-friendly and intuitive to use? Who is this product or service *for*? Men? Women? Children? Cat lovers? *That's* why marketers obsess over and even create pretend customer avatars or buyer personas. The more you can envision the *exact* type of person who would use your product or service, the better you can sell that person on himself and his ability to utilize it! Don't skip this step! Spend some time in the space below writing out some thoughts on your product, service or organization and in what specific ways you'll need to sell your clients or customers on themselves and their ability to utilize what you're offering.

Ready to Resonate?

If you have an iPad or Apple computer, you can get Nancy Duarte’s amazing, interactive eBook *Resonate* (on the power of leveraging story in presentations, branding and marketing) for free via the iTunes store - <http://bit.ly/1uqZsBD>

Also visit www.FiredUpLive.com/Story for a list of powerful talks, books and other resources related to storytelling and business!

It’s Not About You

Another important point is this: Is your content or marketing material client-facing? Is it answering the key questions of, “What’s in it for me? Why should I care?”

Take a piece of marketing material that you’re unhappy with or that hasn’t been effective, and examine it in light of these questions. Is your material focused on what *they* get as a result? Or is it just prattling on about you or your product instead? **Remember, nobody cares about what YOU want out of the exchange!** They only care about themselves, morning noon and supper! Get into their heads, understand what they want, and then position yourself, your product or your service as something that will help them achieve what they’re looking for! Break down one example in the space below of how you can re-engineer a piece of your content to meet this criteria. Go! (And when you’re finished, read the chapter on “Hustle” over in *Fired Up!* and then continue here in the *Life Guide!*)



“Talent is cheaper than table salt. What separates the talented individual from the successful one is a lot of hard work.” – Stephen King

“I know you’ve heard it a thousand times before. But it’s true – hard work pays off. If you want to be good, you have to practice, practice, practice. If you don’t love something, then don’t do it.” – Ray Bradbury

“The reason a lot of people do not recognize opportunity is because it usually goes around wearing overalls looking like hard work.” – Thomas Edison

Ideas vs. Execution

What are some of your best ideas or the best ideas you’ve seen from others on a business or personal level? Jot them down below!

Now, how many of those ideas listed above have actually come to fruition? If they did, how hard was it to turn those ideas into reality? Write your thoughts.

Your Turn

Take your single best business or career idea that you haven't yet accomplished. What's standing in the way? Write out all the obstacles and hurdles you must overcome to make it happen.

Spoiled vs. Struggling

Stop for a moment and let's go back a few years: What was your childhood like? Did you have to fight, scratch and claw for everything you earned, or was life easy? How did your upbringing impact your approach to hard work and hustle later in life? Write your thoughts below!

Hey, Coach!

Did you have a great coach or mentor growing up? How did he or she impact your life as a result? How did he or she shape the type of person you've become or the things you've accomplished? Talk to me, Goose!

Are you in need of a coach or mentor today? If so, identify some of the people in your life you feel you can learn from. Write their names and contact information below! If you're stumped, write MY name and contact info down! (I do offer 1-to-1 coaching services – LOL!)

Even if you can't get direct, 1-on-1 access to these people, can you read their books, listen to their talks or attend their events? (For example, I have a personal business coach – John Michael Morgan – that I pay monthly for advice, insight and feedback. I also use Tony Robbins' programs, talks, books and videos. Both John and Tony's coaching have been invaluable to me, even though in John's situation we talk 1-on-1 each month and in Tony's case we've never met!)

Walk the Talk

How about it? Are you ready to give your career, vision or idea the kind of attention it deserves? Are you going to get off the sidelines and into the game? Or are you going to play it safe and die with unfulfilled dreams instead of incredible memories? Write below what IMMEDIATE action you're going to take, today, right now, to start building momentum and moving toward your goals! Start with something small – as simple as, "I'm going to buy that book, or sign up for that class, or begin my certification program." Then add more detailed and lengthy steps, and attach due dates and deadlines to keep yourself accountable. If it helps (and it will!) find someone you can partner with or who will agree to keep you on task and accountable!

When you're finished, read the chapter "Learn" over in *Fired Up!* and then jump back into the *Life Guide* to keep the ball rolling!



“Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.” – Albert Einstein

“A man only learns in two ways – one by reading, and the other by association with smarter people.” – Will Rogers

“It’s what you learn after you know it all that counts.” – John Wooden

Are You Qualified?

Have you said “No” to a career opportunity or new direction in your life because you thought you weren’t qualified or hadn’t done enough schooling? Or have you been told, “You have to go back to school before you can do that?” Journal what surfaces in your heart when you reflect on those questions!

Loving to Learn

What’s your favorite way to learn? Reading books? Talking with others? Watching instructional videos? Getting “hands on” and handling the material yourself until you master it? Also, what are some *specific* books, classes, videos, talks or programs you need to pursue in order to achieve your dreams? Do you need to research some specific schools, online courses or books related to pursuing your passion?

Are there certain people you need to network with or connect to? Write out a list of people you can learn from, folks who would be ideal coaches, teachers or mentors. Then set a time and date for when you'll reach out to each one, and think about what YOU can offer THEM in terms of value in the space of a networking meeting or consulting type relationship.

Along with that, what arrangements do you need to make in order to move into these educational opportunities? Do you need to take out a loan? Find daycare for your kids? Take a second job to pay for tuition? Also, set specific times and dates on *when* you will accomplish or complete a certain program or course. Write about it below!

Class Dismissed

Can you believe how far we've come? I hope you're excited, because what you have in your hand right now is a *personalized* blueprint for creating the life, career and legacy you've always wanted! Go over to *Fired Up!*, read the chapter on "Love," and then come back here to finish this thing off!



“Have you ever been in love? Horrible isn’t it? It makes you so vulnerable. It opens your chest and it opens up your heart and it means that someone can get inside you and mess you up.” – Neil Gaiman

“Love is a force more formidable than any other. It is invisible – it cannot be seen or measured, yet it is powerful enough to transform you in a moment, and offer you more joy than any material possession could.” – Barbara de Angelis

“My deepest awareness of myself is that I am deeply loved by Jesus Christ and I have done nothing to earn it or deserve it.” – Brennan Manning

Let’s Get Spiritual

What’s your view of God? Do even *believe* in God? What did your parents believe about God or teach you about God or a Higher Power of some sort? How did your religious or church experience shape your views of God and religion growing up? Write down your thoughts on spirituality, including how they were formed and where they are today.

The Existence of Evil

I realize many people don’t believe in God, angels, demons or anything of a spiritual nature. So how do we explain the evil we see every day in our world? Rape, murder, kidnapping, torture ... How can we account for the evil and malice that comes to us every night on the evening news? What would you say to me if we were sitting across from one another in a coffee shop and I tossed these questions your way? Write down what you think you’d say!

Your Story, Your Challenges

What are the biggest roadblocks you are seeing, feeling and experiencing in your life right now? In fact, what comes to mind as you read this and ponder this question? What do you attribute these obstacles to? Share your thoughts below.

Your Gifts + Your Glory

I want you to spend a few minutes journaling about your gifts, and the impact on others you can have (or have already had!) when you're at the top of your game and living in your glory. What does it look like? How do you impact others in a positive way? What's their reaction? Share in the space below!

Unbelievable Love

Author and Speaker Brennan Manning once said this: **“God loves you as you are, not as you should be.”**

Let me ask: Does this resonate? Can you relate? Do you love yourself? Do you accept yourself? Do you think God loves you as you are, not as you should be? Take a moment to write down what comes to the surface. Don't edit yourself – just write it out. (What shows up is the language of your heart and the story you're telling yourself!)

Legacy Matters

If you died today, what would people say at your funeral? What would you be known or remembered for? What stories would others tell about you? Would there be a mix of laughter, tears and joy? Or just empty platitudes, clichés and a businesslike atmosphere?

I once attended a funeral with a powerful executive who seemed to have it all – a high-paying job, professional prestige and an important role in a national organization.

Looking around the church lobby, seeing the tears, hugs and laughs being shared about the man being mourned, the executive looked at me and said, “Nobody’s going to cry at my funeral. Hell, nobody’s even going to come.”

He said it in a quiet voice, and as he did, his face betrayed a mixture of self-pity, pain and anger.

So, how about it? If you died today, what would your legacy be? Write it out below!

A Living Funeral

In his bestselling book *Tuesdays With Morrie*, author Mitch Albom describes how his friend, mentor and teacher, Morrie Schwartz, decided one afternoon to hold a “living funeral” with his closest friends and family.

Writes Albom:

“Although he never said it to anyone, Morrie knew this would be the last year of his life. He was using a wheelchair now, and he was fighting time to say all the things he wanted to say to all the people he loved. When a colleague at Brandeis died suddenly of a heart attack, Morrie went to his funeral. He came home depressed.

“‘What a waste,’ he said. ‘All those people saying all those wonderful things, and Irv never got to hear any of it.’

“Morrie had a better idea. He made some calls. He chose a date. And on a cold Sunday afternoon, he was joined in his home by a small group of friends and family for a ‘living funeral.’ Each of them spoke and paid tribute to my old professor. Some cried. Some laughed.

“Morrie cried and laughed with them. And all the heartfelt things we never get to say to those we love, Morrie said that day. His ‘living funeral’ was a rousing success.

“Only Morrie wasn’t dead yet. In fact, the most unusual part of his life was about to unfold.”

If you aren’t sure of the impact your life has had up to this point, call together the ones you love and hold a living funeral. What you hear may shock, surprise, delight or sadden you. But the point is, you’ll know *exactly* what your impact on the most important people on your life has been to this point – provided those in attendance have permission to be honest.

Courage, Friends!

Let’s switch gears for a minute. **What’s the most courageous, bravest thing you’ve ever done?** What did it feel like? How did others react? What’s been the legacy or impact? Journal about it below.

Along the same lines: What’s the most courageous or loving act someone else has done FOR you or your family, and how did it impact you as a result? Write about it below.

Final Thoughts

Can I just say something? (And I say this, of course, provided that you’ve gone through this entire **Fired Up! Life Guide** and been honest, thoughtful and candid with yourself along the way.)

You, my friend, are the real deal.

You are someone I wish we had more of in this world.

I say those things because the type of candor, honesty and courage it takes to complete a process like this is all too rare in today’s world. **What you just did is something very, very few people accomplish.** Think about that!

Take a minute, step back and reflect on this journey. Flip through the guide, click on the different tabs and see where this exploration has taken you. What have you learned about yourself and your life story? What's going to be different moving forward? Write some thoughts below.

Remember, you are not alone. You're never out of the fight, and I'm going to be here fighting alongside you all the way!

“No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.” – Matthew 5:15

If you'd like, email your biggest thoughts and takeaways (along with your next steps!) to me at JohnNemoPR@gmail.com. I'd love to hear what you thought of the *Fired Up! Life Guide* experience and where you're headed as a result! Also, I can't encourage you enough to share this journey with someone you love and trust, and someone who will help hold you accountable and move you forward with the plans and dreams you've outlined in this space!

Remember what I said in the very beginning of this process: **We need you. This world, more than ever, needs YOU. I'm not kidding when I say that you have a critical role to play in the larger story unfolding around us.**

Above all else, live with passion and keep moving toward the life and calling God created you for!

If you do, the world is never going to be the same.

“What we do in this life ... echoes in eternity!” – Maximus