



life
by **DESIGN**

Join the Drive to
ONE MILLION FAMILIES WORLDWIDE
Living Life By Design

think
by DESIGN



“If you don’t design your own life plan, chances are you’ll fall into someone else’s plan. And guess what they’ll plan for you?

Not much.”

– Jim Rohn

Welcome to the ***Think By Design*** Manual!

The purpose of this manual is to teach you how to create an extraordinary life using the ***Think By Design*** Method.

But before we get to the how to, let’s create some context around exactly what an ‘extraordinary life’ means, how ***Think By Design*** can help you create it and why you should even care.

An extraordinary life means, quite simply, a happy and fulfilled life.

An extraordinary life means that you have achieved, or are on the path to achieving, *everything that you have ever wanted*. The details of your extraordinary life are unique to you; however, there are some basic goals that we all strive for -- such as health, empowering relationships and security. The specific details of those things are left to you.



This is where **Think By Design** is unique. It respects you as a unique individual and understands that your idea of an extraordinary life may be very different from your friend's or neighbor's. This doesn't make you right and them wrong; it simply makes your vision, well . . . yours.

REQUIREMENTS AND STRATEGIES

At **Life By Design**, we start every conversation by making the following fundamental distinction:

- A *requirement* is something that is an unarguable necessity for your life or success.
- A *strategy* is a method or technique for fulfilling the requirement.

For example, let's consider oxygen for humans. Being human means that you need oxygen to live, and if you don't get oxygen you will die. Oxygen is a ***requirement***. Breathing is a ***strategy*** that achieves this requirement, but it's not the only strategy. If you were unconscious, you still need oxygen, but you may have trouble breathing. In this case a respirator is a strategy to help you meet your oxygen requirement.

Think By Design will help you understand the psychological requirements for the life you want and will provide you with strategies to meet those requirements.



Using this method, you will be consciously pursuing the life you have always wanted and reaping the rewards that come from your efforts.

Think By Design is not going to tell you what you should want. Unlike most self-help books or gurus, we believe that as long as you are not hurting anyone, lying or stealing, then you should have the freedom to get what you want in life, or at least die trying.

IT'S NOT FOR EVERYONE

The honest truth is that Think By Design is not for everyone.

There are no shortcuts or quick fixes when it comes to creating the extraordinary life that you say you want. This endeavor will be, without question, the second hardest thing that you ever do.

If you're not happy with the results of your life so far, it might mean you'll need to become a totally different version of yourself (a successful one) in order to get the results you've been searching for. You will challenge many of your long-held beliefs, adopt a new perspective on life, and develop plenty of new habits.

Sure, you can tell yourself that doing the hard work, hustling, and fighting for what you want is not your 'thing'...that's understandable, it's a pile of work, but just



understand that those (hustling, grinding, and fighting) are exactly what's necessary to create your extraordinary life.

There's no way around the biggest challenges that face you on this pursuit.

Still not convinced?

Do yourself a favour and go to a retirement home to meet some of the residents who live there. Or, if you have elderly parents or grandparents, ask them about their lives and if they wish it had turned out differently?

Listen to what they say about their dreams not coming true, about giving up on what they truly wanted, and wishing they could turn back time to do something differently.

After having felt their pain, realize that you are living your time right now and if you don't want to end up feeling the same way, you need to find the courage and patience to become the person who is worthy of the extraordinary life you keep telling yourself you want.

Are you still wondering, "What's the hardest thing I'll have to face during my lifetime?"

It's living with regret.



SIMPLE BUT NOT EASY

What are the psychological requirements necessary for living an extraordinary life?

- Philosophy
- Self-esteem
- Vision
- Purpose
- Strategy

Simple, yet please don't let simplicity be mistaken for ease.

To help you avoid falling victim to a trap that could derail your efforts, here are the top 4 potential reasons that could keep you from success.

Ego

You're not being egotistical (or selfish) enough.

Read that again, and again, and again until it starts to sink into your mind.

As long as you can remember, your ego has been under fierce attack. You've been taught:



- To value others more than yourself
- To not rock the boat and to not speak up
- To not question authority
- To help others is good but to help yourself first is bad
- That there's no "I" in team
- To be humble and not take too much pride in your accomplishments

... along with many, many more mantras that have laid the groundwork that will work against your efforts.

Let's clarify a bit further.

The reason that you likely have an aversion to the words 'selfish' and 'ego' is because they invoke the vision of a pompous jerk who will sell out the poor, the sick, and their mother to get what they want (which is usually money and power).

Let's redefine selfish.

It's true, being selfish does mean putting you and your desires above everything else, while not getting in the way of anyone else chasing after their desires. But being selfish does not mean that what you want is evil or harmful to others.



If you choose to help and support your family because you love them and they are of value to you, that's being selfish and there's nothing wrong with that. If you choose not to because family is not a value, there's nothing wrong with that either.

Selfishness means deciding what is important to you and what is not.

If you decide to do charity work as a life goal, you're acting selfishly because you chose that value.

If you choose to build a successful corporation as your life goal, you're acting selfishly because you chose that value.

Rudeness, brute force, aggression, arrogance, lust for power, willfully harming other people, stealing, lying, etc., are completely unrelated to acting in a rationally selfish way and are, in fact, harmful to anyone who chooses to practice them. Those characteristics are anti-self.

Since selfishness has been lumped in with these and many other horrible qualities, it's no surprise you are scared to openly embrace it. Consider this your warning: it's a huge mistake.

Being selfish does not mean or require becoming a horrible human being. It means structuring your life to rationally pursue the things that you choose to be important to you.



Not everything and everyone is going to be important to you, and that's ok. Just because someone or something is not on your list of priorities or life goals doesn't make it bad, and it doesn't mean that you wish them harm. It means that you're not willing to give any of your time and attention because you are so busy going after your own values... the result of which will make you happy.

Many people simply cannot move beyond this idea that in order to live an extraordinary life they need to fully embrace and focus their lives relentlessly around their values.

If you can't, that's ok. But it will drastically impair your ability to be successful.

Lack of Patience

“He that can have patience can have all that he will.”

– Benjamin Franklin

There is absolutely no way around this...everything in life takes time. Some things take a short time and others will take a lifetime. Most of what you are dreaming for falls into the second category.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you knew exactly when your vision would come to fruition? If you could be assured that all your hard work was leading to something that was guaranteed in advance?



Unfortunately, it doesn't happen that way. The sooner you accept this truth, the sooner you can get on with doing the long work.

If you can't come to terms with this principle, you risk becoming frustrated, you start to question whether you're doing the right thing and if it's even worth all the effort. You do everything except for sticking to the course of action and being patient.

This is your reminder. It's time to give up thinking that the result will bring you happiness and time to start enjoying the grind, the process, the work and the effort because the happiness you've been searching for will be your emotional reward for actively pursuing your values.

Lack of Consistency

"I have not failed; I've found 10,000 ways it won't work"

– Thomas Edison

On October 21st, 1879, Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. Prior to his historical success, he failed literally 10,000 times! Would you choose to stick with something after failing at it 10,000 times?

Most people, after trying something and failing, are ready to move to the next thing almost immediately.



How many times have you gone to the gym and failed (i.e., not achieved the result you wanted in only 3 days) only to move on to the next gym or totally altered your training approach because the one you had “tried” wasn’t working?

How many times have you tried a new diet and decided after week one it’s not for you?

Without question the most successful people in any of life’s endeavors are consistent with their actions and they don’t make excuses. Jim Rohn famously said that his financial life changed the day he realized that “the rain fell equally on the rich and poor, the rich reacted differently.”

Doing The Wrong Stuff

Following the plan is not the only thing that’s necessary. It’s still possible to work, be consistent and patient and yet still not get the results you want. In this case, it’s important you take time to ask yourself one powerful question:

“Am I doing the right stuff?”

At Life By Design, we call “doing the right stuff” following *correct principles*.

In the field of exercise science, it’s been known for some time that chronic cardiovascular training doesn’t result in the same success with regards to body fat



loss, as do higher intensity forms of training. Of course, that doesn't stop people from doing more "cardio" in an effort to lose weight.

In the field of nutritional science, it's been known since the late 1800's that saturated fat has no causal link to heart disease, but that hasn't stopped large organizational bodies and even people in health care from trying to vilify saturated fat.

Just because someone does it, promotes it or is a fan of it, doesn't mean it works or that you should be doing it.

Living in the digital age has made easily accessible information a commodity. You can go online and get information on anything written by anybody - it's truly amazing.

But it also comes at a price, and that price is trust. There are many people pretending to be experts, who sound convincing and trustworthy, but they are completely incorrect and will not be able to help you.

Take the time and effort to determine, to the best of your ability, what the correct principles are in any area of your pursuits. Your reward will be results.



The Life By Design Success Formula

The Life By Design Success Formula serves as a potent reminder for what it takes to achieve an extraordinary life.

(Congruent, Consistent Action + Time) ^{Correct Principles} = Extraordinary Results.

Your Extraordinary Life depends on you doing the right things for an extended period of time with no deviation.

As mentioned before: It sounds simple, but it can be very tough.

Think By Design Requirements

Now that you have an idea of the potential underlying traps that, unconsciously or consciously, could be holding you back, let's move on to what you are required to cultivate in order to create your extraordinary life.



REQUIREMENT #1: DEVELOP A CONSCIOUS PHILOSOPHY

“As a human being, you have no choice about the fact that you need a philosophy. Your only choice is whether you define your philosophy by a conscious, rational, disciplined process of thought and scrupulously logical deliberation or let your subconscious accumulate a junk heap of unwarranted conclusions, false generalizations, undefined contradictions, undigested slogans, unidentified wishes, doubts and fears, thrown together by chance but integrated by your subconscious into a kind of mongrel philosophy and fused into a single, solid weight: self-doubt, like a ball and chain in the place where your mind’s wings should have grown.”

– Ayn Rand

A philosophy is your framework for dealing with reality. It guides your decisions, it lets you know what you think is possible and what you think is impossible, it programs your beliefs, helps you find love and make friends; it could be the cause of your self-doubt, or it could give your mind wings.

More importantly, you need a philosophy to live. If you didn’t have one, you wouldn’t know how to act. So the question is not “Do I need a philosophy?” but instead, “How do I go about consciously developing my philosophy?”



Most people in the world hold philosophy as a trivial exercise -- something over coffee on Sunday afternoon with no real world impact. Simply understanding the importance of philosophy and its proper definition will be of tremendous benefit to your life.

Developing a conscious philosophy is one of the most powerful and exciting experiences a human being can ever have.

Now, we've used the term "developing your conscious philosophy," but it may be better explained as "uncovering your belief system." Once you begin to become conscious of your beliefs, you will learn that some of them are not true and are, in fact, hurting you instead of helping you. Once you learn what those beliefs are, you can begin to let them go and reprogram them, so that your life becomes consistent and congruent.

A belief is a conviction or opinion that you hold about a certain topic or subject matter.

Your beliefs are the most powerful things that you hold because, in most respects, they become your reality.

"Whether you think you can or you think you can't; you're right"
- Henry Ford



It might sound mystical, hokey or even crazy, but it's true.

Have you ever been absolutely convinced about something? At one time, you were so sure your belief was right that you would have invested every penny you had in the bank, only to realize later that you were dead wrong?

Your beliefs are paramount in that they have and will continue to shape your actions, your success and your happiness.

Beliefs come in two forms:

- Limiting Beliefs
- Empowering Beliefs

Have you ever said these statements to yourself?

- I could never lose weight
- I'm destined to be sick
- I'll never be happy
- I'm not a night person
- I'm not good with names

...and about a million other things you've told yourself that are limiting beliefs and not facts.



A powerful real-life example of how not to let potential limiting beliefs (like ‘I’m too old for that’) hold you back is Sidney Frank. Sidney is the creator of Grey Goose Vodka, who was 77 years old when he brought Grey Goose to life. Clearly, Sidney Frank did not believe he was ‘too old’ to accomplish something. The famous Colonel Sanders of KFC fame was 65 years old when he created his secret recipe and launched his fried chicken empire.

In case you’re wondering, there are some things in your life that you just can’t do and never will; in these cases the limitations are fact.

By contrast to Sidney Frank, if you’re 77 years old, you likely won’t be playing in the NBA anytime soon; it’s a real limitation, but being 77 doesn’t mean that your life is over and that you still can’t make a huge impact on the world.

The point...the vast majority of what you consider actual limitations are self-imposed limiting beliefs.

Should you find it difficult to know the difference between a real limitation and a limiting belief, a helpful exercise is to find someone who has accomplished what you’ve always wished for, and then compare their abilities and character traits to your own. If they haven’t won the genetic lottery by being 7’ tall or a super genius, then there’s no good reason why you can’t achieve as they have.



It's our limiting beliefs that typically create the biggest barrier for an extraordinary life for the simple fact that most of your beliefs are unconscious, meaning you don't even know you have them!

We are programmed to believe the statements taught to us by those we trust. This isn't to say there was any malicious intent (although in some cases there may have been) by our advisors, as they simply accepted the beliefs transferred to them.

The second reason limiting beliefs are such a significant barrier is because uncovering and then changing undesirable beliefs is hard and uncomfortable.

It's a process most people just don't want to face.

On the surface that may seem true, but when you measure the devastating effects of one's limiting beliefs on their life, past, present and future, it becomes clear that addressing these issues is simply necessary.

How to Change Limiting Beliefs to Empowering Beliefs

Two fundamental facts lie at the heart of this process.

- Most of your beliefs run on automatic pilot.
- You often don't know what you believe.



Your brain loves short cuts; therefore, it relies heavily on a process called *automation*.

For example, do you remember the last time you drove your car? Can you remember getting in, driving and finally getting to your destination only to think, "How did I get here?"

It's not dangerous; it's simply the way your brain does things.

Athletes are prime examples of automation; they learn a skill so well that they don't even have to think about it, they just do it.

The challenge with automation is that programming the wrong things, like a false belief, leads to disastrous and unwanted outcomes.

Imagine growing up around grandparents who were not aging very well, with bodies that were failing them. A lot of the conversation would be about "never grow old", "If only I was young again", "Nothing good happens when you get older," and other clichéd phrases around aging. A child growing up in such an environment would tend to think of old age in a negative way and develop a limiting belief system around aging. Good thing Sidney Frank or Colonel Sanders didn't grow up in such an environment.

How do you change your beliefs?



Despite what some might think (which itself is a limiting belief), your personality is not set in stone and it can change. It will not be easy, but it's more than possible.

Changing your beliefs involves getting to the root cause of those beliefs and uncovering, in as much detail as possible, the complete nature of those beliefs.

Here's the process to get to the root(s) of your belief system and begin the process of developing a consciously created (and empowering) philosophy.

- Awareness of Your Beliefs
- Acceptance of Your Current Beliefs
- Consciously Choose New Beliefs
- Delete The Old & Insert The New

Awareness of Your Beliefs

It's time to drain the limiting beliefs from your mind and fill it with empowering beliefs.

This process begins with the awareness of your current limiting beliefs.

Your beliefs are stated as facts any time you speak, write or think. The good news is that we can use these often-used statements to uncover what we really believe in every area of our life.



Any time you say or think anything that you believe is absolutely true, it's helpful to ask yourself "How do I know it's true?" This involves slowing down your thinking – or in other words examining that process of automation.

No question, constantly slowing down your thinking to better pay attention or analyzing your thoughts will be a difficult task. However, it's the best strategy for developing awareness.

Another solution could be asking a spouse or friend to listen to your words and question you on absolute statements you often make.

Examples could sound like:

"All men are liars."

"Money is the root of all evil."

"You're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't"

"It's just one thing after another."

"I'm an idiot."

"I don't deserve to be happy."

"I'm so pathetic."

"Bad things come in threes."



Statements like these are all very common (and very limiting) beliefs that plague billions. Is it really a surprise that life seems to be so difficult for the vast majority of the world?

Ask yourself: "What do I believe about health?" or "What do I believe about relationships?" Take time to contemplate and write down some answers to those questions.

It's important to note here that no one else is reading your notes, so there's no need to be anything but brutally honest with yourself.

Your successful outcomes require that your beliefs be empowering you towards your end and not working against you. If this challenge doesn't get resolved, it will continue to be a constant source of letdowns and frustration.

For example...

Belief: *"I hate exercise, and it never works for me anyway."*

As you can imagine, it's going to be very difficult to build a fit and healthy body if you hate exercise and believe it won't work. Someone with a belief like this has probably had a hard time getting to the gym consistently or even at all, and until the belief changes, the outcomes they desire never will.



Another example...

Belief: *“Money is the root of evil.”*

Could you imagine just how hard it would be to morally pursue and possess something that you consider evil or, at the very least, less than desirable? Yet, financial independence (a goal for many people) requires money.

This is another perfect example of a goal that will never be met because the belief is in total contradiction with reality.

You can start to see the tremendous power of your beliefs to either support your growth or hold you back.

Acceptance Of Your Current Beliefs

This can be a big challenge.

It's helpful to remind yourself that accepting your current beliefs doesn't mean that you're happy or even content with your current beliefs. It just means you have said to yourself: “I have discovered a belief that I hold and I accept, for better or worse, that it is my belief.”



This is an important point because self-loathing will only make changing your beliefs next to impossible.

Feeling guilty for holding those beliefs would be denying yourself as a human being. It's ok if you're not happy with your beliefs – but don't deny yourself the reality of accepting the truth.

Consciously Choose New Beliefs

Believe it or not, this step might be much harder than it seems on the surface. As humans, we've become very good at knowing what we don't want (we don't want to be fat, we don't want to be broke, we don't want to be depressed) and creating actions that move us away from negatives (the fight against cancer or terrorism).

However, being against something doesn't give us information about what to actually do, just what we don't want.

Knowing or wanting to change limiting beliefs that no longer serve you is a great starting point, but until you know what you want to believe about marriage, about money or about health, you will never attain the successful outcome you've been dreaming of.



The key to choosing beliefs that will move you towards a positive result is ensuring your beliefs are aligned with reality. In other words, the beliefs you choose are actually true.

How will you know?

That's a great question!

As Anthony Robbins reminds us, "Success leaves clues."

Search out successful people in every area and dig deep to find out what beliefs are at the root of their actions. When something is working well, there's a good chance many of the beliefs are correct.

In contrast, the *areas of your life that exhibit the most significant challenges will also be the areas with the most number of or most severe contradictions and limiting beliefs.*

Delete The Old and Insert The New

Now that know what you want to believe, you can begin the process of slowly ridding your mind of the old limiting belief and planting a new one.

Does it have to happen slowly?



If the belief was a deeply rooted one, the highly probable answer is yes.

Beliefs are like trees – the older they are, the harder they are to uproot and move. These roots plant themselves deep into your mind and psyche and have extreme influence over your thoughts and actions.

The more you've repeated a thought or action, the more it has become embedded in the wiring of your brain and nerve system.

Every time you witness yourself acting on an old limiting belief, do your absolute best to catch yourself and remind yourself of the new consciously chosen belief. The more you act according to the new belief, the more you will strengthen it while lessening the hold your limiting belief has on you.

Changing your beliefs and developing our conscious philosophy takes dedicated effort, time, patience and persistence.

Creating and sustaining the life you want requires an empowering belief system. Your belief system is like your computer's operating system: if the OS is working well you can run any program you want with great success; if the OS is damaged you will (best case scenario) get mixed results.

Your beliefs are also the means to the end, not the end. Meaning, it's wonderful to have a great belief system but that alone does not put money in your bank account,



food on your table, or tell you what you should do.

That's up to your values and virtues.

The Importance of Values and Virtues

A value is that which you want to gain and/or keep. A simple example could be health. Virtues are the character traits required to achieve (or get) your values.

Identifying your values will give you guidance and direction on what exactly to dedicate your life to pursuing.

For the most part you get to choose your values. Career, family, where you want to live, your partner, how you spend your free time, etc., are all values which you get to choose for yourself.

There are three values (considered fundamental) necessary for your extraordinary life, no matter which other values you choose. These fundamental values are: reason, purpose and self-esteem. They are considered fundamental because every other value you could choose depends on your having those three fundamental values.

There are seven fundamental virtues that, like the fundamental values, are the baseline that you need to practice as you develop the other virtues to help you meet



your values. The seven fundamental virtues are: rationality, productiveness, pride, honesty, integrity, independence, and justice.

Part of the Think By Design Method will be potentially uncovering more of your own.

The Doorman Principle

This final section in *Developing A Conscious Philosophy* is a practical application of your efforts that will serve you extremely well going forward.

Imagine that your life is a room with only one door going in and out. In order for something (or someone) to be in your life, they have to be in the room, and if they (or it) are not in your room, then they are not in your life.

Similarly, imagine a very large and mean “doorman” guarding the only door to your life, having a list of your values. For anyone to pass through the door into your life, they must identify with your values. If they do not strongly match, they do not enter.

Can you recall in your past when someone or something made it ‘past your doorman’ and got into your life, only to cause you great damage and/or heartache?



This is not a judgment or indictment of a specific person, but instead a principle that is used to guard something sacred – your life. Imagine how much better and easier your life would have been if your ‘doorman’ would have simply stopped that someone or something from entering your life in the first place?

Every time you choose an opportunity over a value, it will lead to destruction in some way, shape or form. Live your life as if your “doorman” is guarding it. Yes, it will be difficult, but your life and happiness are worth any challenges it may bring about.

Build Self-esteem

The Life By Design approach on self-esteem is strongly rooted in the work of Dr. Nathaniel Branden. His concept of a deficiency in self-esteem is equivalent to the nutrient, movement, and nerve supply deficiencies addressed throughout the strategies of Life By Design. Applying this concept to the requirements of an optimal mind was one of the inspirations for Think By Design.

To quote Dr. Branden, *“Apart from disturbance whose roots are biological I cannot think of a single psychological problem – from anxiety and depression, to underachievement at school or at work, to fear of intimacy, happiness, or success, to alcohol or drug abuse, to spouse battering or child molestation, to co-dependency and sexual disorders, to passivity and chronic aimlessness to suicide and crimes of violence – that is not traceable, at least in part, to the problem of deficient self-*



esteem. Of all the judgments we pass in life, none is as important as the one we pass on ourselves.”

Self-esteem is defined as the disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness. It is confidence in the efficacy of your mind and in your ability to think.

It's shocking how few people in the world today view themselves as truly competent or with the ability required to meet the challenges of life or who even believe they don't deserve to be happy.

You can have a clear vision, purpose and great plan but without being sufficient in self-esteem, you will sabotage yourself into consistent failure.

How Do You Develop Self-esteem?

Self-esteem is the result of action. If you want self-esteem, you'll have to take an action or more likely repetitive actions that yield its growth. Self-esteem is also in constant change; no matter how much self-esteem you develop, it's still possible to find yourself in situations where you aren't confident in your abilities. It's very much like health – no matter how great your last workout was (or how fit you are) if you don't keep it up that level of fitness will disappear.



Dr. Branden discovered what he coined the six pillars of self-esteem. Each of these pillars forms a basic component in the development of self-esteem:

The Practice of Living Consciously

In order to change anything, consciousness is crucial and primary. Many people are not or choose not to be conscious of behaviours and actions that are damaging to themselves or others.

Not being conscious means, “lacking the awareness that something is happening.” In this regard, it can be either ignorance or volitional.

By nature we are humans. This means that there are going to be areas in life that we simply do not possess knowledge about yet. There will always be information, facts or concepts that we don’t know that we don’t know. How do we know what they are? That’s the point, you can’t know. And in these cases our ignorance or lack of consciousness can powerfully affect our quality of life.

On the other hand, living unconsciously by choice is having the knowledge and choosing not to act or willingly pretending that the knowledge does not exist.

Observe a poor relationship. Too often a couple in this situation will behave as if they are completely unaware that anything is wrong with the quality of their partnership.



Yet in hindsight, they can detail the shortcomings of their relationship and the issues that were holding back its development. The truth is, they had the knowledge but refused to acknowledge something was not right.

Not admitting that something needs to change shows a lack of consciousness, and without this realization, nothing ever will. This makes living consciously the foundational step to building healthy self-esteem.

The Practice of Self-acceptance

Once you become conscious that you have something you want to change, the next pillar of self-esteem is the practice of self-acceptance.

Self-acceptance simply means to accept your current situation or circumstances. It does not mean that you have to like them, just that you acknowledge them. This applies to both circumstances you don't want (commonly the first thought when one hears the concept of self-acceptance) but also those circumstances you do want.

It is a great crime against yourself to accept your weak points but ignore your greatness, the very thing that makes you stand out from others.

In today's world, people are condemned not for their sins but their virtues. The very qualities that would make someone stand out as amazing are often ridiculed by the masses. You don't have to look much further than popular culture to see all athletes

(LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, Tom Brady) who are hated for no other reason than their success.

Self-acceptance is simply the acknowledgement of reality, nothing more, nothing less.

The Practice of Self-responsibility

Self-responsibility means that you accept the fact that you have control over your life and you are an expression of your choices. Being responsible does not mean accepting moral blame or guilt for everything someone feels like blaming you for.

It is not your goal to live up to anyone else's expectations (provided your expectations are grounded in reality and reason) other than your own; your standards are the only ones that truly matter.

Sadly, society pities those who do nothing to accept responsibility and improve their life. In contrary, a tragic event seen too often is the attack (calling them lucky or somehow believing their circumstance were different than the person who did nothing) on the people who do take full self-responsibility for their lives in an attempt to make them better.

Self-responsibility, like self-acceptance, can be a double-edged sword and there are cases when people have accepted responsibility for something they weren't responsible for creating which manifests itself as guilt. Many parents struggle when re-living how their children grew up: "If only I'd have said/done this differently, then XYZ wouldn't have happened." Accepting responsibility for something you couldn't have helped, or didn't do, is the quickest way to paralyze your path to creating an extraordinary life.

The purpose of accepting responsibility for your life is to realize that if you are not happy you can change it. The degree to which you are able to change is the degree to which you are responsible for your own life.

The Practice of Self-assertiveness

Being self-assertive means to speak and act from your deepest convictions – to be truly authentic with your communication. Many feel that, if they express themselves, they may offend someone, or even worse they may not "be accepted" for sharing their genuine feelings or convictions on a topic.

To be clear, self-assertiveness does not mean sharing your opinion at every opportunity and being rude about it. It simply means that, when you speak or act, you do so from what you truly believe to be correct.



The Practice of Living Purposefully

You could say the purpose of life is to clarify your purpose. You cannot wander aimlessly through life and expect to lead an extraordinary life; you must want to see something happen. Which purpose, or purposes, you choose does not matter (as long as it's not harmful to or interfere with other people doing what they want) as much as just choosing something.

When asked the simple question “Why?” most people don’t have an answer. Of course the answer to this question begins in the first part of this book where we discussed philosophy.

The stronger you are philosophically, the more conscious of your beliefs and values you are, the higher your self-esteem will be and the clearer your purpose for living on this planet will become.

A terrible thought that is implanted into many children as they grow up is that following your dreams and making them a reality is a matter of fiction, not fact. True, following your purpose will be difficult and challenging, but it is possible and even probable to fulfill. Far too many people have given up far too early in their lives because they lacked the courage to follow what they believed to be their purpose.



The Practice of Personal Integrity

The last pillar of self-esteem is the practice of personal integrity. Are your beliefs, values, ideals, convictions, standards, and behaviors aligned? If the answer is yes, you have integrity.

People with a healthy self-esteem have a sense of pride – a characteristic that is frowned upon in today’s world. If you have accomplished many things in your life in an honest and moral fashion, it is automatic to feel a sense of pride. It would be strange if you didn’t. To quote Branden again: “Pride is the emotional reward of achievement, it is not a vice to be overcome but a value to be attained.”

REQUIREMENT #2: IDENTIFY YOUR VISION

What do you want?

This is the most important question YOU can ask and one only YOU can answer.

Having a vision for your life is the most important thing you can have because your vision will guide your actions, your purpose, your attention and your resources. In short, your vision will help you answer a really important question about your life, “What do I do?”



This is your chance to dream ... to make the impossible probable. Create a vision in every area of your life including your relationships, career, finances, life experiences, health and fitness, etc. If you were only willing to think big, what would your life look like? Don't leave your legacy to chance. Make it By Design.

How to Dream Big

Creating an over-arching vision for your life can be very challenging. That's why breaking down your vision into more specific areas of your life and into shorter time lines is a good exercise to practice.

Here are some important concepts to keep in mind as you dream up your extraordinary life.

- Make your vision as detailed as possible, including the emotional rewards of successfully accomplishing it.
- Project your vision at least 25 years into the future.
- Dream big. Don't sell yourself short. It's ok to feel uncomfortable.
- Choose the affirmative.

This final piece will be challenging as you've probably spent most of your life thinking about things that you don't want.

I don't want to be depressed



I don't want to be fat

I don't want to be lonely

I don't want to worry

I don't want to be broke

I don't want to stress

For most people, the “don't want” list is the easiest to fill out. Unfortunately, that's not going to lead you towards your vision or dreams.

Imagine getting a bonus cheque and deciding to spend it on a family vacation. When you ask your family “Where would everyone like to go?” they answer: “Not Disney, not camping, not California, and not Europe.” This answer is helpful about what someone doesn't want, but it still doesn't tell you what they want or what to do about it.

When creating a vision for your life, to attain the results that deeply inspire you, it must be absolutely 100% created with the statement “I want....”

Identifying Your Vision is all about dreaming what your life could be like if there were no limitations. Don't be restricted by your current capabilities, skills or resources. Think big, dream big, and let go of all limiting beliefs as you create in your mind and document what you really want from your life.

Once you know what you want, the next important step is to figure out why.



REQUIREMENT #3: CLARIFY YOUR PURPOSE

Are you wandering aimlessly, always searching for the next big thing? A purpose is your anchor. Whether it is raising a healthy, happy family, travelling the world or creating a thriving business, one big secret to success is clarifying your purpose.

Why do you want to fulfill your vision? Why do you wake up every day? It is your purpose that gives your life and efforts meaning. It is **YOUR WHY**.

"Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."

– Mike Tyson

Tyson ruled the late 1980's boxing world. He was the first fighter in the history of boxing to unify all three major titles. During this time, it was seemingly impossible to prepare for him, as he was just too fast, manic and completely unpredictable in the ring. No one knew how to handle Tyson. He was considered unbeatable.

Then, in 1990, an unknown fighter with an unstable career shocked the world by knocking Mike Tyson out. That nameless contender was James 'Buster' Douglas.

To make the fight even more dramatic, in the 8th round, Tyson knocked Douglas down, but it was too close to the end of the round and Douglas was saved by the bell.



The audience and Mike Tyson both thought this was the end of Douglas. Yet, just two rounds later, like a man possessed, Douglas knocked out Mike Tyson and completed what was arguably the greatest upset in sports history.

How did he do it?

What many people don't know is that Douglas' mom had died two days prior to the fight. Before she passed, she told her son, *"You're going to be the champion of the world."*

After the fight Douglas openly commented that when he barely survived the 8th round knockdown, he was ready to give up. He then remembered his mom's belief in him and how she would tell everyone, *"My baby's going to be the best in the world."*

Douglas said that he didn't want to let his mom down. Her belief in him became his driving motivation or his purpose to withstand the coming onslaught from the most feared boxer of all time and historically send him to the canvas.

What is your motivation? What do you turn to when things get tough? What motivates you to keep moving and pursuing your vision when life seems to be plotting against you?

What if you don't know your purpose?



If you haven't already realized, the Think By Design Method is a process of self-discovery – By reading this manual and performing the exercises your purpose will start to become clear. If you don't know your purpose that's ok, you can still uncover it or discover it.

As you start to develop and refine your purpose you will realize that some of the things you thought you wanted you don't, and some of your values were never even yours to begin with.

This step will take some time for most and need to be revisited and refined over time.

Something to keep in mind, that's without question with purpose – it must be emotional, it must create goose bumps, bring tears to your eyes, and make you feel as though life would not be as fulfilled without its tireless pursuit.

REQUIREMENT #5: DETAIL YOUR STRATEGY

Here we are.... We have finally arrived at the “how to” step of Think By Design. It's commonplace to automatically jump to this section of any book, manual or manifesto and follow the action steps expecting to get optimum benefit. Leaving in the possibility of *good luck*, it almost never happens that way. All the steps that have been presented are equally important, but the key to success is following the very specific order laid out in the book.



Why is *Detail Your Strategy* the final step? Simply because even an ingenious idea without congruent action becomes meaningless. How many potentially world-changing thoughts never make an impact simply because action was not initiated? Big dreams can be overwhelming, but when they are broken down into bite-size pieces they are instantly less intimidating and seemingly possible.

The process is to create a plan in every area of your life to ensure that massive success is not left to chance but is instead deliberate and repeatable.

Where do you begin?

It can be difficult to contemplate your life with the knowledge that it is (for the most part) under your control and direction.

Thankfully, we've split the task up into ***Eight Branches of Your Life By Design.***

Each branch covers an area that exists in your life. What's important to remember is that this is YOUR life, and you can pursue or avoid any of the areas you choose.

However, experience has shown that the happiest people have a strategy for every branch or their life.

HEALTH

Health is a state in which the body functions at 100%, not merely the absence of disease or symptoms. Being stronger, more fit, performing better, feeling more energized and living longer permeates every other branch. This makes pursuing extraordinary health a fundamental component to your Life By Design.

INTELLECT

Intellect includes your faculty of reasoning and objective understanding; consider intellect your mental power. Acquiring and comprehending information will help you develop a vast library of knowledge that will enhance your quality of life beyond measure.

INNER STATE

Inner State is the awareness of how you think and feel. Knowing that action is a derivative of thought and emotions are effects, not causes, makes this branch extremely vital to your success. More than any other area, lack of attention to inner state will quickly derail your path toward an extraordinary life.

FAMILY

Family includes the relationships and interaction between partners, parents and children. This branch encompasses communication, child rearing, and romantic expression. It can be a source of deep fulfillment for your life.

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships incorporate the connections beyond your family. This social network can bring extreme joy or it can be the cause of debilitating stress. How you interact with friends and co-workers can have a powerful effect on your life.

CAREER

Career relates to the working aspects of your life. This includes traditional 9-to-5 occupations, home-based endeavors and labours of love. The pursuit of productive achievement can be one of life's greatest rewards yielding incredible experiences, satisfaction and happiness.



FINANCES

Finances deal with the creation, planning and management of your wealth. Since money is the primary mechanism for the exchange of value, consciously developing this branch will increase the ability to pursue all of your values.

LEGACY

Legacy is the impact your actions, words and creations leave on family, community and the world when you've passed. As your day's stay filled with tasks and to-dos, make every effort to ensure those seemingly small activities accumulate in ways that positively influence others for years to come.

Do not ignore aspects of your life just because they are challenging to think about; they're probably challenging to you because much thought has never been directed towards them or you are currently struggling in these areas.

Start by creating a strategy to move toward the milestones in every one of the eight branches.

How do you create a strategy?

There are three levels of success that build on each other.



- **Knowledge**
- **Plan**
- **Execution**

Let's use the common goal of weight loss.

Assume you've done the work to remove old limiting beliefs, updated your philosophy with new empowering beliefs, have clarity about your values, you've put time and effort into developing your vision and you know why it's important to you.

The next thing to ask yourself is "How much do I know about weight loss?"

Beliefs, values, vision and purpose will never replace the practical and concrete knowledge required to succeed. This is exactly why the first step in creating your strategy is acquiring the knowledge, skill or capability to accomplish that "thing" on your list.

There are many ways to tackle this task: read a book, take a course, hire a coach, find a mentor, etc. The point is: If you don't know something you need to know, it's mandatory you learn more.

Once you've attained the knowledge, you can proceed to the next step in the cycle: a plan. What EXACTLY do you need to do in order to accomplish your goal?



This plan takes into account every possible outcome that could happen and has a solution to that problem.

Assume your plan is to start an exercise program four days each week with a trainer. Here are some of the considerations to address.

- What days will I train?
- What time will I train?
- How can I afford the investment?
- Who is going to watch the kids?
- What happens if I don't feel motivated?
- What do I say if my friends want to go for a drink during my training time?
- What will I wear?

Add in another 100 questions and concerns that need solving and you're starting to understand just how meticulous you'll need to be to all but guarantee your future results.

The final piece of your strategy is execution. Obviously, you need to work the plan you've created to implement the knowledge or skill you've acquired and achieve your expected outcome.



Now that you are executing your plan, pay close attention and monitor the product of your efforts.

Don't be disheartened or discouraged if things don't seem perfect the first time you try something; in fact, expect it. There are very few people who get things right the first time. Your success will come from using the feedback generated to continue improving your knowledge acquisition, planning and execution.

YOUR GUIDE TO AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE

The biggest challenge you'll face in building your dream life is to avoid becoming paralyzed by the enormity. It can be very difficult to know what to do this week, today, and in this hour, to move you towards your vision. Therefore the best solution is to break down the actions and goals into smaller "chunks".

We have found that the simplest framework is to begin mapping out your life in the "*Eight Branches of Your Life By Design*".

Before you get started, [here are some important considerations.](#)



Stop Doing Things That Don't Matter

Create a stop doing list. Examples could be worrying, social media, life drama, checking email frequently, watching CNN or Netflix, etc. Include anything that is not increasing your chances of success and especially include everything that is taking away from your chances.

Of course, many of the things on your list can be enjoyed and there's nothing inherently wrong with them, but if you think that binging on House of Cards is going to get you closer to an extraordinary life, it's not.

Before you start taking action, take this big one and free up time in your schedule to work on yourself. The easiest way to do this is to stop doing things that don't matter.

Ritualize Your Life

Too many people spend their life handling one crisis after another. Once you know what you want and how to get there, focus on that. If something is important to you, put it on your calendar, take responsibility and make sure it gets done.

Create a rhythm by ritualizing as much of your life as possible. You will quickly notice how fluidly things move in your days, how drama will begin to decrease, and calmness will begin to flourish.



This includes a morning ritual designed to create time for you to plan, exercise, read, walk or do whatever you need to prepare for success.

People will complain that they don't want their lives to become so "regimented" that they lose "flexibility and spontaneity." While that is understandable, it is also untrue. Organization, ritualization and rhythm release the natural flow of your life, allowing time for creativity, life enjoyment and productive achievement.

Strategic Planning

Arrange a day trip, rent a room with a beautiful view or schedule it for one afternoon while on a wonderful vacation and invest the time to create your Extraordinary Life. Any time you take for this important project will be an investment in your life and will deliver immeasurable benefit.

Your blueprint should contain the tangible (I need to do this today) steps. So you know what you need to do every day to meet the vision you've created from the eight branches of your Life By Design.

- Revisit your blueprint **ANNUALLY** to evaluate any significant changes to your beliefs, vision, purpose and strategy. Set new annual goals that will continue to inspire and move you towards your 25-year vision in each area.



- Review every 90 DAYS to briefly review your blueprint but more importantly to set objectives for the next 90 days.
- Plan weekly for the upcoming week. Set aside time near the end of your week to review the past week, update your to-do list, and schedule in details the next week.
- Review your day. Make time daily to review your goals, your objectives, and your schedule.

Goal Setting

Part of sitting down and reviewing every year, 90 days, week and day is to ensure that you have proper goals that will help you keep on track. Goals are the tangible to-do's that will help move the needle toward the different parts of your 8 branches and towards that big vision you want. Discovering what you want helps you set a direction and gives you a destination to reach. In order to have proper goals they must be:

S – Specific

M – Measureable

A – Achievable

R – Relevant

T – Time Bound



Specific means with as much detail as possible. Fuzzy targets never get hit and neither do fuzzy goals.

Measurable means putting a specific value around your goal. “*I want to be happier this year*” is not a measurable goal. “*I want to lose 10 pounds*” is measurable.

Achievable means that your goal is something that you can achieve through your work. Setting a goal for your husband to lose weight is not very attainable because it involves something or someone outside of your control.

Relevant means working towards a vision. All of your goals need to be aligned with the pursuit of your vision.

Time Bound means that you have set a specific time frame for achieving or completing a goal.

ACTION STEPS

Write It Down

Set aside a time and place in small increments as in during your *Morning Ritual* or take a weekend trip somewhere peaceful and beautiful. Regardless, be sure to create



an environment conducive to dreaming big. You will need anywhere from three to six hours the first time to do this task justice.

Whether you write your thoughts down on paper or store them digitally, the most important point is that you have somewhere to document your work and keep your thoughts organized.

Step One – Develop a Conscious Philosophy

After contemplating your current beliefs and the beliefs you want, document your congruent beliefs in each of the ***Eight Branches of Your Life By Design***.

- Health
- Intellect
- Inner State
- Family
- Relationships
- Career
- Finances
- Legacy

Create a list of your values and the virtues necessary to pursue them.



Step Two – Build Self-esteem

Read “The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem” by Dr. Nathaniel Branden. In the book Branden presents a simple exercise called sentence completions. At first, it may seem funny and trivial to do these exercises because they seem so easy. But they absolutely work.

Step Three – Identify Your Vision

Visualize every part of your dream – how it feels, tastes and smells. See every minute detail, in any and every area of your life, make it as clear as possible. From the experiences you want to have, the quality of your life, the people you will spend your time with, even the tangible things you would love to enjoy. The power of visualization goes far beyond the context of this book, but it’s safe to say the votes are in. An abundance of research, most successful people and even you have confirmed the incredible power of seeing in your mind first what you wish to experience in your life. *Create a 25-year vision and coinciding 1-year goals for each branch.*

You will use all this information again in the final section – *Detailing Your Strategy.*



Step Four – Clarify Your Purpose

The first thing you must do to clarify your purpose is take a goal or a vision that you want and ask yourself “Why do I want this?”

As an example, pretend you picked “I want to lose 25 pounds” as your goal. The first question to ask yourself is “Why do I want to lose 25 pounds?” Think about and record your answer. Let’s say your answer is “So I can look good in a swim suit.” The next question is to ask yourself “Why do I want to look good in a swim suit?” The goal is to repeat this process as many times as possible until you uncover your true purpose for wanting to achieve your goal.

As you can see, the answers to each question as you go one level ‘deeper’ require much more insight, are harder to answer and require you to really scan yourself for your true motivation. This is a powerful exercise that can get you closer to your true life’s purpose.

As your purpose becomes clearer, your sense of well-being and excitement should increase too. You will be looking ahead to opportunities or experiences that allow you to fulfill your why.

You may not hit the nail on the head in one try. It will take time, exploration and persistence. The sense of knowing your purpose will be worth every single moment you spend clarifying it.



Step Five – Detail Your Strategy

For each branch of your Life By Design, detail a plan for making your vision a reality. What knowledge, skills and capabilities need to be acquired or developed? What action steps are you going to take and when will they be completed? What foreseeable challenges will you need to solve in order to be successful?

To summarize, **YOUR GUIDE TO AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE will be ultimately created by answering these four questions:**

Philosophy – What do I believe?

Vision – What do I want?

Purpose – Why do I want it?

Strategy – What action steps do I need to take?

Everything at the Same Time

This is a good time to remember that, in order to be living an extraordinary life, we need to be doing ***everything, at the same time, for a period of time, preferably a lifetime.*** Think By Design alone will improve your life but will not make you optimal.



Life By Design is an integrative approach to achieving success built on the simple principle that having strategies to fulfill the most fundamental requirements for optimal life and health expression will lead to the best version of ourselves.

Don't Forget...

You will still need to incorporate Move By Design, Eat By Design and the most often missed strategy Power By Design.

Having a clear Brain–Body Connection allows full integration of all the requirements. Each is dependent on neurological function, and inherent in each requirement is the need for synergistic activity. In order for the body to work together, a proper nerve supply is paramount. **Insert Chiropractic here.**

Final Thoughts

The pinnacle achievement of Think By Design will be your ability to incorporate the ideas, beliefs, values and convictions you have developed into your vision, for one singular reason – your purpose.

Once you begin to develop your philosophy, choose your values, build your self-esteem, identify your vision, clarify your purpose, and detail your strategy, all that remains is the long work – uncovering inconsistencies or contradictions between truth and behavior, modifying your beliefs to approximate reality, revisiting your



think
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Join the Drive to
ONE MILLION FAMILIES WORLDWIDE
Living Life By Design

vision, setting new goals and strategies to achieve them consistently, honestly and for the remainder of your life.

Thinking By Design is not easy, it's not always enjoyable but it is a requirement for an optimal and maximized life. Do the work, reap the rewards, and ensure you safeguard and develop the greatest gift you have – your life.