

FOREWORD BY SAM KASS
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MORE

Be

**FIND YOUR TRUTH, TELL YOUR STORY,
& GET WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE.**

by TODD PUTMAN with LORI SPARGER

Project

you



ASK YOURSELF THIS:

What are you good at?

What energizes you?

What do you contribute?

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PROJECT YOU

**“IN THE DEPTH OF WINTER I FINALLY LEARNED
THAT THERE WAS IN ME AN INVINCIBLE SUMMER.”**

Albert Camus, Author and Philosopher

Wherever I go, whoever I talk to, everywhere I look, I see people who want more out of life—more impact, more opportunity, more fit, more balance—just *more*. And more often than not, the longing for more is tied to career. But what that more should look like, where to find greater fulfillment, too often remains undefined. As a result, rather than moving forward with intent, many people fail to fulfill their potential, not because of lack of ability, means, or opportunity, but too often because so very few can even say what they want.

Some of the happiest, most successful people share one special quality. It's not a certain expertise, not a singular personality trait. Nope. The common thread is an uncommon, and very purposeful, alignment of their exceptional skills, the values that guide their actions, and their true passion. Early in my career, I started looking, really looking, at the successful people around me. I tried to understand what had made them that way. Often they were driven. Almost without fail,

they were goal-oriented. But the really interesting thing they shared was an absolute love for what they were doing. I realized what I was seeing, time and again, were people with an abiding belief in their work and an extraordinary commitment to doing it at a high level. Sure, it was work. But they didn't act like it, and they didn't talk about it that way. In fact, when I talked to them, I found myself getting excited, too, because they were so into what they were doing.

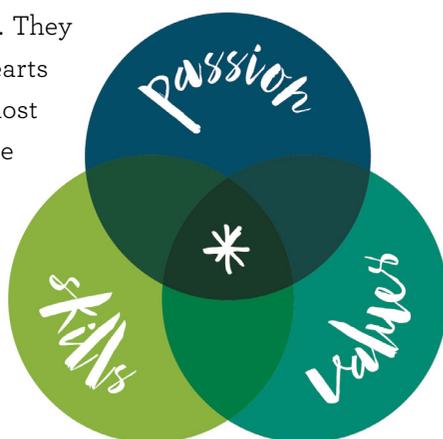
What I was noticing was pretty simple really. These people who were extremely successful, these people I aspired to be at some level, had found a way to take what they did best and

apply it to what they cared about. They had found a way to pour their hearts and their talents into what was most meaningful to them. As a recipe

for success, an intersection of skills and passion seems like a no-brainer. It's not a new concept—we've all heard it. But as I looked more closely, I saw something more.

Completing the picture was the harmony of their skills and passion

aligning with their personal values. Taken together, skills, values, and passion create a balance and strength that empowers you to find your truth and to achieve more.



At some point, I realized the most important thing: Success is not some special space reserved for a select few. Anyone with self-awareness and commitment can aim for that target, for their own intersection. It's not particularly hard to align your skills, values, and passion. We all

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have the ability to enable our capacity to advance our personal mission, if we can take the time to listen, and to really hear, what's in our brains, our hearts, our souls. The fact is, I believe that for many of us, what we love is what we could be doing every day—if we had the clarity to recognize it and the imagination to envision it. But for too many of us, seeing where that is in our lives, let alone getting there, is another story. It is, however, a story you can learn to tell.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

To tell that story, your story, you need to recognize and communicate your unique value. You will learn to see what makes you different, better, special. I assure you, each of us truly is. Ultimately, you need to be able to answer one simple question. What do you want to be when you grow up? The words are ones we've heard for as long as we can remember, but don't take them lightly. For many people, that's a remarkably difficult question. Saying what they want to be, what they want to accomplish with their lives, exactly what getting more out of life means to them is not always an easy thing. But it's an incredibly important thing. In fact, I believe it's pretty much *the* thing.

The question should not be paralyzing. It's a question of what you want next. And perhaps most importantly, it's not a question you will only answer once. It's a question you will answer over and over and over again throughout the course of your life. Your answer will change, and that's great. What you want to be when you grow up should be a moving target. As you meet goals, as your priorities change, your perception of that question and how to answer it will change as well.

Your life can be bigger, bolder, more fulfilling, and it's completely in your hands to make that happen.

There's no doubt that getting to that answer requires considerable effort. As I talked with more and more people over the years who were unable to say what it was they wanted, I developed an uncomplicated

way to help them identify the qualities that lead to an understanding of what makes each of us unique. With the Skills, Values, Passion (SVP) Exercise that represents the homework of *Be More*, you will work toward defining yourself in a straightforward manner. By identifying your exceptional skills, your core values, and your true passion, you develop the self-awareness to answer the question of what you want to be.

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Yes, *your* hands. But that's not half as scary as you think it is. In fact, there are way scarier things than that. Consider this. To make it happen, you have to ask yourself, "Who am I?"

Let that sink in for a minute.

Who am I?

This isn't about the easy stuff. Sister. Brother. Teacher. Runner. Oh those certainly are elements of who you are, but to get to the good stuff, you need to move beyond the labels and the checkboxes and look for what's real, to take control of your life and your story so you don't let someone else take it from you.

THE SVP EXERCISE.

With the SVP Exercise, you will work toward those answers in a methodical, purposeful way. By identifying your five exceptional skills, four core values, and your one true passion, you gather the insights to answer the question: What do you want to be when you grow up?

It's not the exercise that's difficult here. Once you reach below the surface and genuinely express what makes you distinctively you, you'll see the puzzle come together with surprising ease. And be assured, we each have some mixture of qualities that makes us unique and valued in some way, even though we often fail to see it in ourselves. In fact, the

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The SVP exercise

SET YOUR GOALS

IDENTIFY

5

SKILLS

4

VALUES

1

PASSION

CREATE YOUR STORY

APPLY
YOUR
STORY

RESEARCH
JOBS, COMPANIES,
ORGANIZATIONS

EXPLORE
YOUR
CONNECTIONS

ENGAGE YOUR NETWORK
TO REACH TOWARD YOUR GOALS

failure of so many people to see that—to celebrate it, to pursue the bold future that is within their ability to grasp—is the very inspiration for this book. Some of the most capable people on the planet suffer from a failure of vision, of courage, of determination. This results in a colossal waste of potential: potential for good, for innovation, for change, for happiness. To me, that feels unacceptable.

Life is not about finding yourself. There is not some preordained destiny into which you will stumble, at least not one that looks like anything but a stumble. Life is about creating yourself. It's about knowing who you are, what you want, and how you will get it. To answer those questions, to envision your boldest future, to empower your life's mission requires the clarity, commitment, and courage to pursue it. You only get one life. Don't you want to own it? Let me put it this way: Don't wait to get pushed off a cliff—swan dive.

Remember, the SVP Exercise is designed to help you know yourself in a way that allows you to find the intersection of your skills, values, and passion, to get you to that sweet spot where what you do best and what you care about most converge. It's about taking a hard look at your whole life at work and at home. Careers don't live in a vacuum. They are part of our lives, and our lives are complex with a lot of moving pieces.

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When you can say how all of those pieces can function best for you, your work will be more fulfilling and you'll be able to maximize the specific combination of qualities that only you bring to the table.

Add a dash of luck, the right connection made at the right time, and more will be within reach. Perhaps even more importantly, the confidence and self-esteem that result from knowing that you are being true to yourself will bring a special sense of peace and happiness as you recognize that you are controlling your life and claiming your place in the world. I have seen the look in people's eyes when this happens. It's a powerful and profound moment when people begin to move forward—in control—in a way that they have defined.

MEANINGFUL WORK. AND THAT WOULD BE?

There's a great deal of research out there right now on Millennials. It's a demographic that pollsters, retailers, and others want to understand better, for lots of reasons. But I believe much of what studies have learned about Millennials is true for people of all ages. Studies of Millennials show a great priority placed upon meaningful work. In fact, the 2015 Deloitte Millennial Survey found that a "sense of purpose" is why 60 percent of those surveyed chose to work for their current employer. That number increases to 77 percent among super-connected Millennials, those who are more active social network users. Two years earlier, the same survey showed that the majority of American Millennials believe the primary purpose of business is to improve society. Noteworthy among the many mentions of the importance of meaningful employment, whether among Millennials or workers of other demographics, is the lack of a concrete definition of what makes work meaningful.

When you think about it though, that's really unsurprising. A blanket definition of "meaningful work" defies logic. What might qualify as a meaningful job to me may differ widely from what it means to you. What we deem meaningful is deeply personal, reflecting our individual goals, beliefs, and values. It takes a lot of self-reflection and a clear understanding of what matters to you most to tease out your own definition of meaningful work. This part of knowing yourself allows you to move forward in a way that balances your truth with your personal sense of mission.

We talked about labels earlier. Think about them and what they mean in your life. The labels rest on the surface, but they can be easy to hide beneath. Have you ever chased a job because the label appealed to you, perhaps even more than the job itself? Are there things you have never tried, jobs you have never pursued because a label said it wasn't for you? Have you missed out on challenging opportunities because a label held you back? Have you denied yourself the option of chasing your wildest

imaginings because you were constrained by a label that said “Don’t, it’s not for people like you”? What sense does that make? “People like you”—are you really going to let someone limit you that way? Grab the label, and rip it off!

Now, it’s gone. Feels better already, doesn’t it? So ask yourself this: What are you good at? What energizes you? What do you contribute? What do you bring to the world? What motivates you? What makes you want to get out of bed in the morning and engrosses you so that you hate to go to bed at night? (A little suggestion: Grab a notebook and a pen now. Things are going to start flying through your head, and you need to write them down. You’ll come back to them later.)

All of these things are elements of who you are, and perhaps more importantly, who you can become. See, once we started talking, it got a little less scary, didn’t it?

ASK YOURSELF THE TOUGH QUESTIONS.

There’s a catch of course. There’s always a catch, right? Alongside those questions, you also have to ask tough questions of yourself and those around you. What aren’t you so good at? Are the things you most care about aligned well with your strengths? Too often, we don’t ask the tough questions for which we don’t want to hear the answers. But you need to ask them.

My long-time colleague Bill Levisay says, “It’s always better to know.” To know your strengths, to know your weaknesses, to know the areas in which you can apply yourself, learn, stretch, grow, and reach for new areas of strength is invaluable information. I have a profound admiration for Bill’s ability to go deeper. His insistence on facing the tough questions and the tough answers head-on is exceptional. He helped me see that the apprehension tied to asking difficult questions is like going to the dentist. Once you’ve asked—once you’ve gone there—you realize it was never as bad as the oppressive expectation of how bad it might be. Not asking leaves you on a treadmill going nowhere.

Once you have the answers, once you really know the problems, you are positioned to work toward solutions. And that's always a better position to be in. Just ask. An honest answer never killed anyone.

Our objective is preparing you to answer in a very thoughtful and purposeful way this question: What do you want to be when you grow up? In one form or another, over time, many people will ask some version of that question. Where do you see yourself in five years? Same question.

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What do you want to accomplish? Yep, that's essentially it yet again. It's about you, just you, and moving toward an outcome that reflects your individual capabilities and opens the door for you to consciously recognize and pursue what you want. Acknowledge and embrace the fact that you absolutely bring something to the world that no one else does. Who else is informed by your particular array of experiences? Who has your specific collection of skills guided by your core values? Who brings to the table precisely what you do? No one, I promise you that. Know yourself, find your niche, and move forward faster.

EMPOWER YOURSELF MOVING FORWARD.

As you work through this book, I want you to feel empowered to move your life forward, to embrace the inspired future that we talked about, and to tell your story in a way that feels right. Otherwise, all that happens is you bought a book. And maybe read it. That works out pretty well for me, but it's really not the point. It's sure not why I spent the time creating this book. I didn't write it for me. What's in here has been part of my life for years. I wrote it for you.

As you work through the SVP Exercise of *Be More*, what you will find is a story—your story—that allows you to position yourself in terms of career and avocation. You will learn to say the things that you know

are on your path to finding the fulfillment and happiness that moving forward with intent can bring. It's your story—to own and to tell. If you don't, someone else will. It happens every minute of every day. People size you up. They see you in a context that defines you. If you don't create that context, if you don't tell your story, someone else will. In that moment, you lose ownership of the story that's all about you. If you don't say what you want, people around you will assume you already have it or perhaps even worse, they will assume they know what you want and move you in a direction that isn't right for you. Unless they know what you want, they have no way to help you get it. That's why you have to be able to tell your story. Think of that story as your personal brand.

All right. Stop. No eye-rolls allowed. Marketing. Brands. These are not the devil. They aren't. It's all about storytelling. And the best storytelling, like the best marketing and the best brands, is memorable. It is concise.

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It's purposeful. It's evocative. It may be colorful. But most importantly, it's true, really true. One hallmark of a great brand is the uncompromising truth of the story it tells and its unquestionable alignment

with all it represents. As the face you present to the world, your story is the single strongest element in the backpack you will carry on your path moving forward. There's no more powerful way to be remembered and to set yourself apart.

BE REMEMBERED FOR THE STORY YOU TELL.

When you say what you feel, when you say who you are, it is an immense thing. In that moment, with those words, you define your place in the world. You stake your claim to what you want to accomplish, and you set your life's mission when you can find your truth and say who you are. It will guide the choices you should make, telling you when to say "Yes" and also when to say "No." And so the work that goes into it, the reflection

that brings you to your story, should be deliberate, intense, thoughtful, sometimes painful, and extremely purposefully orchestrated. It may require the deepest dive into yourself you have ever taken. It is scary. I get the fear of uncovering and embracing your true self, but I've also learned that the fear ebbs as the empowerment of becoming exactly who you are overcomes it.

“The construct of coming at it with the simplicity of one passion, four values, and five skills, is very approachable but also profound,” says Jack, a former colleague who spent an extraordinary amount of time and introspection as he completed the SVP Exercise. “It’s simple, but it’s profound. You can’t articulate your passion without doing a lot of work.” It is a lot of work—get ready.

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A lot of work, yes, but the prospect for return on your investment of effort is undoubtedly worth it. In one of the most memorable character introductions in American literature, F. Scott Fitzgerald described Jay Gatsby’s smile, saying, “It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey.” That idealized description captures the opportunity that lies before you as you conceive your personal story. It is yours to write and yours to tell, honestly, but also exactly as you choose. It is the opportunity to define your relevance in the world and to create the impression of yourself that you would most like to convey and that will best help you achieve your goals.

EMBRACE YOUR UNIQUE DIFFERENCE.

Don’t be afraid of where that story takes you. It’s about truth—your truth. The things that make you interesting and special may feel untraditional

and off-center. Embrace them. That is exactly where your uniqueness lives. Hold onto it with both hands. The things that made you different in high school may have made you an outlier. Those are the very same things that will elevate you above the masses in your life. Don't ever be afraid to be you. Be authentic. If you don't, your life will never resonate in a genuine way, and the story you tell won't point to what will make you happier.

There's another reason your story is so important. Once you develop it, once you can articulate it in a truthful way, it will empower you. Your number one goal is to tell your story better than anyone else, before anyone else, and in a way that's relevant, emotive, and memorable. The

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strength of your personal story can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. "How so?" you ask. "Just because I say it, are you telling me that it will come true?" There might be more to it than that. But know this: An aura of purposefulness can take you a long way in this world. Quite simply, if you look like you know where you are going, you will be amazed at the people

who will let you—even help you—get there. Your confidence will inspire you, and it will inspire those around you.

A number of years ago, the former head of Walt Disney Studios, founder of Disney Theatricals, and director Peter Schneider led a master class for graduate acting students at Purdue. The discussion turned to auditions. The students, mostly twentysomethings, talked about the stress and angst of a process that in their view was about a dissection of them in search of their weaknesses. Schneider, a guy with no soft edges, told them something fascinating. At an audition, he said, as the director, he roots for a great performance. His goal is to find someone exceptional to fill a role, to make a production great. Rather than looking for weaknesses, rather than trying to weed out, his objective is to find the person who makes his eyes light up. So, while the actors felt that auditions were about looking for the ways in which they did not measure

up, the director brought a very different perspective to the table. Every time the door opens and a new person walks into the room, he told them, I am hoping, praying, that this will be the one. I am desperate for you to succeed.

It's time to create your story. People love a good story.

But mostly, they love happy endings.



IT'S YOUR STORY TO OWN AND TO TELL.

Explore Self.

Know Self.

Express Self.