



# How to do 2021 well

4 January 2021

It's finally here. January 2021. The year some people have been longing for since August last year, after we all got sideswiped and knocked off our feet by the coronavirus. We made it. That, in itself, is something, given the year that has passed.

For almost everyone, 2020 was not a nice year. Yet it was a year that got us to reflect, to appreciate what we have, and to learn how important it is to be flexible, to be able to think on our feet, and to make changes quickly if necessary. Of course, almost nothing changes between 31 December 2020 and 1 January 2021. The world is still the same. However, as we enter a new year, we are far more able to deal with what is coming. Covid-19 is still here, but we do have a better idea of how to handle it. And should another such-like virus come our way, we will also be better able to handle it. So, providing nothing else comes out of left-field and punches us all in the gut like the virus did last year, we can breathe a bit easier, and look forward to a year of making the most of what we know how to do.

When I talk about how to do 2021 well, I am not only talking about your health – physical and mental. I am also talking about other aspects of your life: your relationships, your career, your business, and your finances. One of the lessons that we can learn from business is the importance of having a strategy. A strategy is what enables a business to move forward and achieve their goals. If the playing field changes and the strategy needs to be changed, then they change it. Professional sports is like that too. As individual people though, we tend not to set a strategy for our lives. We tend to live day after day, dealing with whatever comes up. The problem with this is that we then find we are just drifting through life, or not really accomplishing much. Or – as many find out – reach the end of the year, and think what did I do this year that I really wanted to do? So, I want you to think about a personal strategy for your life this year. It doesn't have to be complicated and it doesn't have to be big. But it does have to be about goals you would like to achieve for your life. It needs to be about what you want for yourself this year in terms of health, career and business, relationships, and finances. And of course it needs to take the current environmental influences into account.

So, what are some things you can think about that you could put in your strategy and plan to accomplish this year. Below are some ideas to get you thinking about elements you may want to put in your strategy for your life this year.

## **HEALTH**

Let us start with health, and I start with health because without it you have nothing. Health is something we take for granted until we don't have it. Look after your health. Take proactive steps to manage your stress. Take time off from work. You cannot be on 24-7-365 and expect to stay well. Eat healthily, exercise, and get enough sleep. If we are, as some reputable medical journals suggest, facing a time with more and more unusual viruses coming our way, then you need to prioritise your health. If you have a chronic illness, understand that a lot of the time there is plenty you can do to manage it. Many Olympic athletes have chronic illnesses such as asthma and diabetes. They are able to compete at the level they do because they manage their illnesses. A chronic illness does not mean you cannot live a healthy life. You do have to do the work to manage it though. Steve Redgrave is a British oarsman who won 5 Olympic Gold Medals for rowing at five consecutive Olympic games, during which time he had diabetes and ulcerative colitis. There is a lot you can do to make sure your body is in great shape even if you do have chronic conditions. There is also a lot you can do to ensure your mind is in great shape. If you lose your money, you can make more money. If you lose your job or your business, you can get another job or start another business. If you lose a relationship, you can find another one. If you lose your health, you may not get it back.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

Value and make time for your relationships. This past year has taught us that life is short. And it could be a lot shorter than we expect it to be. We just never know when someone we love is going to pass away. Relationships also are a significant buffer against stress and difficult times. Nurture your relationships. If you don't have enough of the right people in your life then take some actions this year to go and meet new people. Relationships don't just happen. Some people are willing to put a lot of work into their careers and almost nothing into their relationships. And then they wonder why their relationships are a mess. If you want good relationships you need to put in the work.

## **CAREER**

You may need to rethink your career. Perhaps your career is in a field that has been devastated by the virus. Perhaps you need a new career. Perhaps finding a job is the most important goal for you this January because you have lost a job. If you need to think about a new career, then put in the time to research the right career for you, and then go out and get a job. Despite the virus, which still continues to create havoc out there, companies are definitely hiring and people are definitely getting employed so get out there and get busy job

hunting. If you battled with remote work, and you are still working remotely, then think about how to deal with the problems you encountered. Take breaks. Get out of your home some of the time. Have a space dedicated to work only and have specific hours only that you work.

## **BUSINESS**

If you had a business and it got knocked with the virus, this is a chance to pick up again. If you had a business and went out of business because of the virus and lockdown regulations, think about what sort of a business you could start this time that will be needed. Also think a lot about more online delivery of products and services. If nothing else the coronavirus got us to realise that assuming we can deliver exactly the same products and services year after year to the same customers will not work. We need to be more creative, more flexible, and more adaptable in our businesses. And we may need to be able to change our offerings rapidly to deal with the world of the future.

## **FINANCES**

Then there are your finances; an area in which almost everyone took a big knock last year. What are some of the goals you would like to achieve financially this year? Perhaps you need to pay off loans. Maybe you need to replenish your savings. You might also want to think about starting a side hustle. Having multiple streams of income is becoming more and more important in this unstable, ever changing world. Set yourself some financial goals to move you in the direction you would like to end up in.

When you are strategising your life plan for the year, remember to also talk to other people, consult various books, media, the internet and other resources. You don't have to come up with everything on your own. But make a plan. Think about where you would like your life to be at the end of this year and start setting the goals and planning the actions to take to get you there. As the year progresses you can update the plan as need be. Just set a plan. Make a decision to start creating the sort of life you would like to have. Don't drift. Don't depend on chance or fate. Deliberately decide what you want and then set about making it happen. You may not feel like setting goals. You may still feel overwhelmed by the events of last year which are continuing into this year. But please do. Even a boat in a storm needs direction or it can end up on the rocks.