

PHOENIX RISING

A stylized phoenix is depicted as a series of flowing, flame-like shapes in shades of orange, yellow, and red. The bird is shown in profile, facing right, with its wings spread and tail feathers visible. The background is a light, warm-toned gradient with faint, swirling patterns that suggest movement and energy.

HOW YOU CAN BEAT
LIFE'S GREATEST
CHALLENGES

Dr. DAVE POOLE, PhD

This book is dedicated to everyone who says (or wants to say), with Frank, “I thought of quitting, baby, But my heart ain’t gonna buy it.”

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*You can chase a dream
That seems so out of reach
And you know it might not ever come your way
Dream it anywayⁱ
(Martina McBride)*

Introduction

The Good Life

My favourite TV show of all time was all about the good life, literally. *The Good Life* (called *Good Neighbours* when screened in the United States) was one of the hits of the mid-seventies in the United Kingdom and Australia.

Its story was simple: Tom Good, the show's central character, spends his 40th birthday searching for "it". He doesn't know what "it" is, but he knows what "it" isn't. "It" is not working every day for the rest of his life, as has done until now, designing the toy animals inserted into breakfast cereal packets for children. He knows "it" is not commuting back and forth each morning from his home in upper class London to the design desks he shares with ambitious junior colleagues barely out of their teens. "It" is not working harder to make more money to buy more things as he and his wife Barbara feel compelled to climb the aspirational ladder.

For Tom and Barbara "it" turns out to be the monumental decision to quit work and turn their standard-sized suburban garden into a self-sufficient farm. They trade in their car for a rotary hoe and plough up their manicured lawns to make way for vegetable gardens. Pigs, chickens and a goat are acquired, the crops are sown, and the series follows the Good's ups and downs as they try to forge a living.

"It" is not easy going; storms wipe out their plants, the crops are difficult to sell and their power generator is uncooperative. Yet Tom and Barbara press on in their radical experiment, much to the amusement of their next-door friends and neighbours, Jerry and Margot. While the Good's money often runs out, Jerry and Margot continue to live their life of modern commercial luxury. Jerry, in fact, keeps moving up within the same company that Tom left on his 40th birthday.

By the final episode, the second anniversary of their new life, events have taken their toll on Tom and Barbara Good. Their goat, Geraldine, has stopped giving milk. Most of their soil has been contaminated beyond use by another neighbour's leaking oil drum whose contents have spilt onto their land. While they celebrate Jerry's promotion to Managing Director of the toy animal company, their home is broken into and trashed by local hoodlums.

Despite their tears and despite the urgings of Jerry and Margot to give up on their dreams of self-sufficiency and return to a "normal" life, Tom and Barbara Good refuse. Not only do they recommit to their dream, they generously toast Jerry with champagne on his good fortune. Jerry's response to that toast defines for me the spirit of the pursuit of the good life:

*"I've only become a Managing Director", he says. "You've just taken life by the throat and throttled it to death."*ⁱⁱ

You may be asking yourself why I chose to begin a book about comebacks with a story about a couple who, at first glance, don't appear to have lost anything. Sure, Tom was discontent with his job but it was still a safe career. They were both in good health and they had quite a nice home in the suburbs with good friends and all the creature comforts. Nevertheless, Tom felt like a failure every time he went to work because he'd lost passion, direction and a sense of control over his own life.

While the real life comeback stories in the pages to come are notable and inspirational because of the great size of the falls and the mountainous climbs back to the top, we must first acknowledge that most setbacks don't announce themselves in the form of bankruptcy or divorce or a terminal diagnosis. They can be as simple as waking up one day and realising you can no longer stand your job or noticing that you have become too unfit to walk your dog. Our daily lives are roller coasters of gains and losses but the comeback path, whether it be trivial or life changing, is marked by the same sign posts, if we can only learn to recognise them.

Dream it Anyway

For Tom and Barbara Good, "throttling life" meant first recognising that their current lives had reached a dead end and then having the courage to comeback at life—to re-invent themselves and start again on their own terms. Of course, giving up your day job to dig holes in your back garden and play with compost may not be your idea of the perfect career change but the point of this book isn't to simply give you a list of off-the-shelf lifestyle renovation options. Instead this book is a guidebook, helping you to decipher the sign posts on your own comeback path, whatever your setback may be and wherever your new direction may lead.

What really shines through in each of the various real life stories recounted in this book is that, to make a successful comeback, we first need to think differently about our lives. Actually, it's more than this. We must learn to think deeply, to observe and consider both our internal and external worlds more closely and more honestly. Then we must apply this level of thinking to our lives in a way that takes into account our emotional and behavioural complexity as men and women in a dynamic society.

If that all sounds unnecessarily abstract and difficult, don't worry—your brain has already been doing this for you all your life. This infinitely remarkable piece of equipment can perform complex mathematical calculations in microseconds to predict the trajectory of a ball and in a heartbeat move your entire body into a position to catch it. In much the same way it can also gather myriad scraps of data, from your own emotional feedback all the way through to wide societal trends, and piece it all together to make predictions of your own life trajectory. Simply put, we call this subconscious process "dreaming" and the outcomes of these calculations we call our "dreams".

Now, I'm not talking about the dreams you have when you're asleep, although they're important too. I am talking about your passions and aspirations, those things you hold in your heart and mind during every waking hour as you ponder your life and its true meaning. And when I say "we must thinking differently" and "we must think more deeply" I mean we must make better use of our subconscious dream machinery, tune in to our dreams and then refine them in our conscious minds.

By their very nature, dreams will be both objective and subjective, rational and emotional, muddled and clear-headed. As humans, that's how we think. We need an approach that

allows us to recognise our dreams and cultivate them, hone them survive in the harsh reality of life outside our own minds..

In recent times, many of our dreams have taken a beating. The constant uncertainty of the world's financial markets and economies, the restructuring of corporations and industries, and the rapidly changing nature of family structures and relationships have all contributed to lives more unsure than ever. We need to retain authentic, resilient dreams to positively confront these dynamics.

Wherever you are in the world, this remains true. For instance, a recent study of people in the United Kingdom found that feelings of isolation and stress had grown alongside the economic wealth and prosperity of the 1990s and much of the last decade.ⁱⁱⁱ In the wake of the bankruptcies, foreclosures, and tide of unemployment wrought by the Global Financial Crisis, many individuals found that the foundations on which they had built their lives had collapsed. A base they had thought was secure and resilient turned out to be fragile, vulnerable and weak.

What were your dreams?

What are your dreams now?

Maybe you want to be the world's best hedge-fund trader or, perhaps, just find the time to sculpt beautiful garden hedges. Maybe you want to corner the market in securities, sell a truckload of security gates or, perhaps, just add security to a job that otherwise feels completely uncertain. Maybe you want to become a senior executive, a master of the business universe or, perhaps, just feel a little more mastery in the universe that is your home or office.

While achieving our dreams can be one tough ask, giving them away too easily can feel like we are killing off part of our very selves. We feel like we've lost a limb. Some of our spirit departs. We can feel the lingering sense that life is not what it might be ... could be ... should be.

This book is about positive dreams. It is about creating them and pursuing them. Most importantly, it is about holding onto them when life is at its toughest. When our dreams are put to the hardest test, how well do they survive?

It is also about recognising when it's time to adapt our dreams as life takes its course. At times, we may need to build entirely new dreams, dreams that truly reflect where life has taken us.

For most of my life, I've been inspired by the dreams of some of the best-known men and women of our times. Some of the lives I have studied have been of folks whose celebrity is far less, yet whose response to life's challenges has been just as inspirational. I've found myself even more inspired when the dream chasers have crashed, their dreams seemingly crushed, but then somehow they dust themselves off and move on with their lives.

Sometimes, our heroes and heroines have come back to pursue their original dream. At other times, the mere act of survival has been comeback enough. Together, they provide the stories that allow us to reflect with wisdom on our own dreams. They encourage us to view our dreams through the often brutal prism of reality. Then, they can inspire us to pick up our bags, open the door, and press on towards more authentic dreams.

Your Choice

Whatever has happened in your life until now, each day is a new beginning. Your choices may be constrained factors beyond your immediate control—by debt or by disease, by depression or by disaster but as long as you’re alive you can still choose to move and to grow. Perhaps you’ll grow in new directions, having struck a dead end in your current career path; maybe you’ll move back towards dreams you’ve long delayed or denied; perhaps you’ll shift in the direction of dreams forgotten or dreams that died as your values shifted towards the superficial and inauthentic, to values and behaviours that have never really been “you”.

It doesn’t matter. Today is a new day and today you can choose to take ownership of whatever control you do have, no matter how limited it appears, and use it to steer your life in the direction of your dreams. Like Tom and Barbara Good, regardless of what’s happening or where you are right now, the creation of a good life remains possible for you. Never, ever believe that it isn’t.

Each new day is a fresh opportunity to begin the necessary and vital process of cleaning out the mental debris that can turn a clear mind into an unnavigable junkyard. Our fears, and our regrets and our disappointments can quickly pile up and block out our wider perspective. We live our lives in such a state of high alert, however, that slowing down sufficiently is virtually impossible for most of us. Thus, before we begin to heal our minds, we must first learn to pause long enough to create the foundations on which this may take place.

Next, we need to take ownership of our own situations. We live in a world that encourages to turn over responsibility for our mistakes to the whims of fate, to bad luck, or to being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Dreamers, and I have chosen this term carefully as a label that we can wear with pride, accept responsibility for their dreams. We do this from the perspective of the messy, grounded, and lived-in realities of our lives, rather than as fantasists. The *rea* in *dreams* reminds us of reality. It also reminds us of the importance of pursuing realistic, healthy dreams that reflect the chaos and true circumstances of our lives.

Having accepted the responsibilities of ownership, we can begin to explore new possibilities, both for today and for tomorrow. We must ask questions of our old dreams and explore the potentialities of our new dreams. Given our situations, we must consider what are and what are no longer options or possibilities. What steps can we take, big or small, to begin to build the momentum so central to the achievement of our dreams? While exploring, how can we decide if a particular path has run its course or remains a promising avenue for exploration?

This brings us to the need to negotiate the obstacles and challenges that always lie in the path of good dreams. Few men or women achieve their dreams without confronting and staring down the knockbacks and the naysayers, the feelings of foolishness and fatigue that confront all worthwhile achievements. Just doing it, to cite one influential philosophy, can feel impossibly hard. It can move us towards feelings of under confidence and, at worst, feelings of worthlessness. To the extent that our dreams and our identities overlap, problems arising when we negotiate the hurdles can actually place our self-beliefs and worldviews in danger of being smashed beyond recognition. While some reconstruction of our lives can be a good thing, we need the tools to get through this phase alive and with sufficient energy and passion to go on.

Such energies and passions can be strengthened via the gift of inspiration. When we hear this word, we usually think of the inspiration we take from others. As we will learn, however, it can be just as powerful to give inspiration as to receive it, whatever the stage of our journeys. Getting and giving inspiration, then, can undergird the resilience required to keep us moving towards our dreams.

Finally, we must consider excellence as the defining characteristic of our dreams and the core value on which we rely to make them happen. In excelling, we define ourselves from others. While most people consider themselves to be above-average on virtually every quality, history reveals that those who excel in the pursuit of their dreams not only achieve better outcomes but enjoy the satisfaction and joy that can come with achieving at the highest levels.

The Phoenix

These processes come together as a guiding model for achieving our own good dreams. Achieving and achieved, our dreams can move us towards the good life, the life well-lived. This life cannot be achieved outside the circumstances of our most important relationships and responsibilities. No life devoid of intimacy, friendship or duty can ever be said to have been a life well-lived. As the good book says, life retains little value if we win the world yet lose our souls.

Accordingly, the good life depends on the nourishment of our souls. Paradoxically, while the introspection this requires might imply a degree of self-centredness, taking time for ourselves gives balance to our quest for achievement and our hope for a legacy that outlasts us. Much of our journey explores this paradox and provides practical advice and examples to enhance our ability to live within it.

After ten years of study and personal reflection I have developed a model of dealing with life's challenges that works for me. It has been refined from countless hours of consideration and analysis of the lives of friends, colleagues, and many of the most famous men and women of the last century who have successfully overcome disappointments and defeats. It takes its name from the mythical phoenix. A majestic and colourful bird that can live for a millennium, the phoenix builds a nest for itself in which it catches fire and turns to ashes before being born anew. The phoenix reminds us that each hour and each day give us a chance to renew our own lives and, most importantly, our dreams.

P encourages us to **pause**, to stop and take stock and to begin the task of dream and re-creation.

H is for **healing**, for coming to grips with our situations and pursuing forgiveness and renewal.

O stands for **ownership**, the need to accept responsibility for the good and the bad, and for the often-forgotten power that we have to choose where life may take us.

E calls on us to **explore**, to move into new waters, chart new territory, and summon the courage to change.

N is about **negotiating** the shoals, the inevitable dangers and discomforts that may oppose us, distract us, or limit us as we move towards our dreams.

I is for **inspiration**, taking it and giving it as we continue our journeys of achievement.

X reminds us to excel, to establish and re-establish the best of virtues, from integrity and decency to quality and service, and to match the height, width and depth of our goals to the dreams to which we are drawn.

A creature of power and majesty, the image of the phoenix can lift our hearts, heads, and minds. Its symbolic power can help us fly. Let's travel together on the journey of the phoenix and create new, better dreams. Let's fly together and learn about what it takes to land in the rich soil of the good life.

When you've been through trauma – whether that's bereavement or divorce or public humiliation – there's something to be said for just taking the time to cool down.^{iv}
(Gerald Ratner)

Chapter 1

To Pause is to Progress

Gerald Ratner writes that cooling down and taking time out was foreign to his nature. He was an action man. In the years after April 1991, however, he had no choice.

Gerald Ratner had taken a relatively small family jewellery business and, by dint of passion and incredibly hard work, turned it into the United Kingdom's leading jewellery retailer. Annual profits for 1990 were £130 million and among Ratner's 2,000 stores were 500 recently acquired on the west coast of the United States. Gerald Ratner was in the only job he had ever wanted, a millionaire master of the universe. Yet, for all of his business acumen, experience, and smarts, Ratner made a single mistake that would cost him almost everything.

On 23 April, 1991, Ratner stepped onto the stage to give a speech to 4,000 of the UK's most influential businesspeople at the conference of the Institute of Company Directors. He was at the top of his game, and was scheduled to share the stage with future British Prime Minister John Major and former South African President FW de Klerk. Ratner was a confident speaker, known for adding humour and pithy pieces of advice to make his speeches more memorable. On this occasion, however, Ratner delivered one joke too many. A tabloid journalist scribbled down Ratner's comment that the reason his stores could sell a sherry decanter with six glasses in a presentation box for £9.95 was because "it was crap".^v The newspapers had a field day. Ratner's comment became national news, even shifting Princess Diana from her traditional spot on the front page. Ratner's was rechristened as "Rotners" and Gerald Ratner quoted as telling his customers that, "I'm selling total crap."

Already facing the start of an economic recession, Ratner's was forced to close stores. Soon after, his board forced him to resign. Despite having spent 18 months working like crazy to save the business, the name Ratner had become an embarrassment, both to Gerald Ratner and his organisation. At the age of 43, having watched the value of his personal shareholdings shrink from £8 million to £100,000, Ratner was washed up.

The phone didn't ring for Gerald Ratner. For years, there were no opportunities to recover and begin to regain his self-confidence. To pass the time, his wife sent him out on family errands. While new business possibilities began to emerge several years later, Ratner faced a long period of self-questioning and torment before anything like career recovery began.

During these years, he learnt for the first time what it truly meant to develop relationships with his (second) wife and children. He started to get fit, riding a bicycle through the English countryside, rebuilding his physical and mental fitness. On reflection, these tough years were years well spent,

"What I now call my 'wilderness years' gave me a chance to recuperate. I really believe now that if you've been through a terrible experience, you have to get your

head straight before you can do anything else...You can't recover from a failed business – and all the pain that places on every part of your life – overnight.”^{vi}

Gerald Ratner **paused** in order to progress. He'd lost his fortune, his business, his job, and his reputation. He'd become known as Mr Crapner. He, more than most, would agree that “sh** happens”. In coming back, however, he got through a critical period that the vast majority of people would prefer to avoid, namely pausing long enough to understand what had really happened.

Our keep-moving culture strongly discourages stopping. After all, no one who stops can win a race, can they? While we know that the roses might indeed smell nice, pausing to smell them while the world moves on without us is unacceptable, isn't it? By definition, pausing or stopping mean that we will lose “the big mo”, momentum.

To stop means to die, doesn't it?

I don't think so. To pause is to progress.

Pausing Starts the Process

We crawl before we walk, and walk before we run. No choice. No baby has yet run out of the womb, although I would not be surprised if the world's fastest man, Usain Bolt, had begun life with a sprint.

Similarly, Gerald Ratner had no choice but to stop for a while. The market and the media had given him his marching orders. Being forced to stop is a common occurrence. Lightning strikes and down we go. Disease or disaster can strike anyone at anytime. Just a few months ago, I was forced to sell my business because the franchisor gave me no choice. They said that I was too entrepreneurial for their conservative and cautious business. Despite increasing my bookstore's revenues by some 25 percent, I lost around \$100,000 from the sale since I was forced to sell in a recession-effected, buyer's market. I had to pay legal fees and the fees of the business agent I'd entrusted with the sale, despite the fact that he didn't sell it. In fact, he was so clueless that I ended up going outside his network to sell it myself. That's me being too entrepreneurial again!

I hated it. I was angry at the franchisor for not giving me a single chance at redemption. Surely a little naughtiness didn't deserve immediate execution, I argued. I was angry at the new buyer with all of her ridiculous questions and queries (many of which actually made sense, however I'm far too spontaneous a guy to do a thorough preliminary study of a business via due diligence). Similarly, I was angry at the guy from whom I'd bought the business a couple of years before since he'd failed to pay one of his full-time employees (his wife) more than a token salary each year. I was angry at the business agent for being incompetent. And I was angry at the world for getting me into this predicament.

On the other hand, the owners of my franchise may have just done me one of the biggest favours of my life. If they hadn't put a stop to the ridiculous hours I was working to try to make my retail store work, hours that led to me living in a lodge near my store at least one night a week, I wouldn't have woken up to the fact that the economics of bookstores and the size and location of my store would forever work against the achievement of any significant financial returns from the business. I might have had to pay \$100,000 for this lesson, but the

lesson itself was priceless. It pulled me out the treadmill long enough to realise that the glory days of retail bookstores were, unfortunately, long gone. I realised that I had for too long been a square peg trying to squeeze myself into the traditional “mum and dad” model of small retail bookstores. Like many businesses, bookstore owners have usually purchased the business to buy themselves a job. It may not be a lucrative job but it’s a job. And, for booklovers, it’s a job that keeps them close to their favourite things. While I’d first observed this at the franchisee conference several months before, it took a decision from above (my franchisor, in this case) to pull me clear of this particular cliff top. And, while I hate losing money, I will always be thankful that I was pulled clear, whatever my protestations at the time.

While I was stopped by someone else, you may face the tough decision as to whether you should deliberately choose to stop. Most people, like me, wait until the decision is made for us. Having said that, I wonder if my subconscious was actually at work during this time, busily creating the crises that led to my retail downfall. Before I had actually recognised it, my subconscious may have already recognised that I was frustrated, bored and exhausted and begun to act on its own accord!

Pausing is the right choice if your life has any of the following characteristics. If you hate your job or hate the people you work with, you may need to pause long enough to reflect on what you will do about this. Life is too short to work in a horrible job or amongst power-driven or sociopathic colleagues for longer than you have to. Sure, you might have to put up with things for a while as you work out what to do, but pausing to think about today’s realities is an essential first step before considering future options.

The same is true of many of the other crises that may be afflicting you. You may be in an abusive relationship that is difficult to leave when there are assets and children and shared friendships involved. You may be fighting a degenerative illness that refuses to respond to your aggressive spirit and positive attitude, determined as you are to beat this “thing” that causes constant disruptions to your life and ever-present reminders of your mortality. You may have just lost your job or, like me, watched your business taken from you.

Whatever it is, things won’t change in the long-term unless you stop to recognise that what’s happened has, well, happened. And, paradoxically, by stopping, you will take the first step in coming back, the first move towards the good life, a life richer in meaning and greater in contentment. By stopping, paradoxically, you start.

This is what happened with Steve Jobs who, after pausing, set about creating one of the most amazing comebacks in business history. Jobs’s decade and a half of separation from his own creation, Apple Corp, transformed his attitude, his philosophy, and his life. Formerly arrogant beyond belief,

Fifteen years in the wilderness after being rejected by his own company changed all that: it made him human. This was a new Steve Jobs. Humbled by failure, elevated by the birth of his children, mellowed with age, yet still as headstrong and perhaps even more certain of his own decision making than ever before, Jobs now understood that it really was the many others who did the work: “Apple is a team sport.”^{vii}

Adopted soon after his birth in 1955, Steve Jobs always sought to create meaning in the void left by the abandonment he felt from his natural mother, despite the fact that his new parents

were loving, caring people. A precocious and easily-bored child, Steve was tinkering with electronics by the age of 10. Living in Los Altos, San Francisco the family resided among a huge number of scientists and engineers. Bored at school at 13, Steve fell in with a school colleague of similar age, Bill Fernandez, and Fernandez's 18 year-old university dropout neighbour, Steve Wozniak, who were working on one of earliest versions of the personal computer. Despite the difference in their ages, the two Steves were both intense and passionate, delighted to be fully absorbed in a project of their own creation.

Within a year or two, they had become great friends, and invented a machine using old electronic components that could confound AT&T's computers and allow people to make long-distance phone calls without payment. It cost \$40 to build and sold locally for up to \$300. Leaving 'Woz', Steve went to college but soon gave up on attending classes. Nonetheless, he stayed to hang around college and ruminate and think. A dean of the time recalls that Jobs questioned everything as he sought to understand why things were as they were. Such an enquiring mind would stand him in good stead. This period, the first pause, gave him great clarity and depth of thinking.

Hired by Atari, Steve was only allowed to work at night since his hippie gear and associated odours repelled his colleagues and the company's management. Struggling with the existential questions surrounding his birth, he sojourned to India, living in abandoned village buildings and begging for food as he travelled towards the Himalayas. The journey, while intense, didn't answer his questions. He did turn, however, to Zen Buddhism for spiritual enlightenment. Arriving back at Atari in robes and shaved head, Steve soon found himself renewing his relationship with Steve Wozniak. Spotting an advertisement for a computer kit in a trade magazine, the two Steves decided to build circuit boards that hobbyists could load directly into their computer kits. When a local computer store owner asked if the young men could build the full machine rather than simply supplying the boards, the Apple I was born. When it didn't sell well, Woz designed the Apple II, a machine with much greater functionality. Using an operating language that would make the computer quicker and easier to use for hackers seeking to write their own programs, Steve Jobs determined that the machine should be much quieter than the fan-cooled alternatives. His obsession with design, user-friendliness and functionality was born.

While continuing to improve the Apple II, Steve's imagination was captured by an Intel advertisement that used symbols such as poker chips and sports cars instead of technical jargon. The use of symbolism would become a hallmark of the Jobs approach to marketing. He would also become known for his perfectionism, impatience and single mindedness. He could infuriate his staff yet simultaneously inspire them to walk over hot coals. Like the rest of us, he wasn't without his flaws. When girlfriend Chris-Ann became pregnant in 1977, Steve abandoned her when she refused an abortion. As a man who set his own rules, he couldn't countenance that someone else would choose not to follow them. After years of lamenting the loss of his biological parents, Steve left his new daughter without a father and ignored her existence for years. For much of this time, he refused to admit that he had fathered her.

As new applications like spreadsheet programs were added to the Apple II, sales soared. Using an alliance with Xerox to gain access to their ideas, innovations like pop-up windows, the mouse, word processing, art and drawing applications, and the ability to network between machines were developed. His next model, the Lisa, was over-priced and 5 years late to market. Steve's abrasive approach and obsession with doing things his way began to alienate

him from many of the other key Apple employees. As the low-priced, self-contained Macintosh (Mac) was being developed, Steve's colleagues began to sideline him. While his innovative ideas for the look of the new machine proved invaluable, his manner proved intolerable. In 1985, an under-pressure Steve Jobs resigned from Apple. A former CEO at PepsiCo took his place. Steve was in tears when he left Apple. Close friends feared that he might commit suicide. A colleague found him lying on the floor of his home in the dark, inconsolable. Come the following day, however, Steve was talking comeback.

Taking time out, Steve travelled to Paris, then cycled Italy's Tuscan hills. He visited Sweden and Russia. Returning to the US, he contemplated a career in politics. During the summer, he wandered the campus of Stanford University, spending time in the library to study research into DNA, biotechnology, and biochemistry. He began a new company, NeXT, and decided to design a computer capable of high-level research functions and those graphics, design, and animation tasks impossible for other machines. During his travels, he attempted, unsuccessfully, to sell the machine to Disney. While there, however, he obtained valuable insights into the worlds of animation and film-making. Finding experienced engineers he could entice, Steve purchased a special effects studio from George Lucas and attracted brilliant Disney animator John Lasseter to the new team. In the years that followed, the renamed Pixar would develop the technology and associated storylines to create new software applications that would become standards for the industry, as well as a veritable production line of hit movies including Toy Story, A Bug's Life, Monsters, Inc., and The Incredibles. While the NeXT computer and its siblings would not prove particularly successful, by the late 1990s Pixar was reporting profits of \$2.5 billion, making it the most successful Hollywood studio of all time.

Once again, Steve's genius appeared to derive from using his time-outs to reflect on where markets were heading, on how fashions were changing, and what he could do to catch the waves before they broke.

Returning to Apple in 2000, Steve could see that the internet would provide the platform for a whole new world of products and applications. Having re-established Apple's credibility with the radical-looking iMac, he brought to Apple a young genius who had great ideas for improving the relatively new MP3 player software. With the existing products selling poorly, Steve saw a market ripe for the picking. His brilliant idea was that people might download tracks off the internet directly onto a user-friendly, cool-looking device for personal use. The iPod was born. It became Apple's most successful product ever. In the meantime, Pixar continued to churn out the hits. When Disney would buy Pixar in 2006, Steve would become Disney's biggest shareholder, owning a slice of the company valued at more than \$3.5 billion.

Having conquered two industries, having confronted the ups and downs of his life and having, through dealing with cancer, stared down his demons and his flaws, Steve Jobs could conclude what his most valuable lesson had been,

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become.^{viii}

Knowing which voice is your own in the clamour and cacophony of life really only comes with deliberately taking the time to stop, to pause, and to quiet your mind sufficiently to hear the still, small voice inside. If Steve Jobs, the hyperactive, always moving, impatient entrepreneur could pause for long enough to listen to his inner voice, so can you.

Pausing Brings Pain (but pause we must)

But the pain of stopping is often too great. With pausing, we can't help but recognise reality for what it is. It is often said that life wasn't meant to be easy. We live in a culture, however, where happiness seems to have become a right and freedom to avoid pain a given. Happiness has evolved from being a feeling that was once found abundantly only amongst the rich and the leisure-classed of our society to become an expectation that should be fulfilled at all times and places. When it is lost, then, we can thus feel abused by a world whose glorious promises have given way to capriciousness and unfairness. Someone up there has trained their spotlight on us, alone in the middle of our stage, and we are compelled to exit stage left or right. In fact, when the unmerciful spotlight is trained on us, we'd be happy to jump into the audience and hide under the seats. All we can do is hope to high heaven that we're no longer the target of such bad luck and such inequity for a time.

Further, to the extent that we blame other factors for our downfall or, conversely, other factors actually are to blame for our misfortunes, we are more likely to feel the pain that comes with stopping to consider our situation. In the midst of such self-pity and self-recrimination, who wants the pain to worsen? Neither you nor I.

On the other hand, there can be no truth without pausing long enough let truth seep into our lives. Consider what happened to Michael J Fox. After ten years of working through the pain associated with accepting his diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease, he was able to conclude that the decade had been the best time of his life. How was this possible? The key can be found in Fox's pivotal decision to stop living a lie.

Michael J Fox had it all. He had become a global superstar in the Back to the Future movies and as the central figure in the popular Family Ties sitcom. He had worked night and day to escape the 17 by 12 feet apartment he'd lived at in Beverly Hills between 1979 and 1981 as a struggling actor constantly in and out of work. Through bad management decisions, he had lost almost all of his early earnings. On a cool day in March 1982, he stood in a payphone awaiting news of whether he had landed a role in Family Ties. As he waited, he wished he could afford the \$1.99 buffalo wings/mashed potato combo on sale at the nearby Pioneer Chicken outlet. His wait was worthwhile, since producer Gary David Goldberg had finally decided on Fox for the role of Alex Keaton after initially preferring several other actors. Fox was made.

For years, Michael J Fox had enjoyed the fact that the normal rules of behaviour did not apply to stars like him. The partying, the girls, and the booze were available in bucket loads, yet he wondered if he deserved it. He questioned if he would be exposed as a fraud, and as undeserving of such ridiculous largesse. Such thoughts deepened when he was taken to court by the buyer of his luxury home, a buyer who wanted to sue Fox for covering up the building's faults. To prove his innocence, Fox had to prove that he knew nothing about the faults and knew little at all about the house. The fact that he really didn't know became a source of sadness, since it forced him to consider how far he was living from the realities and basics of normal lives as they are lived by most of us.

By the time he had been diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson's Disease, Michael J Fox had become an angry man, spending hours at a time in his bath as an escape from his wife, his children, his life and, most significantly, the reality of his disease. Just as he'd earlier given an up alcohol and had never broken this commitment, he decided that from Christmas Eve, 1993, he would face life, in all its crazy complications, as a man. That night, he permitted his fears and failings to flow. Through the pain, Fox saw that to become a man without a man's heart was to be no man at all. Only now, did he see that the defining characteristics of his former life were clear. It was:

A sheltered, narrow existence fuelled by fear and made liveable by insulation, isolation, and self-indulgence. It was a life lived in a bubble – but bubbles, being the most fragile constructions, are easily destroyed.^{ix}

Michael J Fox had to allow a big part of himself to die for a better Michael J Fox to emerge. On Christmas Eve, 1993, he finally stopped running from his inner pain.

For the phoenix, the pain of self-immolation always precedes the joy of new life. To embrace pain is akin to embracing an enemy. Fox embraced his enemy, a lethal opponent, Parkinson's Disease.

In 1981, the late Pope John Paul II was critically wounded in an attempt on his life in St Peter's Square. The would-be assassin was Mehmet Ali Ağca, a Turk who had murdered in his home country in 1979. History records that after the shooting, John Paul II asked the world to forgive Ağca. He later did something quite shocking. In 1983, the Pope visited Ağca in prison, embracing his enemy in an emotional display of forgiveness and friendship. In embracing his enemy, John Paul II had robbed him of his power. He had also removed any control that Ağca and these events had retained on his life and his thoughts.

It is another paradox, then, that to remove its dark power from our lives, we must stop and embrace the good, the bad, and the ugly in our pasts and in our presents. We may need only do this once. We may need to do it every morning for a month, or a year, or a decade. But do it, we must.

Pausing Brings Power

Used well, pausing creates the power and energy that we need to continue our journey towards good dreams. It puts distance between us and our setbacks, failures, and disappointments. Used wisely and used often, it helps with the incredibly tough work of moving our rockets off their launch platforms and in the direction of blue skies.

Perhaps the greatest exponent of the deliberate pause during modern history was a small, wiry and intense but generous Indian, Mohandas K Gandhi. He became known as the Mahatma, an Indian word that means "great soul." Gandhi never sought this title, nor indeed any honour or title. He lived a simple, spiritual life. His life was his message, for by modelling a peaceful yet incredibly active way of life, he sought to create an environment in which hindus and moslems, often the most powerful of enemies, could together confront their shared nemesis and colonial masters, the government of Great Britain. He achieved this through the radical strategy of *satyagraha*, an effort to persuade the hearts of men by demonstrations of love and truth rather than force. For Gandhi, this meant adopting an

attitude of peacefulness and benevolence towards all men and women while simultaneously maintaining the strength of his belief in the eventual success of his nation's quest for independence. In developing the patience and humility demanded of this strategy, Gandhi conducted what he called "experiments with the truth", a variety of tactics and actions that provided continuous movement to the campaign, even if this was, at times, in the wrong direction. Gandhi's secret was his ability to wear the risks and dangers and failures as lightly as he did his mendicant's loin cloth.

The Mahatma had learnt to "pocket" insults. He had become impervious to the abuse and invective of others. How had he achieved this remarkable ability? Because he had continually sought to achieve a self-less existence. His food was light and minimal and his clothing had become negligible. He had few possessions apart from some books, and he gave up sex for the final 42 years of his life before his assassination. As Gilbert Murray wrote of him,

Be careful in dealing with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasures, nothing for comfort or praise or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy because his body which you can always conquer gives you so little purchase over his soul.^x

While regularly accused of poor judgement and "Himalayan miscalculations", Gandhi never took them to heart. As he wrote in his autobiography,

I have always held that it is only when one sees one's own mistakes with a convex lens and does just the reverse with the case of others that one is able to arrive at a just relative estimate of the two.^{xi}

Whatever the setback, Gandhi's faith remained unshaken. In accepting poverty and sharing in the imprisonment of his followers, Gandhi won the love and commitment of his followers. In so many ways, he was a remarkable man. For our story, however, let's take a look at the internal power that came to Gandhi when he took time out to reflect, regroup, and renew his life.

The most well-known of Gandhi's pauses occurred when he fasted. He did this on several occasions and undertook fasts which may have resulted in his death had not the conflicting parties for whom he fasted come to their collective senses. He also paused when imprisoned. Gandhi cheerfully submitted to being imprisoned, often even asking for the maximum penalty to be brought down upon him. Gandhi spent more than 2,300 days of his life in the prisons of India and South Africa. From these some of his greatest ideas and most powerful thinking took place.

Since 1925 had been a bad year for Gandhi's independence movement, the Mahatma designated 1926 as a "silent year." He did not travel, addressed no mass audiences, and did not speak a word on any of the 52 Mondays that fell during the year. When he resumed travelling, he would sometimes find himself exhausted as noisy crowds on crowded railway platforms sought his words of wisdom. On these occasions, Gandhi would sit in silence until the masses (of up to 200,000 men and women) calmed. At this point, he would touch his palms together in blessing, smile, and depart. During a period of particular unrest among India's poor in 1926 following the collapse of Wall Street, Gandhi paused for six weeks to await the inner voice that would call him to renewed effort. To model his desire for India to shift to the self-production of fabric rather than import finished materials from the United

Kingdom, Gandhi pursued the philosophy of “homespun”. He would often sit for an hour each day spinning cloth on his simple charkha, or spinning wheel.

Thus, whether forced to pause via imprisonment or choosing to pause via fasting, silent Mondays, or when spinning cloth, the Mahatma took the time to renew his spirit and give his mind the freedom it needed to reflect and contemplate. Together, these times provided the continuous renewal that his expansive vision demanded. Gandhi’s life remains an example to us all of the power that pausing can bring.

Pausing Brings Perspective

If we can pause for a while or, at the very least, pause repeatedly and regularly for breath, our life will assume a new, healthier sense of perspective. In essence, we will be seated upon a smooth rock on the top of a magnificent mountain that overlooks our world and note that we are but a speck within a far greater system which maintains a purpose far greater than ours alone. We will realise, to quote George Bernard Shaw, that we can rise above life as it is most typically lived, men and women behaving as little more than a “selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making them happy.”^{xii}

Pro golfer Paul Azinger drew power from the perspective that only crises can bring. Having won his first major in a playoff against Greg Norman, the 1993 US PGA title, Azinger learnt that he had cancer in his shoulder. He’d been troubled by shoulder soreness for years, however an operation and the constant consumption of anti-inflammatory painkillers kept it from evolving into a major problem. Azinger, nicknamed “Zinger”, had learnt to deal with hardships in the past. He had been in and out of the US PGA Tour and had lived for months at a time in a campervan driven from one tournament to the next, parking in golf course car parks for the duration of the competition. For several years, he had worn the heavy mantle of “greatest player never to win a major”, and had managed a competitive, ambitious, and sometimes angry temperament that at times brought out the worst in him.

Like anyone who is diagnosed with the big C, Zinger was incredibly upset to learn of his illness. After dealing with the reality that he could die, however, Zinger made a far bigger discovery. We are all going to die sometime, he realised. The more significant question is what we might do with the days that we have. With that in mind, Zinger opened his heart to his wife and his friends. Even more importantly, he recommitted to his faith in God. While he remained something of an emotional wreck at times, particularly while awaiting his prognosis for the future, he often recalled the words of a friend who told him, “Zinger, we are not in the land of the living going to the land of the dying. We are in the land of the dying, going to the land of the living.”

While golf has remained important to him, and indeed Zinger fulfilled a life-long dream when he captained the US Ryder Cup Team to victory in 2008, he is a markedly different man to the pre-cancer Zinger. He truly understands that accomplishments and possessions bring only fleeting happiness. He believes that true contentment only comes when we have a purpose that is greater than anything our “clod of ailments and grievances” might devise. In fact, he says that the birth of his children created a sense of “exhilaration and joy” that no tournament purse could ever match. For Zinger, finding perspective had come to mean that golf assumed fourth place in his life after God, his family, and friends.^{xiii}

To pause, then, is to potentially gain perspective. It is only a potential outcome, however, since if we are not fully open to having our priorities rearranged and the pillars shaken on which our lives have been built, the perspective we gain will be partial, at best, and wildly distorted, at worst. The choice lies within us.

How to Pause

For generations, children have been given “time outs” as punishment for their misdemeanours. Quickly, we learnt to equate solitude with discipline, with loneliness, and with being forcefully removed from our social setting. Seen in this light, pausing often became for us a phenomenon to be avoided at all costs.

In an era of constant, instant communication, to turn off is to tune out of life. The omnipresence of social networking websites, iPods, wireless internet, and personal DVD players create a cacophony of noise in our lives. We can become so addicted to such noise that to spend time away from such toys can feel like someone has turned off our life support systems.

To create the mental freedom necessary to renew our dreams and to build better dreams demands such silences, however. There is no other way.

Let’s not equate pausing with some form of psychological imprisonment. Instead, consider the ways in which you might create pauses in your life without too much pain.

First, take yourself to a “**pretty place**”. I like this phrase since it conjures up the kind of location where pausing is best undertaken. It’s from a song by Paul Kelly in which he wistfully sings, “In my mind I see the light, I’ve never been so ready, now I’m going to the pretty place.”^{xiv} Our minds are never clearer than when we travel to somewhere outside the humdrum and routine of our offices and homes. The mountains are always a great choice, as are the rivers and streams. If you can’t take a “well day” (the opposite of a sick day) to travel into the natural environment, consider even the possibility of just picking yourself up from your office chair and walking around the block, in and out of a shopping centre, or through a city park. To slow your thinking, a critical component of pausing, you need to take your mind to a different place. If it is pretty, so much the better.

Another suggestion for pausing is simply to **do something different**. As a youth, I recall that I did some of my best pausing while partaking of activities in which I could let my mind wander or, better still, switch off. While riding on a sit-down lawn mower can hardly be compared to Gandhi’s silent Mondays, the fact that I had to retain my wits while mowing meant that I was taking a small step towards slowing my mind rather than attempting to switch it off in one hit. If you’ve ever taken a holiday immediately after working intensely in the office, you will know how hard it is to switch off and relax. Intermediate steps can make pausing much easier than attempting to flick the switch in ways that just won’t work for you.

Third, consider creating a **pause routine**. How you achieve this is up to you. I had a professorial colleague who kept a bedroll under his desk. A brilliant man with two doctorates, he would spend an hour every day, from 1 to 2pm, resting on his bed. He would switch off the lights, ask his secretary to hold all calls, and simply take sufficient time out to reenergise his body for the afternoon. While open plan offices and demanding schedules may make this impossible for you, find your own creative ways to pause regularly. It could be as simple as

spending an extra 5 minutes in the bathroom so that you don't feel the guilts that can accompany the deliberate pause. It may be taking the time to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee with your significant others each morning before you set off for work, or study, or whatever it is that fills your day. Will getting to work 10 or 15 minutes later really make a difference?

Finally, take advantage of the **routines** you already undertake to remind yourself to pause. We all look at ourselves in the mirror several times a day, whether to check that we've brushed our teeth, apply make-up, shave, or simply ensure that everything is adjusted and where it should be. On at least one of these occasions each day, take a real look at yourself. Rather than simply glance, as you might normally do, look beyond your surfaces and peer deeper into your heart and mind. Ask yourself, "How am I travelling today? Am I giving myself the time for silence, for a brief period away from the beeps and chimes of my communications tools, and for coming to grips with truly important things in my life?" If you can answer positively, the next step in our process of creating and achieving the best possible dreams will fall so much more easily into place.

Once paused, we give our bodies and minds the space they need to begin the healing process.

What Happens When We Don't Pause

Since pausing is so counter-cultural, you may well be tempted to avoid it. Don't. Our troubles may well only deepen if we don't stop to reflect on their lessons for our lives.

Sometimes we avoid pausing for a seemingly good reason. When we pause, the true gravitas of our situation can haunt us. We will be faced with the stark realities of our lives. Our failures may loom large and those factors outside of our control, such as our physical appearance, may mock us. This is precisely what stopped Roy Orbison from pausing.

Born into poverty in the backblocks of Texas, Roy Orbison found local fame for his outstanding singing voice. His voice and his music became an escape, however, from the bullying and scorn he faced because of his physical appearance. Pale skinned, scrawny, and with a face that could best be described as plain, Orbison was constantly taunted for his differences. He escaped into the darkness of movie theatres to avoid the derision of his peers, and slipped easily into a world of fantasy as he sought to escape the hostility of life in a claustrophobic rural town called Wink.

It got tough. The local football hero once told Roy that, "Your face looks like my ass." Soon Roy was known by a new and devastating nickname, Facetus, throughout his school and community. When Roy tried to look different by removing his thick-lensed glasses, he could hardly see at all. College could not come soon enough.

In and out of work, Orbison came to the attention of legendary Sun Records owner Sam Phillips. While Phillips loved Orbison's voice, he did not predict a strong future for him, stating that, "Nobody's going to listen to that ugly son of a bitch." With the song Ooby Dooby, Orbison broke into the top 100 for the first time. With "Claudette", it was the top 30, however fame disappeared as quickly as it had come. With his teenage wife, Claudette, Roy survived on cornmeal. His car was repossessed. Without another hit song, he was, again, a nobody.

Revealing a 3-octave range that stunned audiences, Orbison achieved a #2 hit in the US with Only the Lonely, a song that became his first #1 in the United Kingdom. With Running Scared, he topped the US charts for the first time. It was summer 1961. Roy Orbison was the king of the world.

Having learnt what it was like to grow up without money and to lose it all once gained, Roy Orbison never slowed down enough to appreciate what he had and what he had achieved. Hits like Crying, Blue Bayou, and Working for the Man followed as he toured constantly, both across the United States and internationally, regularly visiting the United Kingdom and Australia where his popularity reached its peak. With Pretty Woman in late 1964, Orbison had his most successful song.

Meanwhile, his personal life was a mess. Addicted to speed and to sex, Orbison's marriage to Claudette ended before he realised how much she meant to him. They remarried in 1966. On a BMW motorcycle that Roy had bought her, Claudette followed Roy, also riding a BMW, down a road on the way to visit a race meeting in Tennessee in 1967. After Roy had ridden through an intersection, Claudette thought that it was safe to cross. Tragically, she was struck and then dragged underneath a passing pickup truck, losing her life at just 25. Roy threw himself immediately back into his work and into his former and continuing addictions to drugs and women. While he may have learnt more humility from the ups and downs of his journey, his additional obsessions with being loved as a performer and resuming his place at the top of the charts also remained. So did his love for motorcycles, since he never gave up riding them at breakneck pace.

In 1968, tragedy struck again. While touring, a fire started among Orbison's collection of model airplanes as his boys played with a lighter. His house was soon incinerated, taking the lives of his sons RD and Tony.

After failing to make an impact during the disco era, Roy Orbison's lowest point as a performer came with an appearance at Van-a-Rama in Cincinnati Gardens when playing on his 40th birthday in April 1976. With a small stage at one end and a flea market at the other, most of the patrons preferred looking for a bargain to watching Roy perform. With just a handful of people observing, Roy sang as if he was in Carnegie Hall. He would often do so around America during this period, sometimes performing in theatres and halls that were almost completely empty.

Orbison never gave up, and for that he should be admired. He also enjoyed one of the most remarkable musical comebacks in history. As the years passed, he came to the attention of a new generation of music lovers. He played support for The Eagles and Bruce Springsteen and saw successful covers of his songs released by Linda Ronstadt, KD Lang, and Van Halen. Watched in concert by U2's Bono, the Irish megastar and several other stars wrote new music for The Big O. Similarly, he was invited to join an all-star supergroup that would become known as The Travelling Wilburys. A survivor of triple by-pass surgery, Orbison resented the claim that he'd come back, arguing that he'd never left. Desperate to maintain the momentum of his second chance at success, Orbison worked day and night to complete the two albums, a solo effort entitled Mystery Girl alongside as the Wilburys album. He'd become cool again, and had grown his hair and changed his clothing to reflect a new, hipper look.

On 6 December, 1988, however, Orbison died after a massive heart attack. His body could not stand the frenetic pace at which he lived. It had never had the chance to recover from the

catastrophes and tragedies that had befallen him, let alone from the energy demanded of his constant touring and recording schedule. Thus, despite being the first singer since Elvis with 2 albums simultaneously in the Top 5, Roy Orbison did not live long enough to enjoy the fruits of his labours. While he had spent his money on fast bikes and opulent mansions, he was rarely home long enough to enjoy them. In fact, he never really found a home in which he could engage in being, in living, rather than just doing. Like many of his contemporaries, he burnt out prematurely. Ironically, this occurred at just the time he finally achieved all he had worked so long and hard for. Never pausing or stopping for breath, Roy's life echoed the tragedies written in the lyrics of so many of his songs. He died because he was simply unable to stop.

Be Inspired – The 37 Year Pause of Brian Wilson

When Brian Wilson stood to face the audience as the final notes of his music faded away, he wondered whether the crowd had enjoyed the first performance of *Smile*, an album he had first begun to record more than three and a half decades prior. A ten-minute standing ovation from the audience in London's Royal Festival Hall that night in February, 2004, showed that they had. And more. Pop music's greatest unfinished album had, at last, seen the light. It was the most unlikely comeback in musical history.

Rewind the tape to 10 November, 1966. Progressively losing his mind, Wilson was producing a track for the planned album, "*Smile*". The song, an instrumental notionally entitled "*Mrs O'Leary's Fire*", invoked the mood and sounds of fire and flames. Other songs related to the elements of water and wind. During the recording session, Brian Wilson had demanded that everyone, including the string section, sound engineers, and anyone else who happened to be in the vicinity, should wear fire helmets. Someone was sent to a local toy store to purchase as many plastic helmets as they could find. Once they were adorning all heads, Wilson asked that a fire be started so that everyone could smell smoke. As smoke wafted around the studio, the helmet-adorned musicians created whining crescendos that echoed the sounds of the sirens of fire trucks.

Soon after, Wilson heard of a fire that had occurred in a nearby part of Los Angeles at around the same time as the recording session. His mind addled by drugs, he was convinced that his music had been the cause of the fire. Further, he had his staff research the number of fires that had also occurred around that time. Convinced again that he was the cause, he sought to destroy the session's tapes. The next day, he was just as sure that the girlfriend of a music writer observing the sessions was a witch who was playing with his mind via extra sensory perception. Soon after, he was sure that he was being followed and his conversations bugged. In response, Brian decided to hold all of his business meetings in the deep end of his pool since he knew that it would be more difficult to bug meetings held in that location.

Musically gifted beyond belief, Brian had suffered for much of his life from the emotional and physical abuse of his father, Murry. A modestly-successful songwriter, Murry drove the brothers Wilson and the other members of the Beach Boys to the kind of success that he had always himself coveted. While Murry's intentions may have been reasonable, his *modus operandi* was anything but. He had the boys constantly touring, recording, and publicising their music. On the stage and in the studio, good enough never was. Frustrated by his second-guessing, the Beach Boys eventually created a fake soundboard on which Murry would constantly tinker, thinking that he was enhancing their sound. Given the genius of Brian Wilson, this was never going to be likely.

Mentally broken, Brian withdrew from touring and later withdrew from the world, spending years at a time in bed, occasionally roaming the house in his pyjamas, or constantly replaying the Phil Spector tune *Be My Baby*, obsessed with its layering of sounds and compositional richness. His piano was relocated over an indoor sandpit to invoke the feelings and mood of the beach, while a treehouse had been constructed near the front door through which visitors had to climb to gain entry to the home. His weight ballooned to over 300 pounds and cocktails of drugs and alcohol were always working their way through his body. It seemed that if anyone from the Beach Boys should be designated to die first, it would be Brian. Amazingly, however, he became the last survivor of the three Wilson brothers who played in the band.

Wilson attempted several comebacks, with varying degrees of success. A psychiatrist, Dr Eugene Landy, had two shots at bringing Brian back to some kind of normal life. The cost of keeping Brian alive through an improved diet and rigorous exercise regime, however, was that Landy's techniques were unhealthy in their own ways. Landy, recently struck off as a psychiatric practitioner, messed with Brian's mind through the massive drug doses he prescribed to deal with Wilson's manic and schizophrenic disorders. In addition, he made himself Brian's business and creative partner, scheduling every minute of Brian's life and employing guards to ensure that his control over Brian's fragile life was complete.

Freed of Landy's toxic control, Brian began to blossom. His true friends rallied to his aid and he found an understanding, loyal, and empathetic partner in Melinda Ledbetter, to whom he was married in 1995. With new musical partners like Darian Sahanaja, a relative youngster whose first ever music purchase in 1974 had been the Beach Boys album *Endless Summer*, and Jeff Foskett, a long-time Beach Boys sideman whose falsettos filled the gaps that Brian's voice, toughened by years of smoking, could no longer reach, Brian began to work again. Long terrified of touring, Melinda encouraged Brian to hit the road with his new band in order to experience the love that audiences wanted to show him as a token of thanks for his immense impact on their lives. Melinda also prodded Brian to finish that which was incomplete, the album with which he had come to associate with so many bad memories of times past, *Smile*. The result, and the change in a man who would always need to be treated, in some ways, as the boy-man he still was, was triumphant. This time, Brian was truly back.

To biographer Peter Ames Carlin, Brian Wilson seemed "less like a living, breathing person than a personification of every dream and nightmare borne upon the westward ride."^{xv} That's true. The life of Brian Wilson has been a roller coaster. It has been the magnification of the dreams and the demons of one man. In his life, we see our own ups and downs. We see our own setbacks, whether they consist of achievements unachieved, dreams denied, or hopes held hostage by the vagaries of fortune, health, or luck. And, in Brian Wilson's shuffling and damaged steps, we see the movements of an imperfect man whose life represents the possibility of triumph over that which held him back for more than 30 years. No one could say it any better than the man himself:

*At 25, I turned out the light
Cause I couldn't handle the glare in my tired eyes
But now I'm back, drawing shades of kind blue skies.^{xvi}*

It's the phoenix rising.

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- ⁱ Martina McBride, Do It Anyway – lyrics viewed at <http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/Do-It-Anyway-lyrics-Martina-McBride/D73972A484D45A9B48257221000AFEDB>, accessed 10 October 2009
- ⁱⁱ The Good Life, Series 4, Episode 7 – viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NgyJkFM7jM&feature=related>, accessed 10 October 2009
- ⁱⁱⁱ Patrick Butler, (2009) 'Living on the brink: Britons unhappy, lonely and unable to cope, study finds,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 December, p.9.
- ^{iv} Gerald Ratner, 2007. *Gerald Ratner – The Rise and Fall...and Rise Again*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, p.184.
- ^v Ratner, p.148.
- ^{vi} Ratner, p.242.
- ^{vii} Jeffrey S Young and William L Simon, (2005) *iCon: Steve Jobs, the Greatest Second Act in the History of Business*, John Wiley & Sons, New Jersey.
- ^{viii} Steve Jobs, (2005) *Commencement Address*, Stanford University, 12 June.
- ^{ix} Michael J Fox (2002), *Lucky Man: A Memoir*, Bantam, Sydney, p.7.
- ^x Louis Fischer, (1997) *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, Harper Collins, London (originally published in 1951), p.153.
- ^{xi} MK Gandhi, (2001) *God is Truth – An Autobiography*, Penguin, London, originally published 1920, p.422.
- ^{xii} http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/George_Bernard_Shaw/61, accessed 13 October, 2009.
- ^{xiii} Paul Azinger (with Ken Abraham), (1995) *Zinger*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.
- ^{xiv} <http://www.amws.com.au/pk/lyrics/pretty-place.html>, accessed 13 October, 2009.
- ^{xv} Peter Ames Carlin, (2006) *Catch a Wave: The Rise, Fall and Redemption of the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson*, Rodale, Emmaus, p.2. Material for this section also derived from Steven Gaines, (1988) *Heroes and Villains: The True Story of the Beach Boys*, Grafton, London, pp.211-213.
- ^{xvi} Lyrics from the song Goin' Home from the album *That Lucky Old Sun*, Brian Wilson, 2008.