



Instant Retirement Loopholes Armchair

Unlocking Your Big Break

I mentioned this section earlier. Here's where you can take a good long look in the mirror and decide what it might be that you do in retirement AND what income that will give you.

Part One: **Yes It's True!**

It's often said that everyone has a good book inside them, but it's also true that each of us have a big business idea too that could make untold riches! You have such an idea lying in wait at this very moment. Are you ready to reveal it and convert it into cash?

The correct answer at this point in time is 'NO' by the way! And the answer will still be 'NO' until you wholeheartedly believe me when I tell you that you DO have at this very moment a HUGE business idea just waiting to be uncovered. Which is why we'll be spending some time on opening that mind of yours!

It's incredibly ironic that the one thing that stands in the way of you revealing your hidden idea is your lack of belief that it exists within you in the first place.

At this juncture, I'm reminded of an ancient Chinese story about a philosophical master and a brand new student of his. "Where do we begin master?" said the student. Without saying a word, the master picked up a teapot and filled the student's cup with green tea until it poured over the edges and then said, "Like the cup, you are full- full of your own opinions and expectations. How can you begin anything before you have emptied the cup?"

It's time to unlearn what you've learned.

So before we begin, I have to ask you a simple question: Are you prepared to overcome all your preconceived ideas and inhibitions? If you can't give me a sincere 'YES!' right here and now, ask yourself why. It's not much of a concession to make when you appreciate that the rewards could easily set you up for life now is it?! Funny, but when I put things this way, people will think just about any way that's necessary!

Let's talk facts now. In business, you have a choice of three paths but only one of them will lead to significant wealth:

- Stay in employment.
- Start a business based on an idea that already exists (i.e. taxi firm).
- Start a business based on an original idea of your own.

Only number three will really do it. So why is it that most people choose the other two paths? Because most people think they don't have the imagination or expertise to pull off number three. They think all the really innovative money-spinners belong to the lucky few bright sparks that seem to be born with such a talent. And what hard work it must be anyway to have to figure out such things...

Well I'm here to dispel a huge myth!

Listen, I'm not talking about helping you come up with just any idea or giving you a pre-packaged idea; you already have a great idea of your own! Now, are you ready to profit from your idea before someone else does?

YES you do have an idea; it's nothing to do with your self-perception of how creative you are. Like so many of our thoughts, that big idea of yours has got buried so deep in your mind due to the daily slog, you never even knew it

existed. But it is there.

Me and My Big Ideas

Can I indulge in a little story? It make's an important point, I promise! When I was a small boy, my grandfather told me something and it always stuck in my memory. It went something like this:

“There are only two types of people in this world; the innovators and the workers. Don't get paid for what you do- get paid for what you create. Where there's solutions, there's money.”

That thought lay dormant for a long while as I drifted into the drudgery of employment as an adult. It wasn't until one cold February afternoon, years ago now, when I had the opportunity to talk to a self-made millionaire that my grandfather's long-forgotten lesson resurfaced.

I sat there on that leather couch with my back to the dim, grey sky as the sun set begrudgingly early, and listened intently to what this man had to say. Heavily in debt and my wife due to give birth to my baby son just the next week, I was all ears.

The message was much the same as my grandfather's though. “You mean that's it?!” I responded. Bless this poor guy; he could sense my frustration but try as hard as he could, he couldn't give me the formula I needed to actually become a creator rather than a worker and make my fortune. He spent the afternoon pouring out his thoughts in the face of heaps of gruelling questions from me- I'm sure he needed a stiff drink after!

Five o'clock came and I was none the wiser. He gracefully took me to the front door, probably relieved I was going and wished me good luck with all my plans. I walked out into darkness, damp and cold towards my desperately-overdue-for-a-service car. But on my way home, I felt different. Something inside me had just been jarred loose. I was onto something but I didn't know what.

A few months went by. One rainy morning that following April, I woke up with a brain-wave and dashed to my computer to write down my thoughts. Two years later, I had a \$500,000 a year business! How did it come about? Until recently, I didn't have a clue! Like that millionaire I saw, I couldn't put it into words or a formula- it just happened.

Some time after, in my next business, a customer wrote to me praising me for my innovative ideas and how much they'd changed his life. Not meaning to sound big-headed, I regularly receive letters like that, but even so, I can't tell you how good it feels to receive them. Well, I was just about to write back with the standard reply thanking him for his letter, when I realised there was a question at the end:

“But, please could you tell me where you get all your good ideas from? How do you come up with them?”

No problem! I always like to answer questions wherever I.....can.....Oh dear. I was painfully reminded that I didn't have the answer to this blasted question! I don't like to be stumped by anything though, so I sat down for months concentrating on finding this elusive formula. I wanted to extract this thought process and bottle it. I wanted to define this skill that enables a person to reveal their hidden idea. I was successful. The result? You're reading it!

I'm very excited for you indeed; it works- it really works!!

I can safely say that this is easily one of the most exciting and enjoyable publications I've ever written for that very reason! Apply the simple-step plan honestly and I can virtually guarantee you'll uncover your big business idea! In fact, you'll find daily life a whole lot more enjoyable, come to that. Once your ideas are let loose it's like being set free! Whether it's to make mega-bucks in business or write a best-selling novel, ***‘This’*** will afford you respect and admiration from all your friends and family.

Plus, what better way to contribute to society? Your hidden idea could well enhance the lives of many others and I can't tell you how rewarding it is to be respected in that way. You'll love it. I've already found my big idea a good while back and it set me free financially. Now it's your turn.

Have you ever seen a new product come on the market and curse yourself because you'd thought of it ages ago? If you haven't yet, then you will- trust me! You own a huge, original idea right at this very moment that you don't yet know about; are you going to let someone steal it from you?

Why am I giving this information out instead of using it to dominate the corporate globe? Well, as I've already said, I found and applied my big idea years ago and it already made me wealthy so I'm using this knowledge in other

ways now. You see, once you reveal your hidden idea it will set you up for good but finding another one time and time again is a little harder! The point is that you have yet to discover your idea and this section aims to do that for you.

Right, we're about to move on to the second part of your exciting journey. Before we go any further though, I must insist that you put yourself completely in my hands and have your mind as open as a newborn baby's.

So do you? Of course you don't! I wish it was as easy as just flicking a switch but it's not. It's going to be gradual and gentle, but don't worry because that's why you're here right? All I'm asking from you at this moment is some quiet time. Don't read this over a sandwich at work or during a quick coffee break- you'd be wasting your time. Find a quiet spot, close your eyes and take some deep breaths. Forget about the artificial limitations society enforces upon us and prepare to be tele-ported to a whole new world. I can only virtually guarantee that you reveal your hidden idea if you can genuinely achieve this state of mind first.

Let's enter the first phase now; the part where a certain something is jarred loose inside you- like it was for me on my way home from that millionaire interview. It's time to wake up....

Part Two: The Awakening

The first step in getting your hands on the magic formula is to awaken the creator within you. Yes, that creative genius is in all of us, it's just that only a tiny percentage of us choose to find what has been lost.

Just take a look at a bunch of small children playing; it's just amazing all the weird and wacky stuff they'll come up with! You'll have difficulty finding a child with no imagination and creative flair that is unique to each and every one of them.

You were once one of those kids; but adulthood and society scared your creative spirit away- temporarily. It lays dormant inside you just waiting to be discovered.

Unfortunately, many of us are branded at school as 'not creative' by teachers who barely know us. In fact, if you think about it, the main purpose of your schooling was to beat any sign of creativity out of you; any bright kid who considered a new approach to anything was quickly drilled back into line again. I remember it well, do you?

The thing is, education's main purpose is to churn out employees into the workplace; nice, obedient, corporate drones. All this happened to you such a long time ago now and so gradually, that you probably don't even realize it ever occurred though; you'll just be inclined to think that you have no imagination or flair.

Only relatively few adults have realized their teachers were wrong. These people are the captains of industry you see all around you; the innovators. The people who make life easier and cheaper for everyone. The people who provide jobs. The truly unsung heroes of the world.

The first step these people took was to appreciate their uniqueness and to discover that just because the vast majority of folk hold certain beliefs and act in certain ways, it doesn't mean they're right. In fact, the 'herd' are usually completely wrong in my experience. If ever you find yourself getting involved in something and asking why everyone isn't at it if it's so easy, then you're on to something!

So your first step in jarring lose the creator within then, must be to cast aside your 'herd' conditioning. Let's enforce the fact that you're not just a number in a crowd- you're unique!

Your Autograph Please!

Can I have your autograph please? I'll tell you why in a second- just sign your name right now before going further:

There's method in my madness. What you've done is proven your unique identity- your signature- that authenticates who you are. It is such a universally recognized confirmation of your individuality that banks among others use it for security. It's as unique as your fingerprints.

Take a second to look at your signature now. That's YOU. You're unique- one of a kind. Be proud of that fact. There never has been and never will be another exact you.

Every single strand of DNA in your body is completely unique; only now has modern science been able to unravel this mystery in the form of cloning animals. If you just think about that for a minute it's truly amazing isn't it? With

that in mind, wouldn't it be a terrible waste not to realize your full potential; or more importantly, discover **where your potential lies**? And no, you're never too old!

The self-improvement market bombards you with the message "You could do anything if you just believe in yourself!" and it's largely true as long as you have the inside know-how. I'm sure you don't doubt the validity of the statement- I bet you do believe you could do anything, but do you know who you are and what it is that you really want?

Finding out the answer to this question is our immediate priority because *the real you* is where your creative spirit lies. That's the child within you that adulthood and society banished long ago! It's there- deep down- as sure as your signature, we just have to resurrect it.

Moreover, if I had to name the secret of lasting happiness in one sentence, that would be it; the rediscovery of our true selves and recapturing that long lost child within all of us. This is why you'll gain so much more out of this than revealing your hidden idea. Once the creator within you is awakened, it will be the most exciting day of your life and every day after will be just as lifting. We're not meant to be cogs in the corporate machine.

So let's do that then. Let's start at the beginning- *your* beginning and work from there if we're to find out who you really are. Let me tell you about the birds and the bees.....

Who Are You?

There's a continuous debate about what makes you who you are- your genes or the environment you grew up in, but in reality I think it's a bit of both- there's evidence for both sides of the argument I think you'll agree. Both your genes and your early environment made you who you are but in different degrees and in different ways and this only adds to your uniqueness! It's well worth taking a look at the making of you for a second; let's look at exactly how your genes and early environment worked together to create your identity.

First genes. A gene is defined as a unit of inheritance. Your genes are only passed on by your parents- you don't inherit a cocktail of their genes alone; it goes back for generations. How many years does it go back? Oh, only about 40,000.

It's true I tell you. Only just recently has evidence emerged that even something as simple as our blood type has a bearing on our basic personality and physiology- it's to do with the various tribes that emerged at the dawn of mankind.

If you disagree with genes playing a part in our personality how do you explain the thousands of cases where twins are raised in exactly the same way but have completely different personalities?

So just think about it. 40,000 years of cross-breeding and evolution has resulted in your uniqueness at a basic level. As you slept in your mother's womb, that's what you were; an amazingly unique hybrid, an enigma waiting to be revealed, a truly special being. Safe, warm and secure.

You were a blueprint- a fundamental schematic of the basic you. The colour of your eyes, hair and skin, your structure, blood type and fundamental personality type were all pre-determined. So were your gifts! Yes, you have special gifts believe it or not. Yep, and those too just lay in wait to be discovered and nurtured to blossom into your full potential.

Then something interrupted this state of evolved perfection. You were born into the outside world- is it any wonder babies cry as soon as they're born? Enter your environment....

As you were born into the world, you were just a blueprint as we've already said. This is before you were 'conditioned' by what awaited you- this pre-environment state is called your 'unconditioned self'- various cultures around the world all have actual names for this state. Now, the human being is an extremely clever piece of machinery and the reason it has prevailed and stayed at the top of the food chain is because it has developed an extremely refined survival technique- **it adapts to surroundings**.

Folks, this is why we've been here for so long already. All animals have a built-in mechanism for survival to ensure that particular species prevails- a tiger evolved teeth and claws to be able to hunt and feed just as a rabbit evolved 360 degree vision, large ears and fast hind legs to avoid being hunted with great ease. Man didn't evolve wings, claws and physical strength and speed, but instead his brain would make up for that in the form of cunning and flexibility. Plus, an ability to adapt to any environment to ensure his survival- for example, a wild animal won't have the sense or ability to make a coat if The Ice Age shows up but man will!

All very interesting but what's it got to do with you?

Because it's precisely this survival mechanism that makes your early environment have such a significant impact on who you are. By the way, if you're having any doubts about any of this think again. All I'm stating here is unequivocal scientific fact.

When you were born you had this inherent ability to adapt to survive your upbringing. This required a prompt assessment of your surroundings and to establish a way to behave in order to thrive in it. Basic caveman stuff and very clever! And so your personality came to pass. As you grew up, the pure unconditioned state you were in once just became a forgotten memory due to layer upon layer of conditioning from the environment that surrounded you.

What we're going to do now is nothing short of the most important task in your whole life. We're going to rediscover that unconditioned self of yours and find out what it consisted of, for this is where your nirvana lies; this is where we'll discover your creative spirit. Find out if anything went wrong along the way and see through what it was that threw you off course.

I vividly remember my baby boy being born, as I'm sure all parents do; I sobbed with joy I don't mind telling you. Mums and dads: do you recall that drive home from the hospital- what was it like?! I was driving so cautiously you'd have thought I was on my driving test again! On board was such a precious cargo that I didn't even want the everyday air that we know is so polluted to enter his brand new lungs. Wherever we went, he was 'coochey-cooed' and adored by all. You want to tip milk all over Daddy? No problem! It doesn't matter if you're sick on the brand new carpet either- you can do no wrong!

Can someone tell me exactly why this is? Okay, because I'm his dad, but why do complete strangers smile when they see babies and toddlers? They're not famous, or sporting legends- all they do is sleep, dribble and pass wind so have you ever wondered where this seemingly unfounded adoration comes from?

Young children are a symbol of the innocence we all once had before society got its claws into us.

They are a symbol for our true, unconditioned selves and all the hopes and dreams we once had. Long before mickey-taking, school reports, puberty, being stood up on dates, interview rejections, traffic jams, mortgages and redundancy, we were pure and happy- we just enjoyed now. Almost all cultures have a symbol for the unconditioned self; Hindus- 'eternal bliss consciousness', Zen Monks- 'original face', Taoists- 'uncarved block' to name a few, so significant is this basic concept in finding your true self.

Do you think that thinking this way is a frivolous pipe-dream? Why should it be? I'm not talking about giving up responsibility the way a child does; merely to discover who we really are again because this is a key part in awakening the creator within.

You're a completely unique being- there will never, ever be another one of you due to genetics, plain and simple. It therefore follows that you have a hidden creative idea inside you like no other.

The Adversity of the Crowd

Unfortunately, when you spend most of your time with other people in a working environment, any talk of breaking free of the grind by coming up with that big idea is scoffed at. I remember it well. Look, let me explain something:

95% of people will spend their entire lives slaving at a job they dislike. I call them the 'ninety-five percenters'.

They just want to keep their head down and drudge through until it's time to collect their pension and then die (they're already dead in my opinion!). The collective power of majority opinion is extremely hard to resist, especially if you're subjected to it daily. You should also be aware though that the majority are often wrong!

Get your inner resistance to come out of hiding by making a single move toward your dream; something as simple as visualizing yourself as chairman of a brand new company. Once you can identify what your internal resistance is to such a dream, you can find where it came from and see it for exactly what it is; a load of nonsense imposed upon you by the 'ninety-five percenters'.

So are you in the other five percent? You bet ya! Or you wouldn't be here.

You know, ever since I was a little boy, I've been scornfully told that I have an over-active imagination- like most kids perhaps. In adulthood, this over-active imagination lead me into having all number of seemingly unusual and

unobtainable goals- my first memory of this was wanting to become a professional ice hockey player at the age of 17. And every single time I announced my plans, without question, the same thing would bleat out of the mouths of most family and friends:

“Don’t be silly- you’ll never do it.”

But I always succeeded just the same (Yes, I was a professional ice hockey player at 17!). At first my success was due to defiance (“I’ll show you”), but after a while, I realized it was because I knew I could achieve anything I applied myself to, and more importantly, that the opinions of most other people don’t mean jack!

Your biggest enemy is the adversity and skepticism of others!

But there is a knack to overcoming in the face of adversity and I’m going to share it with you now. Let me first draw your attention to a disturbing trend in society at large; a desire for quick-fix solutions for everything. It’s complete delusion. ‘Have it all and have it now’ is our motto and I think it’s great taken in the right way; that is *it’s all there waiting for you if you want it*. But if you’re hoping that you can achieve great things without consistent practice and application, you’re badly mistaken.

The solution is dedication. So what’s the trick to attaining this state of complete determination? **To integrate your ambitions into a daily part of your life.** Break your objectives down into smaller daily sized chunks and act upon them with the same regularity as you would having lunch. That’s the ‘secret’ if you want to call it that.

Let me tell you something; once I put an entry in my diary, it’s sacred. I don’t go to bed that day unless I’ve done the things I was supposed to- I want you to view your diary with the same reverence!

You think this is all about ‘talent’ and ‘you’ve either got dedication or you haven’t’? Fine. Can you please tell me what Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger have in common? Yep, you’ve got it in one:

They can’t act to save their lives!

And yet, they bring the crowds in like no tomorrow. How did they get to be such huge actors when they were lousy at it and faced with unbelievable amounts of superior competition too? Grim determination.

If ever there was a story of overcoming in the face of adversity, Arnold Schwarzenegger’s must be one of the most incredible. Just picture it. One day he decided to leave his small town in Austria and head off for Hollywood to become an actor. “Yeah right,” said all his mates; “**he’ll be back.**”

So why did he succeed? Because he never once questioned the odds- he just got on with it. And he made the whole project just part of his daily life. He worked out in the gym eight hours a day, attended college for six hours a day to actually learn the English language for heaven’s sake, and work as a builder for six hours a day to support himself. Can you see? Small things add up to bigger things. Persistence and determination will win you through each time. Don’t listen to the mocking of others, and don’t even question the feasibility of your goals, just get on with it.

Most great achievements in history were once laughed at.

Now, don’t get panicky here and think you’ll have to work 20 hours a day like old ‘Arnie’ to reveal your hidden idea and profit from it- far from it. The point I’m making is that you must apply yourself fully to the task at hand and determinedly resist the temptation to give in at the first sign of trouble. Whatever hole life has landed you in, it’s only you that has the power to use the ladder I’m throwing down there to you.

It’s not as arduous as it sounds you know, this ‘learning something new’ malarkey. You’ve been here before; when you learned to walk. You were able to walk firstly because you had the desire to do so. Then, you wobbled a bit as your brain tried to process this new experience- you felt apprehensive but your drive to succeed overcame that.

You fell down a few times; sure you cried but then you just got back up and tried again and before you knew it, you walked just like it was second nature. Next time you get the chance, just watch a child who’s just learning to walk; see the pure exhilaration in their eyes at this great success.

It’s quite amazing really, but you take it for granted now. You learned to walk without government assistance, without suing someone at the times you fell over and no complaints authority to run to if your mum or dad tricked you by moving back a few steps to keep you walking longer!

When you feel like giving up at any stage, ask yourself “Am I better off than I was a year/month ago?” If the answer is ‘yes’ then just keep at it because you’re doing something right. If you’re genuinely worse off, then all you have to do is adjust your course and try again.

It’s not falling down that matters, it’s getting up again.

Why am I telling you all this? What’s it got to do with revealing your hidden idea and converting it into cash? Everything!

Don’t underestimate the seductive power of the herd. Your biggest obstacle is overcoming the hecklers of the crowd and believing in your unique gift of creativity. The majority of people are wage slaves while the minority of people are wealthy and free. Why do you think that is?

Conventional wisdom and the media-circus would have you believe it’s all down to that minority being cut-throat, selfish, lucky and privileged. In very few cases, that might be correct, but generally it’s churned out just to make everyone else feel more comfortable with their lot in life.

You will suffer some put-downs. You will experience failures along the way. But this is all part of the experience and it makes up the pieces of the puzzle of success; failure is just a stepping stone to success. Coming up with your big idea is the easiest part, converting it into cash is when you’ll need to remember the advice I’m offering you here. However, and this is the important point here...

You need to encourage your long-forgotten creative spirit to come out of hiding. You can only do this by overcoming your fear of failure!

Think about it. The reason your creative spirit disappeared was the fear of being laughed at as adulthood and society got their claws into the child you once were! I want you to loosen up and get a bit silly- like you were a child again.

Believe!

On the surface, the Star Wars films appear to be a load of special effects and zany creatures aimed at entertaining five-year olds, but they also contain some very poignant messages about belief and overcoming in the face of adversity and I’d like to relay one to you now.

In ‘The Empire Strikes Back’, there’s a scene with Luke Skywalker and his teacher: Yoda. Yoda asks Luke to use his powers to lift his starship back on to the shore from the swamp he ditched it in. Here’s what happens:

Luke: “Okay...I’ll try.”

Yoda: “NO! Do or do not. There is no ‘try’.”

Luke has a go, but fails, proclaiming: “You ask the impossible!” *Yoda then shows him how it’s done; he uses his powers to lift the downed ship ashore.*

Luke: “I don’t believe it!”

Yoda: “That is why you fail.”

For our purposes, for the part of Yoda, read: ‘ (Me)’ and for the part of Luke, read: ‘You’!

That’s one of my all time favorite movie scenes. Two points can be drawn from it where we’re concerned. Firstly, if you’re reading this with an “I’ll give anything a go once” type attitude, you either need to readjust that attitude or go elsewhere. Secondly, if you don’t at least believe that you are unique and as intrinsically creative as anyone else out there, you’re not listening to me! Even worse:

If you find yourself mocking all this and branding it as childish and pointless, then my friend, you have a long way to go before you free yourself of the daily grind. Your skepticism is your downfall.

I have no qualms about laying this on the line for you now; open your mind up right now or forget the whole thing. I’ve been where you want to be so put yourself in my hands and listen because every single word of this manual is extremely important- it’s not idle chit-chat. At the last count, I reckon I earn just short of \$300-00 an hour for my creative talents.

When someone who earns \$300-00 an hour for coming up with ideas offers you advice on how to be creative, you should listen. Hell, when anyone who earns that kind of money offers you advice, you should listen!

If you want to label me as arrogant, fine. Whatever. As long as I have your undivided attention and the willingness to think in a very different way than normal.

Reclaiming Your Creative Spirit

Okay, do something for me will you? Think back in time to when you were a child and how you played. Can you remember how boring objects like cardboard boxes became castles? Remember how curious you were? What about experiments?! I got up to all sorts and I'm sure you did, much to the dismay of our parents on occasions! Where did all that adventurous spirit go to though? Have you changed, or have just your priorities and attitudes changed?

When you first started nursery, what did your stationery consist of? A box of crayons with about a million different colors and a big, blank piece of paper! And when you left school? A black biro and a notepad complete with margins, boundaries and lines. I think that's pretty symbolic of how creativity is banished gradually as we grow older, don't you?

Let me re-emphasis something: **I believe that you are not born uncreative.** Some things are genetic, other things are a result of the environment we grew up in- I think we're all born with pretty much the same levels of creativity, it's just that we all had different upbringings and life-experiences. Proof of this is to be found in any nursery simply by watching children at play. Here you will see how we all started out; feeling anything to be possible, full of adventure and open to just about anything new. I think Walt Disney summed up this amazing quality of human nature when he said: "It's kind of fun to do the impossible."

If you can find a child who isn't creative, then that's a result of their environment, not their genes. Many of us are criticized for our creations throughout childhood and beyond and this has a huge impact- it hurts deeply especially when we're younger- and our creative spirit retreats from the need to fit in.

As if that wasn't enough, as we move into adulthood we find a new enemy that keeps our creative spirit well and truly in hiding- stress.

The everyday pressures of work, relationships, our own kids and generally trying to hold the whole thing together saps what creative energy we had left. A catch 22 if ever I saw one: we're stuck in a rat-race because we can't reveal our hidden idea and profit from it, and the reason we can't reveal it is that we're too busy getting stressed from that rat-race! This is why I urged you to read this when you have some quality spare time rather than in your lunch-break.

When you're busy chasing your tail being creative seems like a frivolous waste of time. Ironic!

Okay, so how creative are you now? Just how deep in hiding is that creative spirit of yours? Time for a little test! I'd like you to grab hold of a cup- any cup, mug, glass whatever. Got one? Right, now please think of all the possible uses of that container right now before going any further. I'll wait right here while you do that.....

Tum-te-tum....finished? How many uses did you find? Not many I'll bet and you probably had to rack your brains for them too! Now try that again, only this time, ask a five-year old to take the test! Who do you think would come up with the most ideas? Watch the child reel off about ten different uses almost instantaneously; "It could be a....secret base for my action man, an insect catcher, a musical instrument, a toy-washer, a money-bank.....andand..."

A recent study showed that similar tests conducted on groups of adults and children showed that adults scored just 2% originality and kids aged 5 and under scored 90%! You'd probably come back with the argument that all the uses that the children come up with are 'silly' or 'impractical', but firstly, people thought the first aircraft were silly and impractical and secondly, that isn't the point anyway; the point is that we're all born creative. Who says being normal and practical is so cool anyway? Children are far more creative than adults because they believe anything is impossible.

So am I actually asking you to regress into a child-like state once again?

You bet your ass I am!

Yes, I am in many ways. Put up or shut up. Carry on being all sensible, normal and grown-up and have a workaday existence, or awaken the creator within you! Your choice now- what's it to be? Please close this manual now if you feel all this is beneath you and silly- it's not a problem and you take my best wishes with you on the path most trodden.

Okay, if you're still here now you're prepared to be completely open-minded and accept what I tell you here. I don't want to hear about whether you think you're not the creative type or not ever again- we are all born creative. When you take this concept on board and well and truly believe that all we have to do is awaken the creator within you, we can proceed.

Happy? Excellent. Now let's talk more about your creative spirit; if we're trying to find something, we need to know what it looks like! It takes the form of four different attributes: **curiosity, open-mindedness, courage and passion.** Let's look at each one now.

1. Curiosity Killed the Cat...But Made Me Wealthy

Ask the parent of any four or five year old what the bane of their lives is and they'll tell you the constant barrage of questions! It doesn't matter what answer the parent gives, the child will always come back with another "Why?" and eventually, the parent will snap back "Look, because it just is all right!!" for the sake of sanity.

We are born with curiosity, but it is generally beaten out of us as we grow up with the world constantly telling us "Look, because it just is all right!!" Curiosity is the very essence of your creative spirit; you need an interest in the world around you.

Curiosity is what prompts you to try out new ideas and investigate better ways of doing things- surely you can see how this applies to making money too; every wealthy entrepreneur out there became so by investigating a better way of doing things.

"Necessity may be the mother of invention, but curiosity is the mother of discovery." – Charles Handy.

Whenever we demonstrate this tendency to be curious in adulthood, we call it "just idle curiosity" suggesting that curiosity in itself has no value. Once again, we're shown just how wrong the herd out there can be because curiosity is the foundation of creation! The trouble is that curiosity interferes with the 'comfort zones' humans like to build around themselves.

The one and only thing the primitive (and most influential) part of your brain is concerned with is your survival. It does this from the moment you are born- as you grew up it was desperately trying to put the pieces of the puzzle together that made up the world around you to ensure that you survived within it. It learnt things like the fact that fire will burn you, like the fact that you can walk across a floor and it will support your weight, like the fact that you can drink water but not bleach. This puzzle when it is completed, is called it's 'world view' or your 'comfort zone'.

For obvious reasons, to ensure your survival in the world the subconscious has to work very hard in your early years. Who you think you are and what you think your place is in the world is therefore determined during your childhood- this is the reason that a stereotypical image of a psychologist's questions to a patient are about their childhood. It took a long time for your subconscious to put the pieces together- it worked very hard and created comfort zones for your survival. Therefore, it is highly resistant to anything that contradicts your world view.

This is where our so-called 'fear of the unknown' and fear of change comes from. Curiosity is 'dangerous' because it threatens your comfort zone.

You love routine don't you? What food do most British people eat when they go abroad? Indeed, don't most British people go to the same place on holiday over and over to eat the same old food they could get at home? Why? Comfort zones.

So where are we headed with this? Simple; your creative spirit went into hiding partly because of starvation- it needs to explore new ideas- that's the source of it's energy! So the first step in reclaiming your creative spirit must be to break out of those comfort zones and explore new things.

2. An Open Mind

Following on from the importance of being curious to reclaim your creative spirit, it should be obvious that we need an open mind in order to arouse this curiosity. Now, being curious comes naturally to most of us, but when it

comes to having an open mind? Much harder and us Brits are extremely guilty of being too insular and closed-minded I'm afraid!

You know, my favorite food is Japanese, but when I mention this to most people they exclaim, "Yuuuk! Raw Fish? No thanks!" but they haven't even tried it! What's even more amusing is the fact that the very same people enjoy smoked salmon (raw fish)! By the way, I don't really like raw fish, but Japanese food is much more than that and far healthier than our food. Try it some time.

If you shut out, ignore or ridicule other peoples' ideas because they're not the same as yours, your creative spirit just stays hiding in your comfort zone!

In most situations, when anyone comes up with a new idea, good or bad, it takes other people an average of 10 seconds to ridicule it- "That's the way things have always been." is the response.

When was the last time you tried a new type of food or visited a brand new, foreign city? When you did so, did you "do as the Romans" and fully absorb the experience? Or did you shun the whole thing and find a place that served British food?

If you want to find your hidden idea and convert it into cash, you must reclaim your creative spirit and to do that, you need an open mind. Open yourself up to the incredible world around you, take an interest in other people and cultures and tune yourself in to the chance encounters and coincidences of life that have often been the seed for great ideas.

Will you do something for me? From now on, once a week I'd like you to buy and read a magazine dedicated to something that doesn't interest you in the slightest; it's a work-out to open your mind that's very successful! Let me ask you another question:

Do you have an open mind as you read through this manual? Or are you too stuck in your old ways?

3. Courage

Reclaiming your creative spirit and bringing it out into the open requires courage; courage to take the risk of ridicule from others and possible failure of any ideas it brings up.

4. Passion

This is the attribute you need to gain to bond all the previous three together. This is your 'pilot light' in the powerhouse of creativity. Without the fire in your belly to action everything you're learning here, forget it. You need energy!

If you think about it, your creative spirit takes the form of energy by definition; every idea starts off as an electrical impulse in your brain. The University of Chicago has proven that a state of high energy is a critical element in attaining creative success.

They've shown that people achieve their highest state of creativity when they achieve something called 'flow'. Being in flow is when their physical energy levels are higher resulting in surging mental acuity- the creativity just comes instinctively then. If you think about anything you've mastered in your life, like a sport, when you conducted this activity, you were in a state of flow; it just seemed like second nature.

Why are your energy levels low? The usual suspects are stress and/or diet and lack of exercise. The ironic part is you're probably stressed because you're stuck in a mundane job and the creator within you is stifled!

So they're the four musketeers; curiosity, open-mindedness, courage and passion. These are the flames you MUST stoke inside you to awaken the sleeping creator within. This initial awakening will be the platform for revealing your hidden idea.

You can't build a house without foundations!

Make those four attributes your new religion and work on them. In my experience, with creativity, it's all or nothing- people who've awakened the creator within aren't just a bit creative- they're positively brimming with ideas! Why? Because they've embraced those four attributes and started a spiral effect going like so:

Creative lifestyle = Creative spirit = Creative lifestyle = Creative spirit = Creative Lifestyle....

This spiral just compounds and compounds until you have so many good ideas you don't know which way to turn! Conversely, that spiral can move in a negative way- the way I suspect most people are:

Uncreative lifestyle = Uncreative spirit = Uncreative lifestyle....

Take control right now and reverse that cycle! Before going further into Part Three of this manual, I strongly urge you to take some time to reflect on what we've covered so far and to act on the exercises I've given you. This will not be a quick-fix process, but a gradual one as I told you in the introduction; the creator within you has been asleep for many years now, so give it some time to readjust as you nurture it out into the open once again.

Part Three: **Revealing Your Hidden Idea**

The Truth About Ideas

Excellent. Hopefully, you've had a little time off from reading this as you awaken your creative spirit by concentrating on being more curious, open-minded, courageous and passionate. Unless you can well and truly say you have found these latent qualities within you, you are not in a position to proceed further into this next part of the manual; as I said, it would be like trying to build a house without foundations.

By all means, feel free to read on through, but don't expect to actually reveal your hidden idea until you've got things in the right order.

Anyway, onward. I'm going to dispel another myth now and tell you the truth about how good ideas come about. The popular belief is that of a light bulb appearing above your head out of the blue and that's it, hence the other popular belief that you're either born creative or you're not. The two urban legends compliment each other nicely! I've got news though:

Ideas are born from a set process. All you have to do is follow that process!

Most people who have revealed their hidden idea already, will tell you that they don't know of a set process by which they found the idea; if you ask them how they did it, they'll just shrug and say, "It just came to me one day." There *is* a set process they all followed, but they just didn't realise! I'm telling you, there's no 'black-art' or grey lines here; you will reveal your hidden idea by using a set of simple instructions. The problem most people have in coming up with their big idea (apart from not awakening their creative spirit) is that they can't identify a set pattern to follow. I'm pleased to tell you though that I've found such a pattern and it never fails!

The process is in four stages and here it is:

Stage 1: Raw Materials Gathering

This is where your open-mindedness and curiosity become so important. Even the most sophisticated automobile starts off as a lump of steel- it would never exist if the raw materials were not available. You want to pour as much raw information into your head as possible- quality as well as quantity. Imagine placing a funnel over your head and the spout going straight into your brain- pour as much new data in there as possible!

Now this is the important thing: whatever information you come across, don't just mindlessly file it away, but rather look for an angle. Constantly ask: "What if...?" and "Why?" Let's say you read an article in a magazine or newspaper. Ask yourself who will be affected by this news and why? Who will benefit and who will lose from the facts you've just discovered? What if things were different? Why and how could they be different? You see, just like a five-year old nagging their parents to death! If you have a feeling about the line of business you think you'd be attracted to, go and check out the competition. Keep on looking through things you've never heard of, talk to people. Be a sponge- a blank page, and just keep on asking questions.

Just to clarify though, you're not consciously trying to find a business idea at the gathering raw materials stage, merely absorbing as much new data as possible; things you never knew you never knew.

Stage 2: Incubation

The best thing about this stage is that you don't have to do anything! In some ways though, this is why this can be

the hardest stage of the process as you're inclined to feel as though you're wasting time. This crucial stage is where you allow your all-powerful subconscious to take over from your conscious mind; it's about 'down-time'.

How do you know when it's time to move on to this stage? Because you'll have had enough of stage one! Whenever you start to get stressed, having sleepless nights or becoming bored by the whole thing, it could well be time to just forget it and relax.

You must believe me when I tell you that this stage is vital! This stage is about *listening* for the idea, not looking for it.

If you ever read or watched Sherlock Holmes, you'll often see how in the middle of a case- when they don't appear to be able to make any of the clues fit- Holmes often drags his trusty companion Dr. Watson off to the theatre, much to Watson's disgust! Sherlock Holmes knew the importance of this incubation stage though! Taking time-out is an essential part of the creative process.

You can't force the idea out at this point- you just have to let things take their course. This my friend, is why people who have found a great idea can't understand where that idea came from! Of course it will seem as though the idea came out of the blue- the incubation stage is one of seemingly doing nothing but relaxing! This is the reason why problems mysteriously seem less of a problem when you've had a good nights sleep.

As you enter this stage, initially smaller, incomplete and seemingly silly ideas will pop out at you. Write them down, but this is just the prelude to bigger things...

Stage 3: Eureka!

Only now, does the image of a light bulb appearing become accurate; this is the point when the idea, albeit in a raw form, comes to you.

If you've followed everything so far, you'll appreciate that this stage of the process will only come when it's ready- you can't make it happen.

It's well documented that this moment of illumination emerges when the person in question is relaxing in a bath, on holiday, sleeping or some other form of recuperation. We'll come on to this shortly, but clearly, this is why it's a good idea to carry a notebook or dictaphone so you can remember the thought later i.e. when you're not naked in the bath! Personally, whenever I'm on holiday I become a whirl of creativity and upon my return home, I produce some great ideas. Also, many of my great ideas have come to me in the middle of the night- I've nearly knocked myself out scrambling for a pen and paper in the darkness a few times let me tell you!

Albert Einstein had the inspiration for his theory of relativity while just 'vegging out'! Researchers believe that this is the point where the idea passes from the subconscious mind to the conscious mind. You don't get a say in the matter- just let the miracle that is the human brain take over.

Many great creations in history came about in a moment when the inventor wasn't actively trying to find an idea, or even by accident. Worcester sauce was discovered purely by accident!

It's called serendipity; but only someone who has an open and curious mind will be able to create an idea out of events other people would consider inconsequential.

This is the hallmark of a great entrepreneur. I regularly read a story to my young son (about ten times a day it seems!) called *'Harry and the Bucketful of Dinosaurs'*- it's a HUGE children's book that has made the author a fortune. Do you know what gave the author the idea? Well, he was having a quiet drink in a pub garden with friends when he was introduced to a small boy who showed him his bucket of plastic dinosaurs!

Stage 4: Consolidation

Excellent; your brain-wave has come to you, but because of the spontaneity of its arrival, it could well be useless in the cold light of day. Enter the final stage- that of consolidation. Now it is time for your conscious mind to logically analyze this creation that has been thrown out of the mysterious depths of your subconscious!

Can the idea actually be applied to a business situation? Is there a market? Run the idea past people you implicitly trust- what do they think? How would you implement it? What's the competition like? Does this solve a common problem or does it anticipate an imminent need for something?

Sometimes you'll know immediately if the idea is as good as it seemed during stage 3, other times it will take months of testing and tweaking to find out (more on this later). The important thing to take on board at this stage is not to get despondent if it turns out that this idea isn't so hot once you take a second look at it. I reckon that only about 20-50% of the time will your 'Eureka!' moment actually become a workable idea you can capitalize on, so don't lose faith.

The important thing is that you're churning out ideas- I don't care how good they are initially because you're on the right path now!

So they are the four stages an idea goes through- each one as important as the other and unquestionably linked in that exact chronology. Once you've awoken the creator within you, you can actively set about putting these four stages into motion paying careful attention to the 'rules' of each stage.

I think you'll agree that stages one, two and three are really very simple- they're almost automatic. However, the first stage- 'Gathering Raw Materials' is a lot more involved because this is where you need to have fully awoken that creator within you to be able to gather the brain-food necessary to start the whole process off. That's why I'm going to be giving you ten strategies to help make that initial stage easier. But first...

Don't Waste It!

Let's talk about 'idea capture'.

Please appreciate that every single idea that pops into your head, however small or insignificant it may seem, could well be a winning lottery ticket! Would you throw away a lottery ticket before the numbers were called?

Bearing in mind that your 'Eureka!' moment will probably come when you're relaxed or in an awkward situation, I want to speak a little about the importance of documenting your ideas. At the least, you should one of these:

A simple notebook

Preferably without lines- there are no boundaries to imagination! What should you write in it? Anything and everything! Words, peoples' comments, articles, pictures, doodles.... I don't care if it seems like junk; your thoughts are valuable- log them. I keep one by the side of my bed.

A dictaphone

You know, a pocket tape-recorder. I keep one of these in the car.

Now, it's time for those ten strategies I promised you.

Ten Strategies for Revealing Your Hidden Idea

Strategy 1: People Power

Two heads are better than one! When you bounce ideas off other people or jointly try to create something, the results can be astonishing.

Just think, every single encounter you have with another person has the potential to put your life in a new direction- the possibilities are endless! Once you break out of the tendency to be reserved and mind one's own business, the whole world opens up. You would be amazed at how someone who on the surface appears to have nothing in common, has an incredible story- a story that might inspire you. Maybe that stranger is moaning about how his employer doesn't understand that their customers are asking for something they can't provide....an opportunity?

Don't write other people off on judgmental first impressions. Every single person has a valuable gem inside them that you can use to aid your cause- all you have to do is dig deep enough!

Break out of your habits and the social groups/classes you mix with. Smash open that comfort zone!

Keep that mind open on a second encounter with someone too. Sometimes you catch people when they're not at their best. Give people a chance.

Try to see things from other peoples' perspectives. Empathy is an essential skill to ensure less anger and a more customer-orientated approach to business too. Listen to what people have to say. Ask them why they think the way they do. Remember, people buy things- what better way to tap into the mood of the buying public for a budding entrepreneur?

Build a creative community with people who are like-minded.

Make notes of all the stories and valuable gems of information- you'll never know when you'll need them.

Find a mentor in your chosen area of interest and befriend them. Senior veterans are often keen to pass on their knowledge and take an apprentice under their wing.

Network! There is a concept called 'The Six Degrees of Separation'. This is the theory that states you can create a line of communication to *anyone* in the world by using your contacts, who in turn exercise *their* contacts, who exercise their contacts and so on. By the time the sixth level has been reached, you will be introduced to the person you want. I tell you, this is more than theory! Multi-million pound business deals are done this way; but unless you start networking- building contacts by connecting with others, how will you ever know? Don't feel that networking is phony! Everyone knows what this is and why it happens and everyone benefits from it, which is why any business person worth their salt will swear by the importance of this. Overcome shyness today!

If you think that you nothing to offer people in return, then think again! Has it occurred to you that you're carrying a gem of information that may be of value to others? Make that first move- don't wait for people to come to you, if they shun you then that's their loss for being so dismissive and short-sighted. Join a golf club or any sports or activity club to find a common interest with others as this can be a good ice-breaker.

Other people love complaining. Complaints = problems = opportunities in the market for a solution!

Strategy 2: Brainstorm

This is intensive thinking about a solution to a problem in the marketplace, or just the creation of a different perspective on an existing product or service. Most people barely sit down and think for themselves a few times a year leaving the door wide open for those who put the effort in!

The idea is to just generate as many ideas as possible- not worrying about how foolish anything sounds. Think aloud and write it down. This works especially well in a group as this whirlwind of ideas flying around enables connections to be made. It's essential that no-one's ideas are laughed at!

All involved should close their eyes- this way people can't see the expressions on others faces and don't worry so much about being embarrassed by what they say. The ideas tend to be more unusual too.

One person should be writing everything down.

The more times a group does this, the more the quality and quantity of ideas will improve so don't give up on the first attempt.

If everyone gets stuck, a good way to get the ball rolling is for each person to imagine a personal hero, and then say what they think that person would come up with!

It's best to start off with an actual objective or topic for the session rather than just saying "come up with an idea!"

Apply lateral thinking; that is, solving a problem by not thinking in the conventional way. Once you break free of the need to be conventional, you're imagination is free!

If you don't want to brainstorm in a group, you can do it on your own with a notepad. Close your eyes and write down everything you can think of- a need that may exist in the market.

Before you start thinking this is all a bit academic or a waste of time, let me tell you that this is how very switched on companies come up with huge ideas! In 1980, executives working for the Gillette Group needed a way to market a new shampoo and were all asked to imagine they were a strand of hair! The result was the massively successful Silkience brand.

Warm up beforehand, with a few stretches and mentally detach from the daily life restrictions that afflict our imaginations.

Strategy 3: Intuition

Have you ever 'just felt' to act in a certain way? A gut-feeling that turned out to be valid? A nagging feeling? We all have a certain amount of intuition and we can tap into it to help our creative spirit along.

Intuition emanates from our subconscious which is if you remember, where the all-important 'incubation' stage takes place. Your brain is twice as powerful as the most powerful computer in the world! However, the average person only uses about 1% of that power.

Believe in your instincts- you can trust them where creativity is concerned. If you suffer from low self-esteem, you'll think you don't possess intuition or that it's worthless- overcome this condition- don't allow your conditioning to devalue the input of your gut!

Be confident, playful and as independent as possible- your subconscious thrives on such things when it comes to incubation.

Don't ridicule day-dreaming! I encourage it in fact as day-dreaming is simply tapping into our innermost thoughts.

Vividly visualize events/solutions to problems you want to transpire. This way you train your subconscious to be on the look out for ways to make things happen.

Heed your dreams at night. Dreams are widely acknowledged to be portals into our subconscious so you should analyze them. Bette Graham invented Tip-Ex because of such a dream! Remember and record what happens in your dreams as soon as possible- every minute detail.

Strategy 4: Fertile Surroundings

Surround yourself with surroundings that inspire your creativity by designating a room all to yourself; failing that, pick a quiet place that is special to you- one that you find stirs something within you. Your surroundings also affect your mood don't forget. Can someone tell me why the average office is grey and white?

Pay attention to all your senses when constructing the environment; touch, smell, sound, sight.

Why is it that we feel so much better when we're in the sunshine and so much worse when it's dull and grey?

The answer's not as obvious as it seems. Those of you who work or spend large amounts of time in places with little or artificial light only, should especially heed this article.

We feel good about ourselves often when we're being creative and light is one of the most powerful sources of creative energy. Bright sunlight actually has a direct biological connection to your body and mind. Light not only controls your natural body-clock but also your appetite, mood, healing ability, productivity and even your sexual desire! Why do you think there are so many birthdays in March?!

This is why people who live in extreme northern countries are highly prone to seasonal affective disorder which leads to lethargy and depression. A recent study showed that increased sunlight applied to workers resulted in less errors and absenteeism.

The biological connection with light is that sunlight has a direct effect on your pineal gland which secretes the hormone Melatonin. This hormone when produced induces sleep and thus it's at its highest levels when it's dark.

Decorate your work space with various curiosities that have meaning to you. Use vibrant colors that encourage dynamism like red, orange and blue. We're trying to make the creator within you feel at home here!

Sounds and smells can both appeal to the inner you also. Music can motivate, smell can invigorate.

Don't underestimate the importance of taste also! Too many people eat the wrong sort of food and wonder why they aren't more creative. Carbohydrates make you sleepy, fats dull mental acuity and protein increases alertness.

Strategy 5: New Horizons

Pack your bags and get out in that big world! When you go somewhere you've never been before, you become more aware of your surroundings- i.e. you notice things that inspire you and awaken the creator within! May I recommend Lake Como in Italy Sir?

Routines kill our imaginations and yet we cling on to them for dear life!

Travel gives you the perfect opportunity to practice being open-minded and curious!

A holiday is a perfect way for the incubation stage to evolve into the Eureka! stage.

You'll get the chance to meet many new and exciting people.

More directly linked to business, you could easily discover a product that would go down a storm at home or conversely, realize that the foreign country could do with a product we have back home!

Do as the Romans. Give yourself to the alien culture- see the *real* country- not the beaten tourist track. Don't plan a schedule- let life lead you. Follow your instincts.

The inventor of Velcro- George deMaestral was on holiday in Switzerland, hiking over the Alps when he noticed burrs stuck to his dog's fur- he was inspired to create Velcro!

Strategy 6: Be Childish

Remember what I said about kids being far more creative than adults? If you can't beat them, join them!

Adults should find time for play too. Rekindle your sense of humor. Do something like parachuting- anything you've always wanted to do but felt a bit too grown up to do now.

You're never too old to play with toys either- they can be a great way to re-contact that child that's still deep within all of us. Encourage them out from the depths of your mind. Personally, I love playing with my son's toy cars/ boats/ planes! If you've got kids, then you've got a brilliant cover- you can get away with doing all number of 'silly' things and make-believe adventures!

If anyone tells you to grow up, ask "Why?"

If I had to name the most innovative company I could think of, it would probably be Microsoft and if you look at their child-like business practices you can easily see why! Microsoft managers get given a 'morale budget' to spend in any way they see fit to bring play-time to the work place in the form of crazy golf or whatever.

I keep an old Star Wars toy on one of my shelves in my office as a way of reminding me to stay in touch with that inner child and to remember that anything is possible- the only limit is that of our imaginations. Being a child is much more fun- you start to laugh more for a start and that in itself can be a great way to encourage your creativity out of hiding.

Strategy 7: The Arts

Just as you're not born either creative or not creative, mostly, we're all capable of tapping into art in one form or another, whether it be music, acting or drawing. Remember, art is in the eye of the beholder! The main function of art is to enable a person to express themselves, which is why the opinion of others is largely irrelevant; art should be a purely selfish pursuit! What do you think people made of a Picasso painting when it was first produced- indeed, what do some people think about them *now*? The next time you see the opening of a film made by MGM studios, take a look at the Latin beneath the roaring lion; it reads "***Ars Gratas Artis***" which translates as "Art for art's sake."

Strategy 8: Read

Reading, as well as providing the essential raw materials for your mind to work on, also opens up your mind to new ways of thinking. Stick to non-fiction mostly and look for subjects that will challenge you.

Even fiction books can be helpful because they encourage you to use your imagination by visualizing. Television is relatively lazy because you're not required to use such a skill.

Reading increases your linguistic skills, which in turn make you more able to express ideas in a creative and/or business situation.

Earlier I told you to go and buy a magazine once a week that you have no interest in whatsoever; so do it! Open your mind and become more curious.

It's a good idea to have an inkling about the sort of idea you're on to when it comes to choosing a book. This can be an excellent way to follow up your Eureka! stage by researching something further to check on feasibility.

Strategy 9: Use Technology

Technology has changed our lives drastically in recent times and it can help us become more creative too. Here's some of the ways you can tap into high-tech as a means to revealing your hidden idea:

Use idea-generation software like: Ideafisher, Mindlink, Inspiration and Mindmodel to come up with and log ideas.

A personal computer can open up all number of creative avenues. Try film-making or greetings card design. Play "The Sims"- a game where you decide what happens next in a virtual soap-style world.

Use the Internet to help you with your research as you examine your raw idea.

Strategy 10: Discover Yourself

Remember, your hidden idea will reveal itself from the deepest recesses of your mind- the real, unconditioned you. Therefore, finding out who you are (as opposed to what other people try to make you) is an essential step forward.

Make time for yourself. These days, it's all too common to just chase your tail all day and think that some quiet time all to yourself would be a frivolous luxury. I can't tell you how wrong that is!

Fine, so they're the ten strategies to encourage, feed and nurture your long forgotten creative spirit. Remember though, there are three steps to revealing your hidden idea and we've now covered them all:

Awakening the creator within you.

Using the four-stage process for coming up with ideas.

Using the ten strategies just discussed.

One final point: **great ideas are very often not completely original.** An idea is most often no more nor less than a *new combination of old elements*. Take the music business. There have really only been a few totally original sounds; anything after that is just a new combination of old material. Even Elvis- the King himself- admitted to getting a lot of his material from gospel music.

This isn't a manual you can just read through once and expect to have found your big idea! This is about moving into a whole new way of life and it will take effort and practice, but once you're there, you'll never look back. **I hope you can now see that it's not so much about looking for an idea directly as much as training your mind in the method by which all good ideas are produced.**

Once you've adopted this new religion, you face a forked junction; you can go one of two ways. There are two types of people in the world: dreamers and doers. All this isn't any real use to you financially unless you convert your idea into cash! You must follow through now and make it really happen- your adventure's really only just begun once you've revealed your hidden idea...

Part Four: Cash Converter

Bridging the Gap

I want you to come back to this chapter once you think you've revealed your hidden idea because only then will you have the essential quality required to convert it into cash: **unbridled enthusiasm!**

Your idea will be very precious to you- like a new-born child- and it's understandable that too many people put off this stage of bringing that idea out into the big, bad world. Being creative and being sensitive to criticism often go hand in hand, hence the stereotype of an actor/singer being a prima donna, but you have to put your business-head on now!

You may have come up with what you think is the best idea in history but if you never turn it into cash you may as well not have bothered!

Entrepreneurial business people are the true heroes of society- they bring about employment, opportunities, wealth and choice and they bring about more change in society than any politician or bureaucrat could dream of. Once you have your idea, you hold in the palm of your hands something that could enhance the lives of a great many people as well as your own, but you need to bridge the gap between a raw idea and a real-life business

proposition that makes a profit.

Once you've awoken the creative spirit within you by changing the way you think and approach life by being more curious and open-minded, the world opens itself up to you. If you find that your precious idea has already been discovered by someone else in some form or another though, don't despair- welcome to the business world! Remember, most good ideas are just a re-working of old ideas. Sure, every now and then someone comes along and drastically alters the way things are done, like Dyson with his vacuum cleaner, but they're the minority.

The huge corporation, Cisco Systems didn't invent The Internet but they've done very well out of it all the same!

You don't have to turn the world upside-down to build a successful business. Most successful businesses are built on just making an existing need product or service in the market a little bit better or easier. Bill Gates didn't invent the personal computer; he just made them easier to use!

Okay, so what's the first step in bridging the gap between an idea and a thriving business? Well, to make a profit people are going to need to buy your idea and you'll only know if they want it or not by testing it!

Don't Fight the Market!

As the parent of a new idea, you now face the biggest challenge of all: the possibility that all those pesky customers out there might hate your idea! Again, just like a parent of a new-born child, you see your creation as perfect- it can do no wrong- and feel other people must feel the same way. Don't fight the market though! You can't afford to fall in love with an idea when you're in business so let the proof be in the pudding.

The key to knowing if your idea is a winner or not firstly then, is to believe what the market tells you. Second, you must test it as cheaply as possible to lower your exposure to risk; you wouldn't believe the amount of people in the past who have got so emotionally involved with an idea that they've spent thousands on production, storage and salaries before they even know if it will work or not! Ask yourself these questions in great detail before anything else:

Who are your target customers?

Why would they buy your product?

Can you offer it at a competitive enough price and still make a profit?

Have you tentatively directly asked whether these customers would benefit from your idea?

These are the first steps. Before you start wondering if all this might be too much work, I'm going to give you a really hot tip- one that will help you find a winning idea as well as know if it will work or not:

Become a spy inside the company you work for!

I'm very excited to be introducing you to this tactic; I've called it 'being an intrapreneur'. Many, many successful businesses have risen from an employee working for a firm and seeing first hand that things could be done better. Think about it:

You know all the tricks of the trade.

You know what the customers like and more importantly, what they *don't* like!

From the comfort of your own workspace, you can find out valuable information on the marketplace by asking your employer's customers information about their preferences. If you're not in direct contact with customers, plug someone who is regularly.

You're also in the perfect position to form your 'dream team'! You can see first hand who the best people are and you might want to team up with them.

Your Dream Team

Why are you so shocked? You didn't think you could do all this by yourself did you? If you did, then you're still thinking on far too small a scale! Your big idea is exactly that- it's BIG- and you want to do it justice by building a small team of good people you know and trust and are capable of bringing a unique skill to the venture.

No, you shouldn't have to pay them a salary- you want to entice them in with a share of the profits. Don't get

greedy now- these people will eventually form your board of directors and the best way to get people fired up is to offer them a piece of the action. Plus, the last thing you want in your delicate first year is a huge salary overhead.

Your dream team should consist of people you know are very capable of something you are not so good at. For example, you may want someone technical who can bring your idea to life, or an accountant who can mind the budget.

Remember ‘The 6 Degrees of Separation’? The team should have contacts they can use- clients, suppliers etc.

Don’t hire your mates just because they’re your mates!

If they are to have a share of the profits, they should be prepared to share the risk. Costs should all be shared up front- another reason to form a dream team; to spread risk!

Two heads are better than one. A dream team may be able to suggest ways of enhancing your idea, or save you a lot of time and effort by explaining possible problems you face.

Be selective who you approach with your idea- you don’t want anyone stealing it! You can have a confidentiality agreement drawn up by your solicitor and signed beforehand by the person in question in situations like this.

How are you going to get these people on board? Two words: **Networking and Selling**. I’ve already explained the importance of networking in the previous chapter- build as many contacts as possible. Get people on board you know and trust.

Once you have these contacts and your big idea, arrange a meeting. You need to sell them your idea...

The Cutting Edge

“Selling? Eeeeeekkk!”. Now don’t start getting all hot under the collar and dragging up pre-programmed responses about salesmen and selling- the sort of selling I’m talking about doesn’t involve knocking on doors with a bunch of encyclopaedias under your arm!

No, the type of selling I’m talking about is the sort you probably do every day of your life without even thinking about it. You want somebody to do something for you. Now if you’re smart, you won’t just tell them to do it, you’ll phrase it in such a way so that the person sees a benefit for themselves in doing it.

As the great Dale Carnegie will tell you, he’s rather partial to eating strawberries. But when he goes fishing he doesn’t put strawberries on the hook to catch a fish!

How do you know if you’re a born salesperson or not? Simple. Everyone is a born salesperson.

People turn their noses up at sales people very often, but at the sharp end of every single one of their pay checks is a salesperson.

Every single successful business deal is the result of a sales person- even Jesus Christ himself was a salesman, and a bloody good one at that as 2,000 years on people are still buying his best-selling novel!

Everyone is a born salesperson because as we grow up we all recognize the fact that people only generally do something if there’s something in it for them. A fair exchange of values. Come on think about it. Have you ever sold your car or house?

Times have changed though. The public are wise to all the text book ways of closing a deal and all the corny lines that go with them. They don’t want any pressure either and if there’s one way not to get a sale, it’s to appear unnatural and pushy. If you notice from many adverts now, you see them state “No salesman will call”.

Indeed, in my days as a front line salesman I found that the best way to finalize the sale would be to say, “Listen Mr. Smith, this is a big decision for you and it should be the right one so I don’t want to rush you. Have a quiet moment on your own, I’ll make you a coffee and you can have a good think about it”. If you pressure people they’ll just run away.

The punter’s last line of defense is something called, “I’ll think about it”. It makes the heart of any salesperson sink. The way to avoid this defense mechanism is not to pressurize too much in the first place. And if they don’t buy the

first time you've laid the foundation for them to buy another time because they see you as trustworthy.

People will buy from you because they respect and like you. People buy from people.

What I am about to tell you is known to you already. You've done it a thousand times before, but you probably haven't sat down to consider the process unless you're already a salesperson.

First, find out the needs of the person you're trying to get on board. Maybe they're sick of not having the freedom they want. Maybe they want to enjoy the fruits of their own labor. Maybe their son isn't getting the treatment they want and need to get him into a private school. Do you see? Plug away and find out about that person- the *real* person. Do this over a period of time as it will sound too much like an interview if you do it all at once!

Once you've found out about that person and their specific needs in life, you can hit them with your proposition, BUT tailor your proposition to the person you're speaking to emphasizing the benefits that relate to that person's situation. "Just think Mike, once this thing takes off you'll have your own department and the profits will easily send your boy to that school."

Third, deal with any objections your possible future director may have. They may not have any, so don't make any for them! Many people talk themselves out of a sale this way. Only deal with them if they arise and turn their negative into a positive.

Fourth and most important of all, finalize the agreement. This doesn't involve any sort of trickery, just a simple formality. Have a draft contract ready that lays out all the conditions and possible outcomes- how profit is split and risk costs are shared etc.

You can apply those simple four rules to any sales situation: **discover the customer's needs, tailor your presentation to fit in with those needs only, overcome any objections and close the deal.**

Of course, the central subject in all of this is your actual business idea. Whether you're selling it to would-be dream team members, a banker to raise the money or an actual customer, you need a special format; you need to give your idea substance. You need...

The Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is what you have to translate your raw idea into to give it substance in a business context. This is also a great way of seeing if your idea is really going to work, so make this the first thing you do after your idea comes to you. This step is of paramount importance- not an optional extra. Without it, your idea will remain just that and your efforts will lack focus and cohesion.

An elevator pitch is your business idea in a nutshell. In one short sentence, you should describe your products unique benefits.

This isn't as simple as it sounds and I do mean *one short sentence*. In future, when anyone asks what your company does, your elevator pitch will be your automatic answer. As your business grows and you talk to more and more customers, no doubt you'll alter and adapt your elevator pitch, but in any case, this is your first and foremost step. There is a way to give even more substance to your idea in the form of credibility...

A Piggy-Back Ride

A fledgling company will always have their size and inexperience working against them and the way around this is to piggy-back on the reputation of someone else- a non-conflict company. By this I mean an organization already in existence that you could compliment their existing service with your product or service; a strategic alliance. Sound impossible? The airlines do it all the time with code-sharing agreements! Here's two more good examples:

A car importer. Proton Cars started this way- the importer of cheap but good quality vehicles from Malaysia. Instead of having to gradually build up a number of dealer outlets, they teamed up with Lada Cars and instantly had a nation-wide network. Lada agreed because Proton cars were aimed at a different customer base than their own.

A letting agent. In the South-East about ten years ago, Orchard and Shipman letting agents boomed out of nowhere because of a piggy-back ride from Mann & Co. estate agents. Mann & Co. didn't have a letting division at the time so they allowed Orchard & Shipman to set up in all of their offices- an instant network!

You could go on forever; a beauty therapist that sets up above a hair salon... etc. etc. The alliance is just a means to an end; once you've got to where you want, you can go your own way. Trade shows can be another excellent way to build contacts, test your product and be inspired by variations on existing ideas (that's good....but it would be even better if I did this...).

The important thing: NEVER GIVE UP- EVER!

Turn Your Idea into an Epidemic

In case you hadn't noticed, people talk and you can tap into this fundamental human need to communicate by spreading your idea like an outbreak of an airborne virus!

The most successful ideas are those that spread and grow because of the customer's relationship to other customers- not the marketer's to the customer!

We now live in an environment in which most people actively resist marketing, so the solution comes in instead of marketing at people, make people market to each other. Word of mouth has never been more essential- or should I say word of *mouse*? The Internet and communications revolution has so much to answer for here.

And no, this doesn't always happen because of huge advertising budgets either. Have you ever got into a particular TV show or new band, only to discover that many other people were doing exactly the same unbeknown to you? Then you witnessed an idea epidemic in action!

Fads make the people behind them *or the people who piggy-back from them* huge amounts of money! Don't snigger at fads- embrace them.

The huge Internet web-site, Yahoo! is only so big because of an idea epidemic. They don't really offer anything that other search engines don't, it's all about sizzle and hype. The best way is to specifically target a small but highly influential group and let them use your product for free. Do this as many times as you can afford. Creating an epidemic is especially crucial if your big idea takes the form of a web-site (if that is the case, you should get your hands on my manual entitled *Net Income*).

The Future

You're at the end of this manual, but at the beginning of something huge. Something that *will* change your life beyond recognition and make your spirit soar and liberate your soul. We've entered a new stage in commercial history; first it was agriculture, then it was factories. This century belongs to those with ideas!

If you've just read this from front to cover, which I suspect you have (or worse, just flicked through it!), that's understandable but you now have to ask yourself an important question: Are you going to take the advice given and actually reveal your hidden idea and convert it into cash?

Reading this manual isn't enough; your big idea isn't going to magically pop into your head just because you've acquired the knowledge on how the creative process occurs. You have to make the techniques given here a central philosophy and practice them. You *do* possess a HUGE idea inside you right now- everyone does. We're not simply either born creative or not, we just need to learn and use the standard process by which ALL good ideas come about, just like a 'dream machine'. And remember, most brilliant, winning business ideas are just a new variation of an old idea- watch any movie for proof of that one!

So now, re-read this only this time very slowly. Make notes. Keep this by your side and integrate the strategies into your life. Re-invent yourself and if anyone laughs, just bear in mind who'll have the last laugh. Whether you use this material to write the next best-selling novel, change the world for the better or to create a hugely successful company, I know it will change your life in an enormous way once you fully give yourself to the contents. Open yourself up and just watch opportunity come knocking.

You take my very best wishes with you on this, ***your*** great adventure.

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