

JIM GARLAND

THE
PRACTICAL
GUIDE
TO
EXCEPTIONAL
LIVING

Creating AND Living THE Life of Your Dreams



The Practical Guide To Exceptional Living

Creating and Living the Life of Your Dreams

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Cover Design by: **Rachel Lopez**
Rachel@r2cdesign

ISBN 978-1-60037-716-7

Library of Congress Control Number: 2009936846

MORGAN • JAMES
THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PUBLISHER

Morgan James Publishing, LLC
1225 Franklin Ave., STE 325
Garden City, NY 11530-1693
Toll Free 800-485-4943
www.MorganJamesPublishing.com



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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my wife Carrie and our four wonderful children Bayley, Ellie, Jack, and Benjamin.

Carrie has been the love of my life since high school. She is the woman who has made me the man I am today, my soul mate and truly my best friend. She is the person who brings me my greatest happiness and joy. Carrie's love and support are the only reason that this book became a reality. Her experience in journalism helped as well, as she was my first (and toughest) editor! She is the best mother a child and husband could ever imagine - she is patient, fun, energetic, kind, and adventurous. I love you.

Bayley, you have been such a delight since the day you were born that we decided to have three more kids! Your great attitude, sense of humor and smarts are inspirational. I love you and cherish all of the joy you have brought to mommy and me.

Ellie, watching you grow up has brought more joy to my life than you will ever know. You are spunky, funny, and smart as a whip and I adore you for that. I love you and will forever hold onto the excitement you have given mommy and me.

Jack, it is a blessing to have you as my son. Your varied interests amaze me and your sense of humor makes me laugh until I can't breathe. I love you and cherish the conversations, the fun and the laughter you bring to mommy and me.

Benjamin, you are a delight to behold, with a twinkle in your eye and a spring in your step. Jimmy Buffet and Bob Marley would be proud to hear you sing along to any of their songs. I love you to the moon and back and thank you for the happiness you bring mommy and me.

I also dedicate this book to my late mom (Dickey), my late Pop (Jake), my late sister (Karen), my brother Joe and my sisters Leslie and Felicia. I have shared more joy, laughter and adventure with all of you than the law should allow. Your support of my crazy ideas has given me the strength I have found when the odds have been against me. You have all brought love, passion and excitement to my life. The adventures we shared as children - camping, fishing, going to the beach, Uncle Tommy's, traveling in an RV, and simply playing together - are etched in my memory forever. The pleasure of sharing these things with you makes me the luckiest guy in the world. With all of my love, I thank you.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge and thank the following people for giving me the strength, resources and passion for shaping my life and bringing this book to reality:

- ***Carrie, Bayley, Ellie, Jack and Benjamin**, for the unbelievable patience, help, ideas and strength you have provided for me on this journey.*
- ***PJ Maher, Sharp Details, Inc. Operations Manager**, for teaching me to simplify, to look at the big picture, to be patient and think things through before making a snap judgment or decision. You have allowed me to work on my strengths and grow the business while you use your strengths to handle the day-to-day details and refine our operating systems. You have a management team that would make Warren Buffet proud. You have given me the freedom to develop relationships with our clients and thereby exceed our business goals.*
- ***Christina Miller, Sharp Details, Inc. Office Operations Guru**, for organizing and simplifying what was chaos and for keeping my “shoot from the hip style” in check. If I need something you have it, if I have lost something you find it and if it is technical you guide me through it. You manage to keep our accounts receivable on time and up-to-date which is the life blood of our business. You are the best!*
- ***Tom Dula, Sharp Details, Inc. CFO**, for your passion and care for our business, your ability to turn the financially complex into something I understand and your friendship. Thank you for steering us in the right direction and for helping me turn Sharp Details into a financially sound and profitable business.*
- ***Ed Behling, Cindy Bailey, Janet Carbajal, Brian Dower, Colleen Mascara, Eric Pulling, Mike Vinaya, Will Zimdars, Sharp Details, Inc. Management Team**, your leadership ability, professionalism, customer service, attention to detail, hard work, countless hours, patience, creativity and dedication continue to exceed what I ever thought imaginable. It is what you do, day in and day out that has allowed our company to grow and serve so many in our wonderful industry. It is an honor and a privilege to share this with you. Not a day goes by that I don't thank the Lord for bringing you to Sharp Details, Inc. Your loyalty and friendship mean the world to me.*
- ***The Sharp Details, Inc. Service Technicians**, thanks to the men and women who keep our customers happy, our managers sane and the nuts and bolts of the business running all day, every day. Your dedication, hard work and loyalty are not always praised but are always appreciated. Thank you, Gracias!*

- *Ann McIndoo, for your, ideas, guidance, resources, and business process. Your ability to take my mixed-up, disorganized, and rambling ideas and concepts and help me turn them into a book has been amazing.*
- *David Farber, of Patton and Boggs, LLP, for your tenacity, professionalism, wit and for guiding me through one of the toughest periods of my business career.*
- *Sharp Details, Inc.'s clients and friends, for your dedication, continued business and friendship. A special thanks to Gene Condreras of Panorama Flight Service for encouraging me to branch out from my core business. You are the greatest clients in the world. I have made more lifelong friends in this industry than I ever could have imagined. The work we all do is challenging, demanding and sometimes unforgiving and we love it! My heartfelt thanks to all of you. Special thanks to Joe Tate, who gave me the opportunity to get into this great industry and to Bill Maynard, who first taught me to clean an aircraft!*
- *Carroll and Patty Owens, for never doubting me when I wanted to marry your daughter and promised to take good care of her, and for always making me feel part of the family. Your support is a blessing.*
- *My Friends from Bush Hill Elementary, Thomas Edison High School, Radford University, New River Valley and Radford Rugby clubs, to Phi Sigma Kappa, the Chart House, Barnacle Jim's Boat Service, Sharp Details, Inc., Rehoboth, St Aidan's, St John's, Riverside Gardens, Grace Episcopal (Jim, Brian, Tony, Phil, Bob, Ken and all of your lovely brides), Belle Haven, Surfing (Ross and Dave) and beyond. I thank you all for making me laugh so hard that my stomach is sore the next day, giving me memories that will be with me forever, providing me with inspiration and guidance, causing me to raise my standards, improve my surfing and my golf game and most of all for just being good friends that I can count on for the rest of my life. You guys and gals are the greatest friends I could ever ask for!*

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Introduction

I always thought I was someone who tried to strive for excellence in my life. The problem was I never really had the discipline to make the changes that would bring about that excellence. In high school, I played football and did okay, but during the off-season I was not dedicated to staying in shape. Instead of striving for excellence, I would just hang out with my buddies. We had fun, but none of us thought about doing what it would take to play sports beyond high school.

The same was true with my study habits. I could do well, but instead of striving for excellence I cruised through with a low B average and never really thought much about it. As I moved on to college, things did not change. I attended Radford University in Radford, Virginia from the fall of 1986 until my graduation in the spring of 1990. I had fun, made terrific lifelong friends, played rugby, and coasted through with a C average. I will never forget the frustration of my math economics professor, Dr. Kasturi. I was an economics major and needed a C in his class in order to graduate. We had two tests: the midterm and the final. I bombed the midterm with a 34 (yes, out of 100). Before the final, several of us got together and studied around the clock. After the final, I went to Dr. Kasturi's office to see if I was going to be able to graduate. In his classic Indian accent he said, "Mr. Garland, I do not understand people like you. You have the ability to do so well, but it is like you do not care. You got a 105 on the final—the highest grade in the class. Your average is a 69.9 and I will give you a C." I was thrilled. He was not.

He basically posed the question, "Why are you such an underachiever?" At that moment, I realized I had not been striving for excellence but settling for mediocrity. I realized that although I had fleeting thoughts of success I had always accepted mediocrity as the norm. That was a turning point in my life.

Like many of you, I wanted a life of joy, success, loving relationships, financial stability, adventure and excitement. Since then I have had several defining moments in my life, turning points, that caused me to look at where I was and make the decision to turn it up a notch.

What will be the defining moment in your life? When will you no longer settle for mediocrity? When are you going to decide to start designing the life of your dreams? Is now the time?

Since that time with Dr. Kasturi, more than 20 years ago, I have focused much of my energy on studying what actions people take who truly create the lives that they want—people who truly strive for excellence. Throughout this process, I have read hundreds of books, listened to countless hours of tapes and CDs, watched videos, attended seminars, enrolled in classes for entrepreneurs, hired personal trainers and coaches and visited, analyzed and learned from countless websites. As a result, I have purposely designed my life and my business to be exactly what I want it to be.

Here are a few examples:

- I married Carrie, my high school sweetheart and the woman of my dreams.
- We have been blessed with four beautiful children: Bayley, Ellie, Jack and Benjamin.
- Our children attend schools that we love.
- We live in a wonderful house in a beautiful neighborhood.
- I have grown my business, Sharp Details, Inc., from the trunk of my car (as a boat cleaning service) into a company that produces almost \$4,000,000 in annual revenue, providing aircraft detailing, cleaning and support services, operates in eight different states with over 50 employees, and runs without my day-to-day involvement.
- I work out regularly, enjoy great health, and can still fit into the tuxedo I bought for my wedding 14 years ago!
- I take 10 weeks of vacation per year (no contact at all with the office) and spend much of my time with my wife and kids.

My aim in writing *The Practical Guide to Exceptional Living* is to give you a simple book, a guide that can help you along the way. It is packed with ideas that will save you years of trial-and-error and gives you the tools and philosophy you need to begin your journey towards creating and living the life of your dreams. You can make the changes in your life you have always wanted to make, **today**... and I will show you how!

Warm regards,

Jim Garland

Chapter One

Are You Living the Life of Your Dreams?

“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams, live the life you have imagined.”

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)
American author, poet, and philosopher



Are you living the life of your dreams? What would the life of your dreams look like? How would you envision it? Many people shy away from these questions because they are so direct; they really hit you in the gut and make you start to think and that is the idea. I want to get you thinking about what the answers to these very direct questions should be and how you would describe, in detail, the life of your dreams. You must know what you want and where you want to go. Answering these questions is where the journey begins.

By the end of this book you will have developed a new strategy for how you look at life and a game plan for deliberately designing the life you desire on every level. The subjects on the following pages will help you define what it means to have a truly exceptional life. As you read, think about how these subjects relate to your daily life.

Time: Your Most Valuable Asset

At the beginning of my business career, I was taught by my colleagues that working long, hard hours was not only necessary but was required as a means to success. It was almost like a badge of honor to work 80-90 hours per week. If you wanted to succeed you had to put in the hours at any cost and if you didn't, you were not worthy. As I began my journey as a small business owner, I focused on two things:

1. Work as many hours as humanly possible
2. Accumulate as much money as humanly possible

As shallow as it seems, that was it. Work hard to make money. I was 21 and single and this seemed like a great philosophy. What it actually produced was a very tired body and mind, a business that could not be left for five minutes without my hands in everything, a girlfriend, and family and friends who wanted to know why I worked so much. Unfortunately for me, I had put no value on time and measured my success by how many hours I worked. This is a sure formula for failure on every level and I was proving it to myself.

As time went on and my business continued to grow, I realized more and more that the additional hours I was working were becoming less and less productive. It was

at this point that I realized I had to let go of some of the responsibilities of the business and allow others to take charge. To delegate effectively you need patience, trial and error with many different people and a willingness to understand that many mistakes will be made and corrected, along the way. It was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do; however, as months and years passed, I became more effective at building business systems and designing clear divisions of authority and responsibility. My business continued to grow, I began to gain more and more control over my time and more of my employees improved their management and leadership skills.

Thanks to delegating successfully, my philosophy and life have changed 180 degrees. I now believe that time is the most valuable commodity I have and how I spend it is paramount. I no longer work weekends or 80 hours a week. Don't get me wrong, I could. I just have chosen not to, and with that choice have designed my business and my life so I control how I spend my time. How did I do it? How is this possible? I made a deliberate decision to redesign my life and business. I have assembled an unbelievable team at my company, Sharp Details, Inc. and it is this team that has been built over many years, that has allowed me the benefit of spending my time as I choose.

The amazing thing is that since I have set the business up in this way and delegated tasks I am not good at (in an effort to achieve personal freedom) my business has improved tremendously. It runs more efficiently without my hands in everything, it provides jobs for more people, it serves our customers better, and it generates greater revenue than ever. I have finally begun to achieve true success. To me, that means having the ability to spend my time the way I want to spend it. This control over my time has allowed me the flexibility to spend valuable time with my wife Carrie, our children and at the same time, grow my company 30% per year over the last three years. It has provided me with the luxury of being able to pursue other interests including creating a foundation, starting a new company and writing this book. I also have plenty of opportunity for recreational activities I enjoy, such as traveling with my family and surfing and golfing with my buddies.

The average person will spend 110,000 hours of their life on their career (commuting and working 50 hours per week for a 44 year career from the age of 21-65). This means you spend more time working and commuting than you will ever spend with your family. Is this what you want? Do you so love your job or your business that you would spend this much time at it, or do you need to make a change? Outside of work, the time you spend with others is another critical amount of time you should analyze. Who are you spending your time with? Do you hang out with people who support you and give you encouragement on a daily basis? Are they positive and fun?

What about your loved ones? Most of us spend time planning for work, exercise, special events, dinner and a host of other things. How much time do you actively plan to spend with your loved ones or do they just get whatever time is leftover?

To design the life of your dreams, you must gain control of your time. This is the first step and here are six guidelines to help you get started. They will help you begin thinking about how you spend your time. Remember, your time is your most valuable asset and it is the biggest factor in designing the life of your dreams.

1. Start every day with a plan. I write my daily plan on an index card every night before I go to bed. This keeps you organized and on task.
2. Ask your workplace to offer you opportunities to work from home, or pay you for your results instead of your time.
3. Ask your workplace to offer you flexible hours. Maybe you can go in early some days and late on others.
4. Explore opportunities/companies that offer jobs working from home utilizing today's technology.
5. Manage how you communicate:
 - Turn off all email alerts on your computer and phone.
 - Put your phone on vibrate.
 - Put an auto response on your email letting others know you will respond at certain times or days so they do not expect an immediate response.
 - Plan time with your spouse and kids first, and then fill in around that.
 - Designate 1-2 days per week that you do not check email or work phone.
 - At dinners out, ball games, and special events leave your communication device in the car.
6. Before making commitments to others, ask these questions: Do I like being with this person? Do they make me feel good? Do we have fun together? If you answer "no" to any of these questions, rethink spending time with this person. If you answer "no" and you are married to this person, get professional help! Life is too short to spend time feeling angst towards the person you have married.

How is Your Health?

Good health is essential for achieving and living a life that is full of joy and happiness. Good health will provide you with the stamina to face life's challenges, the energy to play, and the stamina to take a long walk. It will give you a mental awareness and strength that can only be discovered when you are in good shape. It will also give you the energy to balance your time between family, work, social commitments, and travel. Most of all, great health will provide you with longevity and extra years that

will allow you to more fully enjoy all of life's pleasures.

For any of you who have been overweight and then been disciplined enough to lose it and get in shape, you know there is no comparison between how you feel at your ideal weight and how you felt when you are heavy. *Imagine yourself enjoying working out five days per week, eating fruits and vegetables (colorful and vibrant), getting plenty of rest, reducing your stress and being your ideal body weight. Ladies, imagine getting into your size 6-8 jeans you haven't worn since high school!* Just the description of this makes you feel good. *Now imagine yourself 30 pounds overweight, always tired, eating a regular diet of french fries, burgers and cookies (brown, bland, mushy, greasy), getting no exercise, wearing clothes that don't fit and always exhausted from lack of sleep.* Now, how do you feel? You see your health and weight immediately affect you mentally as well as physically. Most people don't get this.

The biggest reason I work out five to six days per week, eat a diet of fresh fruits and vegetables, limit any kind of prescription drugs, drink plenty of water, try to sleep at least six-plus hours every night, quit chewing tobacco after 25 years, and try to stay as close to my ideal weight as possible is simple. Why? **I want to live as long as possible.** Have you ever thought about this? How long do you want to live? One of my sisters was killed at 19 in an alcohol-related automobile accident. My mom was a heavy smoker and died at age 53 from cancer. It is heartbreaking to think of all of the things they missed because of poor *choices* in lifestyle: so many birthdays, ball games, dance recitals, grandchildren, weddings, baptisms, family gatherings, sunsets, and adventure. I want you to think long and hard about your current lifestyle.

Will you be here to see your children mature and grow old? Will you be here to watch them raise their families and pursue their dreams? Will you be here to enjoy and support them? Be honest with yourself. Are you going to make it to see the grandkids? Or are you going to be gone from this earth because of poor health brought on by poor choices. How is your health?

Achieving the life of your dreams will require energy. You should want as many extra years as possible to enjoy. You are also going to need the self confidence that comes with looking and feeling your best.

Here are a few statistics to think about:

- The average American female lives to be 77 years old, the average male 73.
- Smoking cigarettes can take an average of 10 years off of your life.
- Being overweight by 20-30 pounds can take an extra five years off of your life.

- According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), heart disease is the number - one killer in America. One person dies every minute from a heart attack.
- Being overweight by 20-30 pounds can increase your risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and other weight related diseases. Obesity (being more than 20% over your ideal body weight) greatly increases the risk.
- The average male exercises 1.5 times per week and the average female 1.1 times per week. Sixty minutes of exercise five days per week is recommended.

How Are Your Relationships?

Those who have achieved great things in life most likely have not done so by themselves. They have had the help of many different relationships, usually involving a spouse, business partners, work colleagues and friends. You need support from a variety of people, and that requires you to maintain healthy relationships. How are your relationships? Are they caring and loving and supportive? Do they give you inspiration and energy or do they drain you of your energy? Are they filled with anxiety and stress? Are they antagonistic?

If you are married or have a significant other in your life, this is the most important relationship to help you achieve the things you want in life. You must constantly work at this relationship through the inevitable disagreements, arguments, good times and bad times. It will get stronger as you go. What I find with many people is that they don't understand how much you need to work on a relationship. The couples I have seen that are the happiest are constantly communicating with each other, not always agreeing, but constantly communicating. This is critical, especially in a day and age when there are so many distractions.

Relationships take time, commitment and most of all patience. What was the last thing you said to your spouse before you left today? When was the last time you showed up with flowers or a gift for no reason? When was the last time you told your spouse how beautiful or handsome they were? We often forget these simple gestures because "life" tends to get in the way. Work, email, the kids' schedules and many other commitments occupy our time. As I said earlier, one of the first steps is that you must look at how you truly spend your time. After you do this, you must first schedule time for yourself, your family and your spouse. Then think about friends, old and new. Call them, email them, or invite them for dinner. Go out of your way to be loving and kind to the people you care about most.

My wife often reminds our children, "We are here on earth for one reason and

that is to help others and make others feel good.” I remember the first time she said this, and I realized that I had never looked at it like that. If everyone went out each day with this philosophy, can you imagine how your relationships with all those around you (including complete strangers) would change? The purpose of our relationships is to help others reach their highest potential and to nurture one another to reach our goals.

We also need others to be around us to give us a sense of worth and a reason to rise each day. We need that sense of camaraderie as humans. Remember this as you leave in the morning to go to work and you look into the eyes of your spouse or children or you wave to your neighbor. We need a connection to other human beings. When you think of the people you have relationships with, think about what you can do for them, not what they need to do for you. And by doing this, you will find that they will help you along the way to create the life you want.

How Is Your Faith?

My faith is a big part of who I am and is an important part of my relationship with my family, especially my children. Your belief is what it is. If your belief is strong, I encourage you to nurture it. If you have no belief or very little, I encourage you to try to discover it. My faith in God and the strength that faith gives me has allowed me to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles and taken me from a place of fear and failure to a place of absolute joy and success.

My faith in God gives me the strength to be a loving father and husband, business owner, friend, and good citizen of this great country. My belief has helped me through the deaths of a sister and both of my parents. It has provided me strength when my business was on the verge of going bankrupt and was under siege from a lawsuit. And most of all, God and my belief in God bring me great joy on a beautiful spring day when all is going perfectly. When I look at my beautiful family and all of the joy that nature and my many friends bring, who else can receive the credit but God?

I want you to give great thought to your faith and what it means to you and those around you. We will discuss gratitude and faith to a greater degree in Chapter Three. For now, answer the question, how is your faith?

What Is Important to YOU?

To design the life you have always wanted or to make any positive change in your life you have to know what is important to you. Many people will say that their family is important to them, but then they will work 80 hours per week and not spend time with their family. Or someone will say their health is important, but then they will

not do anything to support good health. So, what is important to you? Is it the accumulation of toys and possessions or is it the accumulation of experiences that you share with those around you? I used to struggle with this until a good friend of mine posed a question to me one day. I now call it the Christmas Gift Question.

As I talked with my friend David Allen, describing the book I was writing, we discussed a struggle I was having. I explained to him that I had a lot of ambitious business goals and like to own nice things and have the ability to travel, but that was causing a strain on my family and my relationships. The conflict I faced was the choice between spending time with my family and pursuing my business goals. With that, he hit me with the following question: it is what I call **The Christmas Gift Question**.

“Tell me one gift you remember getting for Christmas each year as a kid from the age of five to fifteen,” David said. I stammered for a moment, not being able to think of any, and then I did manage to remember getting skis one Christmas when I was probably about seven and the football game with the guys that would vibrate up and down the field and the field goal kicker that you hit on the head. That was all that I could clearly remember over ten years of Christmas during my childhood.

Then he said, “Describe the vacations and experiences you and your family shared each year from the age of five to fifteen. What were some of the adventures you had?” Instantly my memory was triggered and a whole host of things came back to me. I started to describe all of the great experiences I had as a child growing up in Alexandria, VA: The summer trip my family made in a Winnebago down the east coast, the trips to our condo at Fenwick Island, DE, camping trips to Cave Mountain Lake, VA and the Great Smokey Mountains, trips to visit relatives in Roanoke, VA, the Riverside Hotel in Gatlinburg, TN and staying in the tree houses at Disney World. It was all so vivid and clear. I told him about my dad coaching baseball and my mom being the den mother of my Cub Scout troop. I could have talked for hours about all of the experiences I had growing up.

Thanks to David it then became crystal clear. **Life is about the experiences we have along the way not about the accumulation of things.** Life is about the experiences we share with our families and other loved ones.

This in a broad sense has become my mantra: *Live as long as possible in order to share experiences with the people you love being around!* When you think about this, it is so simple. Isn't this what you want? (If it isn't, close this book and go get your money back!) Think about what has been important to you in your life. Has it been about the accumulation of things or has it been about the experience? Which is more important to you? What changes do you need to make?

The purpose of this chapter has been to get you thinking about your life and what it has become up to this point. As we get older and our commitments expand, our creativity decreases and our dreams somehow begin to fade into the background. The next two exercises are designed to get you thinking BIG again. These exercises are the first steps, the building blocks, in the journey to design or redesign the life of your dreams.

Ultimate Life Experience™

What is your **Ultimate Life Experience™**? What is the one thing you have always wanted to do or the one place you have always wanted to visit? It may be a trip around the world, surfing in Indonesia, going to London to watch Wimbledon, traveling to Korea to visit relatives, going to the World Series, or maybe organizing a family reunion that brings together hundreds of family members. Right now, I challenge you to consider your **Ultimate Life Experience™**, write it down and include steps needed to achieve it. Whatever it is, I want you to think BIG! Dream and plan as if money were not an obstacle. Don't put limits on what you want to do, just think about it as if there was nothing holding you back.

Thinking BIG is the key and here is why. When you begin to think BIG and dream BIG you force yourself to step out of your comfort zone. For example, driving to the beach for the weekend or going to Fiji for two weeks are two completely different goals that you will think about and plan for differently. The weekend trip may be fun, but the trip to Fiji would conjure up a whole different type of excitement and drive. Your mind will become engaged and creative when the goal is BIG. You will have to think about the financial commitment, logistical aspects, and the time constraints that go along with a big goal. You will be forced to break it down into smaller, manageable chunks over time in order to achieve your **Ultimate Life Experience™**. Most importantly, when the goal and dream are bigger than anything you have ever accomplished, so is the excitement level, and it is this excitement level and the feelings you will have when the goal is accomplished that will push you to go for it!

The Legacy Goal™

In this chapter, I have talked about the importance of how you spend your time, your health, your relationships, your faith, your experiences, and what is truly important to you. Hopefully you have begun to think about your first big goal, your **Ultimate Life Experience™**. Your next assignment is creating your **Legacy Goal™**.

How do you want to be remembered? What do you want your legacy to be? While I was going through a program called *The E-Myth* by Michael Gerber www.e-myth.com (an excellent read for entrepreneurs), I was asked to write my own eulogy. This is an interesting exercise and you can start by answering these questions: How

will people remember you? How would you want to be remembered? What were some of your accomplishments? What are some of the things you have not accomplished yet, but would like to so they could be part of your eulogy? What one sentence or phrase could sum up the person you have been? The person you would like to be? When you have attended funerals, what was said about the deceased that stuck with you? One piece of advice before you start this: think about what you can do in the next 20-40-60 years that could make your eulogy truly amazing. Think about how you could alter someone's life for the better or the impact you could have on your children. What lessons could you teach or learn over the rest of your life that could be life changing for you and those around you? There is no better time than the present to begin thinking about the rest of your life and the legacy you want to leave behind.

When I think about my **Legacy Goal™**, I immediately think of two things: my children and charitable organizations. First and foremost, the responsibility I have to the world is to leave it with four generous, loving and thoughtful individuals that are always thinking of ways to help others. Four people, who have always done their best, to have a positive impact on the world, value education and are constantly looking for ways to show respect and gratitude towards their fellow human beings. As a parent, I feel that the biggest contribution I can make to society is to make sure that my children have been raised in a way to value their faith, God, education and respect for themselves and others.

My second biggest responsibility is to provide for others in need, especially those who are trying to better their lives, health, education, or just want a chance to prove themselves, but do not have the means or support to fulfill their dreams. As you begin to develop your **Legacy Goal™**, it is important to think of others and not yourself.

Chapter One Summary

Are You Living the Life of Your Dreams?

Key Points to Remember

- Discovering what The Life of Your Dreams would mean in detail is the cornerstone for making positive change in your life.
- You must know what you want and where you want to go before the journey can begin.
- Time is your most important and valuable asset and how you spend it is critical.
- Vibrant health gives you the energy to pursue your dreams.
- Healthy relationships are critical to your well-being.
- Your spiritual faith and belief are critical in assisting you with creating the life of your dreams!
- Discovering what is truly important to you will guide you to make the right decisions in life.
- Life is about the experiences we share with others, not about the accumulation of material things—The Christmas Gift Question.
- The Ultimate Life Experience™ - Describe in detail what this would be for you and how it would feel to experience this. It could be a trip, vacation, event, or health goal. Forget all obstacles and dream BIG!
- The Legacy Goal™ - How do you want to be remembered? What do you want your legacy to be? What positive impact could you leave on your children, your family, and the world?

Go to www.thepracticalguidetoexceptionalliving.com for support and guidance.

Please answer the following questions. Challenging yourself to answer the “why” after each question will give you the justification to continue that behavior...or choose to change.

- Are you living the life of your dreams? Why or why not?
- What would the life of your dreams look like? Why?
- How would you envision the life of your dreams? Why?
- Do you love your job, your business, your career? Why?
- Who are you spending your time with? Why or why not?
- Do you spend time with people that support and encourage you? Why or why not?
- Do you spend time with people who are positive and fun? Why or why not?
- How much time do you spend with your family or loved ones on a daily basis? Why or why not?
- How is your health? Why?
- How long do you want to live? Why?
- Do you eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly? Why or why not?
- How are your relationships? Why?
- Are your relationships loving and supportive or filled with anxiety and stress? Why?
- When was the last time you gave your spouse or significant other a compliment, flowers or a gift for no reason? Why or why not?
- How is your faith? Why?
- Do you believe yourself capable of achieving great things? Why or why not?
- What do you value most in your life? Why?

Chapter Two

Your Health and Longevity

"As I see it, every day you do one of two things: build health or produce disease in yourself."

Adelle Davis (1904-1974)

American health pioneer



How is your health? Do you have enough energy to do the things you want to do? Can you walk up three flights of steps without being out of breath? Do you exercise regularly (five times per week)? Do you eat a balanced diet? Can you run around with your kids for hours and play with them at their pace? Or, are you a heart attack waiting to happen?

The most important thing you have in life is your body and its health. If you do not take great care of your body and your health, everything else will start to deteriorate around you. There is a great line in a Jimmy Buffet song called "Fruitcakes"© that goes like this, "...I treat my body like a temple, you treat yours like a tent..."

So, which one is it for you? Is it a temple or a tent? Your health, your vibrant health, is the most important tool you have that will allow you the opportunity to experience true success and create the life of your dreams. You can have great relationships, earn a ton of money, travel the world, love your family and even be famous; however, if you drop dead at 50 because of a heart attack from never taking care of yourself, then all of the accomplishments would immediately lose all value and meaning!

Getting and staying truly healthy is a combination of many factors that **you** have control over, including:

- A clear set of goals for all areas of your life
- A good exercise regime that includes weight training, cardio training and stretching
- Drinking enough water daily
- A balanced diet of whole natural foods
- Six-eight hours of sleep per night
- Leisure activities that bring you joy--gardening, golfing, or just sitting and talking with friends

How are you doing in the areas listed above? An honest answer to this question is your first step to improving your well-being. If you are in top physical condition you

can be more productive in every area of your life. Exercise alone will raise your mental alertness and give you more energy. In this chapter, I will flush out all of the chatter you hear about exercise and good health and give you solid facts, proven ideas, and some of my own anecdotes to get you headed in the right direction.

How Long Do You Want to Live?

“How long do you want to live?” To my amazement I have found that most people have never asked themselves this question. They have set goals for their relationships, finances, travel and careers, but they have never thought about how long they want to live. Knowing how long you want to live will help you change what you do and how you act today, tomorrow, and next week. Your mind will start to shift and things that once seemed unimportant, like your health, all of a sudden become critical.

- How long do you want to live?
- Why do you want to live that long?
- How are you going to live that long?

The answers to these three critical questions will change your life and how you look at your health forever.

My personal experience in observing someone who never answered these questions involved my own mother. I don't think she ever thought about how long she wanted to live. If she had answered this question, she would have surely changed her lifestyle. My father, on the other hand, lived until he was 80. For some people, 80 sounds like a great number and a ripe old age. I feel differently.

For me, 80 years old is not long enough. ***My goal is to live to be 100, and there are many reasons for this:*** I want to see my descendants experience as much joy as possible, I want to have as much time on this earth to experience as many things as I can with my family, I want to see my grandkids and great-grandkids, I want to teach my grandchildren how to surf and golf and I want to take them fishing. At 100, my daughter Bayley will be 72, Ellie will be 70, Jack will be 67, Benjamin will be 64 and my wife Carrie will be 100 as well. Now that sounds fun to me! Best of all, this means I have many, many years left to enjoy. Now this may seem like a lofty goal but I want to give myself every chance I can to live this long. To attempt this, I must exercise, eat right and have a clear mental picture of where I want to go and what I want to be. It will take discipline and good decisions, medical treatments and maybe a cane or a walker! But whatever it takes, I will do my best to make it to 100.

If you also think living to 100 sounds enticing, I recommend a book called *The Blue Zones*, by Dan Buettner, www.bluezones.com. In this book, Dan studies the four

places in the world where the greatest concentration of centenarians (people who live to be 100) live. He talks about their lifestyle, exercise habits, and diet. It is a fun read and extremely informative.

In the following section, I will discuss what I call **The Four Components of Health™**. These are comprised of what I believe to be the four most important topics that control your health and, in turn, affect your longevity. What I provide in this section is not medical advice, but more of a common sense approach to living a healthy lifestyle. There are books that are hundreds of pages long that will basically provide you with the same information. I have managed to put this into 11 pages, provide enough detail to get you started down the right path and keep it simple enough to understand.

The Four Components of Health™

- 1. Heredity**
- 2. How You Think and Act**
- 3. What You Eat**
- 4. How You Exercise**

1. Heredity

Your heredity is the one component of health that you cannot control. You are what you are and there is nothing you can do about this—you have to decide to work with and be grateful for what you were given at birth as it pertains to your body and the lineage that is passed to you by both your mother and father. Know your family's (health) history and background. Make sure you understand the pros and cons of your heredity. You must be aware of the health risks of your immediate and extended family and do what you can to guard against them.

2. How You Think and Act

This is very critical. At an early age you are conditioned to think a certain way about life, money, health, how you eat, what you eat and what relationships mean; however, as an adult you have complete control over your thoughts and ideas. Think about what you were taught as a child regarding diet, health and exercise. In hindsight, was it beneficial or harmful? Some of us were taught to eat fried food and to always clean our plate. Others were taught to eat fresh fruits and vegetables and to stop eating when we were full. In some families, smoking was shunned and forbidden; in others, everyone smoked and it was perfectly acceptable.

In the next two sections I will discuss what I call the **Extra Year Eliminators™** and the **Extra Year Extenders™**. Both of these concepts will play into how you currently think and act about life and your health. As you read these, think about some

of the risks currently present in your life and what you can do to turn these around. At the same time, think about some of the things you are doing right and how you can strive to do more of them.

Extra Year Eliminators™

“Extra years” are any years you are alive beyond the average life expectancy for a male (73) and a female (77). **Extra Year Eliminators™** are the things you are doing that may take years off of your life. Below is a list of the top risk factors:

Being Overweight

If you are 20, 30 or 40 pounds overweight, **you are taking years off of your life.** If you are 30 pounds overweight you are taking an average of seven years off of your life. Being overweight can cause an increased risk of heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, colon, gall bladder, prostate and kidney cancer, breathing problems, arthritis, immobility, gout and sleep apnea. Currently, statistics show that there are 60 million overweight people in America—that is 1 in 5 people. Simply dropping 10-20 pounds over the course of a year can add years to your life, relieve stress on joints, and provide you with more energy than you can imagine.

Smoking

If you smoke daily you are going to take an average of ten years off of your life. Smoking is one of the biggest risk factors to your health. It can cause cancer, emphysema, and shortness of breath. If you currently smoke, find a program that can assist you in stopping as soon as you can.

Sedentary Lifestyle

Those who have a sedentary lifestyle are more likely to be overweight. People with a sedentary lifestyle tend to suffer from a myriad of bad health conditions that usually include obesity, poor diet, and tobacco use.

No Goals, No Direction, No Plan

Someone who does not have health goals or a clear vision of where they are going is putting themselves at risk. If you do not know where you are going, you will get lost! If you have no plan for what to eat, how to exercise, or how to improve your health, you are at risk. Similarly, you must have goals, direction and a plan for what you want your weight, blood pressure, and cholesterol to be. You must have a clear mental picture of what good health means. I will cover goal setting in detail in Chapter

6 and I suggest you start with your health goals.

Stress

Stress affects us in many different ways. All stress is not bad, but too much stress of any kind can take years off of your life. Stress can come from many sources, such as finances, co-workers, family, traffic and information overload (the internet, email, cell phones). You must evaluate the source of your stress and determine if it is coming from things you can or cannot control. You need a **mental plan** to deal with the stress. For example, if your stress is caused by sitting in traffic during your commute, think about an alternative schedule or mode of transportation. If it is financial stress - not enough money - again you need a plan that would allow you to earn more income or spend less of what you earn or both. You also need a **physical plan** to handle stress. For me, it is working out. Exercise lowers my stress level and always makes me feel better. Find that key thing or combination of activities that allows you a complete escape from the stresses in your life. Working out or running, going to the movies, gardening, or reading are different ways many people combat stress.

Give yourself an honest evaluation based on the above information. Are you at risk from any of the factors above? What can you do to eliminate these risks?

Extra Year Extenders™

The Extra Year Extenders™ will enhance your current health and allow you to literally add extra years to your life. They are not hard--in some cases they are slight changes in your lifestyle. The benefit is a longer, healthier life and more years to enjoy whatever it is you love doing!

Exercise

Exercise is the most important factor in extending your life. Regular exercise, performed for 30-60 minutes, five days per week will assist in limiting your risk of obesity, osteoporosis, heart disease and many other possible ailments. Exercise stimulates your brain, heart, other vital organs and it elevates your endorphin levels, which gives you a sense of euphoria, also known as “runners high.”

Diet of Whole Natural Foods

Choosing a diet filled with whole natural foods is the second best thing you can do to extend your life. Whole natural foods consist of fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, grains, pasta, cereal and eggs. Whole natural foods are as close to their original state as possible--the fresher and more colorful the better. Choose lean cuts of beef and chicken

that are organic, free range and raised without growth hormones. We will discuss diet in more detail later in this chapter. If it is wrapped in cellophane **don't eat it!** Most of this food is highly processed and full of additives and preservatives.

Reduce Stress

Regular exercise will reduce stress. Another way to decrease stress is to control technology. Try putting all electronics on silent mode and disable the notification alerts for emails that dump into your computer, BlackBerry, or i-Phone. Check them at your convenience. Get organized and eliminate stacks of paper—make time each day (15-30 minutes) to do this. Give away the belongings you do not need or use on a regular basis and reduce clutter.

Developing Great Relationships

Positive and productive relationships enhance and lengthen your life. A loving spouse and good relationships with your family, friends, and colleagues will help you maintain purpose in life and bring laughter into it as well. Relationships give us a sense of belonging and purpose in life, especially as we grow older. Set up a date to have dinner with people you enjoy. Make time each week for those you adore.

3. What You Eat

For many of us, what and how we eat today is a direct reflection of how we were raised and what we were taught about food. If you were taught good habits, hold onto them and continue to find ways to improve your diet and choices of foods you consume. If you learned bad habits or incorrect information, you will need to re-educate yourself about the good and bad foods and how they affect your body. Let the following be your guide:

The Power Foods™

These are foods that you should eat on a regular basis. Try to choose whole natural foods and use this easy rule: think color. Red, yellow, dark green, blue, and purple--all of these colored foods are packed with the nutrients, vitamins and antioxidants your body needs.

- Salmon (one or two times per week)
- Blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, apples and citrus (daily)
- Green, yellow, orange and red peppers (daily)
- Flaxseed oil and olive oil (daily)
- Nuts—almonds and walnuts are the best (daily)
- Spinach, dark leaf lettuce, broccoli and wheat grass (daily)

- Sweet potatoes, brown rice, grains (daily)
- High fiber cereal--Kashi, Total and Raisin Bran are some of the best (daily)
- Black beans, kidney beans, garbanzo beans (daily)
- Soy milk or hemp milk (daily)
- Lean meats— chicken, lean beef, lean pork (limit to 5-6 times per week)
- Green tea (daily)
- 8-10 glasses of water (daily)

Buy the majority of your foods and groceries from the produce section, nothing from the frozen section, and nothing from the snacks and cookie aisle! Eat foods that are as close to their natural state as possible!

The Empty Foods™

These are foods that should be limited to one-two times per week or completely eliminated if possible. I like to enjoy some good ice cream, chips, or a doughnut every now and then, but I just don't make it a daily habit. Completely avoid anything with high fructose corn syrup or partially-hydrogenated oil. These two ingredients are typically found in highly processed foods that provide little nutritional value and are packed with calories and saturated fat. Just look at the ingredients on a can of Crisco--it has one ingredient and that is partially hydrogenated oil. It was created in a lab to improve the shelf life of food and it is awful for you.

Check labels when you are shopping and you will be amazed at how many products have these two ingredients. You should also avoid soda. Sodas are packed with sugar, and if they are diet sodas they are also packed with chemicals. If you are going to drink carbonated beverages, limit yourself to just three or four 12oz. servings per week. Also limit or avoid white sugar and white flour. Both are void of any true benefit to the body and cause unnecessary weight gain when consumed too often.

Avoid or limit the following:

- Soda
- White bread
- Fast food
- Butter substitutes and spreads
- Frozen foods (that include ingredients and chemicals that you cannot pronounce)
- Pastries, cookies, bagels, crackers
- Candy
- Anything wrapped in cellophane (I included this twice in this chapter on purpose)
- Processed cheese (jarred or soft blocks)

- Anything with partially hydrogenated oils (also known as trans-fats), high fructose corn syrup, powdered eggs, powdered milk, and store-bought cookies and cakes wrapped in cellophane

When shopping always look at food labels. Look for items with natural ingredients that you can pronounce. Always remember, the fewer the number of ingredients the better. Our access to unhealthy food is overwhelming, with convenience stores, gas stations and fast food restaurants located on nearly every street corner. They serve cheap, unhealthy food that can cause health risks to millions of people world-wide. Do not make stops at these types of establishment's part of your routine.

Natural Health Remedies and Enhancers

I am not a big fan of prescription drugs or medications. They have their place in our society, but I stay away from them unless it involves a serious situation. I have discovered some natural remedies and supplements that provide health benefits naturally and work with the body's natural flow.

- **Powdered greens**

I recommend Catie's Greens© or Pure Energy Greens with MSM© from Anthony Robbins. These are easy to drink and provide the following benefits: emulsification of bad cholesterol and fat, increased energy & stamina, bolsters the immune system, removes heavy metals, increases circulation, and balances pH levels.

- **Braggs Raw Unfiltered Apple Cider Vinegar**

Mix two teaspoons with 4-6 ounces of water and drink one-two times per day. Improves digestion, balances pH levels, prevents heartburn and lowers cholesterol levels.

- **Cholestene - red yeast rice**

Red yeast rice has become the most popular and, for many, the most effective over-the-counter option for cholesterol control. Red yeast rice is the active ingredient in Cholestene©. This product produces healthy cholesterol levels.

- **Res-Q 1250 fish oil supplement**

Res-Q 1250 provides an essential balance of the specific omega-3s, EPA and DHA, which optimize cardiovascular health, encourage the reduction of inflammation within the body, reduce the amount of triglycerides in your blood and help blood fats (lipids) stay suspended in the blood instead of sticking to the inside of the arteries.

- **Hemp milk** – One eight-ounce glass contains 800 mg Omega-3 with SDA, 2600 mg of Omega-6 with GLA, all 10 essential amino acids, 4 grams digestible protein, vitamins A, B12, D, E, riboflavin & folic acid, magnesium, potassium, phosphorus, iron & zinc, and provides 40% daily value of calcium.

Using the products listed above, along with a balanced diet and regular exercise, I was able to reduce my cholesterol from a high of 277 down to 217. I do not currently use a cholesterol-lowering drug and probably never will. All of these products have tremendous health benefits, typically have no side effects, and are 100% natural. Links for all of these products can be found on the resource page of our web site www.thepracticalguidetoexceptionalliving.com/resources.

Be Mindful of How Much You Eat

As Americans, the amount of food we are served and consume on a daily basis is absurd. The average American should consume about 2000 calories per day. (If you work out regularly, this could be as high as 3000 calories per day). The problem we run into is two-fold:

- The portions we are served in restaurants and at home are huge and often enough for two or three people.
- We have been taught to finish what is on our plate.

Considering these factors, it is no wonder we have an obesity epidemic in America. You must do your best to fight against these elements. Here are some helpful tips:

- When eating out, go to French, café style restaurants or tapas bars that serve smaller portions
- Order the smallest size of whatever you can
- When eating fast food order a child's meal
- **Never super size anything!**
- At restaurants, eat half of your meal and save the leftovers for another meal or give the food to someone in need
- Never let yourself get famished--always have a healthy snack available
- Eat slowly and completely chew your food completely before taking another bite
- Practice leaving a little food on your plate after each meal (my mother-in-law lives by this!)
- Drink two big glasses of water first thing in the morning
- Eat breakfast every day
- Eat six small meals per day
- A maximum serving size of a carbohydrate, vegetable, or protein is the size of a clenched fist

4. How You Exercise

I have mentioned several times in this book that exercise is the most important factor in improving and maintaining your overall health. What most people get confused about is the difference between exercise time and exercise intensity. You can exercise for two hours at a very slow, walking pace and not get the benefits you could achieve from 30 minutes of heart-pounding, vigorous exercise. It is all about the burn rate. How many calories are you going to burn while you exercise, and how many calories will you continue to burn when you stop? I mix up the types of workouts I do almost daily to avoid repetitive motions. My goal is to burn as many calories as I can in as little time as possible. Here are my suggestions for an effective exercise program: **(Consult your doctor and a professional trainer before starting any exercise regimen, especially if you have not exercised for a long time.)**

- 30-60 minutes per day of vigorous exercise at least five days per week
- Variety in any exercise program is essential--include biking, running, elliptical training, weightlifting, yoga, swimming and stretching
- Get your heart rate up to the 65-85% range and keep it there for the duration of your exercise (Invest in an inexpensive heart rate monitor)
- Burn 500-1000 calories per hour
- Cross-train with 30 minutes of weight training combined with 30 minutes of cardio
- Do ab exercises and use exercise balls
- Stretching prevents soreness and injury--flexibility decreases as we age, so make sure to stretch at least 10-15 minutes per day before and after exercising

There are thousands of books, tapes and seminars about how to exercise, how to get six-pack abs, how to firm your butt and how to tone your hips, arms and thighs. At the end of the day, it all comes down to you. **How hard, how long, and how often are you willing to work out?** If you go to the gym and walk for 45 minutes, at least you are doing something. But, if you go to the gym and lift hard for 20 minutes and then run hard for 20 minutes, the benefits to your body and the calories you burn will be so much greater. One of the best books on this subject is *Body for Life* by Bill Phillips. Bill explains why it is not so much how long you work out, but the intensity at which you work out that really counts.

Constant Movement Exercise™

I have developed a concept that I call **Constant Movement Exercise™**. The key is you never allow your body to stop moving from the time you start your work out until it ends. There is no pausing in between sets, not even taking a break to walk to the water fountain. You constantly move from one exercise to the next, keeping up the intensity every step of the way. **CME™** incorporates weight training, core exercises,

circuit training, stationary bike, elliptical training and floor exercises into a 60-minute workout that never stops.

The main point of this chapter is the importance of your health as it pertains to producing an exceptional life. With great health, all of your other dreams become more possible and your chances of seeing them to fruition and being here to enjoy them are greatly increased. Take time to think about your current health and what you may need to do to improve your lifestyle. To your longevity!

Chapter Two Summary Your Health and Longevity

Key Points to Remember

- You must have a goal for how long you want to live and describe why you want to live this long
- You must have goals for your diet, exercise program, weight, cholesterol and blood pressure
- Drink eight-ten glasses of water daily
- Sleep six-eight hours per night
- Stop any behavior that falls under Extra Year Eliminators™ such as being overweight, smoking and having a sedentary or stressful lifestyle
- Study and engage in activities that are included in the Extra Year Extenders™ such as regular exercise, diet of whole natural foods, reduction of stress and cultivating strong relationships
- Understand the history of your family's health risks (heredity)
- Be careful about how you think or have been taught to think about your health, diet and exercise
- Study the Power Foods™ and their importance in your everyday diet
- Study the Empty Foods™ and eliminate or limit them in your daily diet
- Eat six small meals per day and never supersize anything!
- Exercise 30-60 minutes at least five days per week
- Variety is the key to a successful exercise program--use cardio, weight training, yoga, swimming, biking and running
- Try to use natural supplements in place of prescription drugs whenever possible
- Go to www.thepracticalguidetoexceptionalliving.com for support and guidance

Please answer the following questions. Challenging yourself to answer the “why” after each question will give you the justification to continue that behavior...or choose to change.

- How long do you want to live? Why?
- How will you live this long? Why?
- Do you eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly? Why or why not?
- What changes in your lifestyle do you need to make? Why?
- What Extra Year Eliminators™ do you need to stop or control? Why?
- What Extra Year Extenders™ do you need to start or continue? Why?
- How can you reduce your stress? Why?
- What were you taught about health as a child?
- Was your family’s lifestyle healthy or unhealthy? How?
- Do you have a family history of heart disease, cancer, obesity, and alcohol or drug abuse?
- What have you done as an adult to improve your health?
- Do you believe you can attain the weight you want?
- What is your health plan?
- What Power Foods™ do you currently eat on a regular basis? Why?
- What Empty Foods™ do you currently eat on a regular basis? Why?
- What is your ideal weight? Why?
- What are your health goals for the next 30-60-90-180 days? Why?

The Practical Guide to Exceptional Living

Special Offer!

Thank you for reading Chapters 1 and 2 of “**The Practical Guide to Exceptional Living**”, I hope you enjoyed it and learned something exceptional that you can add to your life right now. Here is a special offer that I have created just for you. Purchase a copy of “**The Practical Guide to Exceptional Living**” for \$19.95 today and you will receive:

- The **E-book** version of the entire book, identical to the published version. This electronic version can be downloaded today.
- A **published copy** of “**The Practical Guide to Exceptional Living**” will be shipped directly to you when it is released this holiday season.
- And a copy of the **audio book** will be sent to you by December 15th, 2009

Click here www.thepracticalguidetoexceptionalliving.com/products to get your copy today – a \$70 value for \$19.95.

Not only are you taking steps to improve your life and health, you are doing it for others as well! We will donate \$2.00 from every purchase of this special offer to benefit The Mark Victor Hansen Foundation and the Text for Success education program. Our goal is to raise \$10,000 by February 15th, 2010. www.markvictorhansenfoundation.org



Thank you!

Jim Garland