

*Life is a Grand*

*Adventure*



*Live the Impossible Dream!*

*Nick Good*

*Forward*

*Your pain is the breaking of the shell which encloses your understanding.*

*—Khalil Gibran, The Prophet*

I once kept a Chipmunk as a pet. I had him in a cage in my room. He would spend every second of his waking hours passionately and feverishly trying to find a way out of that cage. I had fashioned a small leather jacket for him, from which I could tie a leash, imagining that I could somehow tame him and take him for walks outside. Every time we would venture out he would simply fling himself in every direction in his ceaseless desire to escape. Eventually I set him free.

We all have something inside of us that yearns unceasingly for its freedom. I am in touch with it. It is my spirit and it is the spirit of life. The world today is calling each of us to heed the cry of our inner yearnings and to open the cages of our closed hearts and minds. It is time for us all to break free from the chains of misconception and dissolve the shackles and fetters of our false and ignorant judgments and denial of the true greatness of ourselves. Life is a wonderful and amazing journey. If you are not experiencing it as such, then it is time for you live it that way.

We all face challenges in life. Challenges are a natural and necessary part of growing. There is no genuine, authentic evolution of consciousness without challenge. The challenges we all face today in the modern world are fast assuming the appearance of overwhelming and impossible-to-meet proportions.

There are many tales, stories and legends of heroes who surmounted impossible odds and accomplished extraordinary feats and deeds of valor. Some of them are history, some of them are myth, all of them are true. The reason why they are true is because they are communicating the most vital message that you should well understand.

The immense difficulties and trials humanity is facing today and the shocking revelations of the powers of darkness active in the world are throwing down the gauntlet in front of us all. The big question is, will you pick it up?

Rather than waste time in our petty judgments and political debates, we should see the immense opportunity which is presenting itself here, for in order for us to demonstrate our true greatness we need an impossible puzzle to solve. In order for us to shine with our true brightness, we need an equivalent amount of darkness in which to blaze. In order for us to demonstrate our true strength, we need an impossible foe to wrestle, and in order to express the power of Love that we are, we need an unforgivable wound to forgive.

Life is not a little game—it is a big one. Life is not a cheap, soap opera sit-com—it is a soul shuddering, epic event. You are being called to face your personal challenges and we are being called to face our collective challenges together for the raising of the consciousness of the world. In the same spirit that David met Goliath, Jesus met the cross, Skywalker met Vader, and Avatar defeated the machine, we must, like Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, wipe the tears of ignorance from our eyes and see the world for what it truly is. Like reluctant Hobbits facing the hordes of Mordor, we are looking for the savior in someone else; but all these challenges, unbeknown to so many, are initiations of consciousness, for the benefit of soul.

The great challenge of the times, instead of being dragged kicking and screaming towards our fate, is to turn willingly within to summon the courage and power we need to face the extraordinary initiations before us all. In order to accomplish this successfully, we need, as individuals, to be motivated and inspired so we can take the appropriate action to change our own lives.

Perhaps the most inspiring tales of accomplishment are true stories of individuals who, against all odds, have achieved a seemingly impossible dream. As I look back upon the journey of my humble life I see many milestones of “impossible” goals attained. If indeed, as quantum science and the purest spiritual perspectives would have us believe, there is only One of us here, then the story of one is the story of all. I offer this tale in

the hope that it inspires you to accomplish what may today, for you, appear an impossible dream.

*Love and Blessings,*

*Nick Good*

*Kauai, 2011*



**Part One**  
**The Initiation Begins**

*Even as the stone of the fruit must break that its heart may stand  
in the sun, so must you know pain.*

*—Khalil Gibran*

I was born on a small farm in the Shire of Lincoln in the heart of England. The farm was nestled in the elbow of two adjoining rivers and provided an idyllic surrounding for the genesis of the individual I am today. Robin Hood and his merry men had walked the fields of that land before me, and I, like their ilk, was born with an innate soul purpose to defy the iron fist of unnatural authority that sought to own not only the land, but the very spirit that moved me.

My mother was a heartbroken woman grieving for the loss of her first-born son. I soaked in the waters of her saddened womb and imbibed the chemicals from the cigarettes she washed down with whiskey every day. Before I left the womb I was addicted to alcohol and cigarettes. By eight years old I was smoking, and then drinking by the age of ten. The emotional and biochemical cocktail in which I gestated provided the first significant challenge of my life. Anyone who understands the mysteries of health appreciates how the atmosphere and environment of the womb defines the strength and vitality of one's immune system for the rest of one's life. On top of this, being born and emerging into a strange, cold world, I, like many children of the day, was denied the comfort and nourishment of the milk-rich breast. The British government at the time was deftly engaged in a campaign of disinformation and propaganda which brainwashed swollen mothers into believing that the milk in their breasts was somehow inferior to the dried cow's milk powder they were now being sold. The shocking obviousness of this lie is a reflection of the way we, like cattle and sheep, are even today impotently following the herd-masters' dictate.

Strangely enough, the farmhouse in which I grew was haunted. A young monk would ghost through the walls, very often sitting in sad contemplation in front of us all. My father and his sisters, their parents and friends, and especially my brother were all familiar with the sight of this sad little chap. Father and grandfather were both veterans of war. My dad had been to the second world war and my grandfather had been to the first. Both were wounded, deeply psychologically scarred and mutilated in their souls by the shock and horror of it all. Violence and anger whirled around shattered psyches in the toxic emotional climate of my home. This provided a unique situation. Because of the presence of the ghost, the veil between worlds was thin and what was attracted into the house through the astral portal were entities equivalent to the prevailing emotional and psychological climate. Because the men who dominated the atmosphere, in their schizophrenia, toxicity, emotional trauma and angst, were driven by demons themselves, they attracted into that space apparitions and beings I hope you never witness yourself.

For myself, a young child, this was a terrifying ordeal. It formed the basis for an understanding and appreciation of life, the nature and substance of creation, and the relationship between invisible and visible worlds that I, as a boy, had no ability to comprehend. Many a night I would awaken to the presence of some horrific apparition in my room, sometimes sitting on my chest, sometimes on my bed, sometimes just watching in the darkness. Thus began the second great challenge of my life: to deal with a shattered and terrified mind. This particular initiation through fear, then confrontation and conflict, and eventually to peace, took a good thirty-five years.

Unbeknown to me at the time, this unique foundation was a perfect holistic challenge. Its physical, mental, emotional and spiritual complexity penetrated to the depths of my soul. Being challenged so young with supernatural ordeals which were a cruel testimony to the wondrous nature of life provided a template for psychological maturity and depth of understanding that took decades to integrate. For many years it was a dreadful burden to bear and provided the fuel for the victim consciousness which haunted me for decades, it was, as so many of our challenges are, a great blessing in disguise due to the depth and power of the mix.

*And could you but keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life, your pain would seem no less wondrous than your joy.*

—Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*

This England was a tough, hard place, and education was very often delivered by the fist. The British Empire, although in decline, was still close to its inglorious peak and its method of brutal intrusion into sovereign and indigenous lands penetrated to the heart of the family unit. Our parents, our friends, our family, our teachers and all individuals of authority were unconscious administrators of its violent way. The shattering of the psyche and the wounding of the emotional body continued through the institution and structure of our culture. Sensitivity was a curse, open mindedness a blight. Treated with derision and disdain, I wandered and wondered in the fields and by the rivers alone. Struggling to integrate feelings I did not understand, deafened by words that were never said, my best friends were trees and dogs, my favorite music the morning birds and sound of burning logs.

I was kicked and punched every day through my early school years. Even the local girls were dangerous; I remember being chased around the village by one in particular who delighted in wrapping the toilet chain she always carried around my scrawny neck. I was in and out of the hospital with one ailment after another and did not see an adult man and woman demonstrating any affection towards each other, except on TV, till I was twenty-two years old. My headmaster from seven to eleven years old was a big-fisted man, who wore a Hitler style mustache and loved to drive his fist into and under the fledgling ribs of my child's back, affirming with dripping venom that I was no good and never would be.

All of this brings to mind the image of a tiny flower growing in the cracks of a concrete path. Even though trampled and worn, starved of water and light, and sometimes the color of petals disappears, nothing and no one can stop the power seeking to express through that flower. There is something altogether unstoppable in the blazing magnificence of the human spirit. If you prune a tree it only grows more vigorously. If you chop back the bush it only comes back thicker. And if you batter a child, who is in

touch with that same wild thing, he will, one day, ascend to a far brighter sphere on account of that treatment. Life knows this and you should too.

Throughout all of this brutality and toxic expression of well-meaning, shell-shocked maniacs, there were so many victims who fell by the way. So many youngsters, even today, are the specific target of an aggressive, invasive, well-engineered system that is perfectly designed to disable, confuse, castrate and permanently wound the very seeds of Life itself. Like the god Cronos who ate his own children, the modern world in which I grew was doing the same. Although this is my story of yesterday, all of it is still happening today.

The gift in all of this madness is that in order to rise above it, to transcend its shuddering toxic effect, qualities of being must be found—virtues of invincibility. Like sleeping seeds in the soil of your inner nature, they await being watered by your own unshakable faith, faith in Life itself, faith in that pure and natural thing that you eternally are. All of this pain is to drive us deeper into that soil, into the very roots of ourselves to that splendid secret place where all of your riches lie.

*And you would accept the seasons of your heart, even as you  
have always accepted the seasons which pass over your fields.  
And you would watch with serenity through the winters of your  
grief.*

—Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*

The lonely days I spent wandering the flat fields of Lincolnshire, climbing trees and watching the river flow gently by, created a connection with something real that no amount of violence, psychological or otherwise, could sever. That subtle, invisible, nameless thing which laps gently against the shores of our souls was finding a way in to mine. The succor it provided was the perfect contrast to the hard edges of the toxic, unnatural world which I was trying to make sense of through an already shattered and terrified mind.

There were precious few moments for dreamtime and even fewer for fairy tale romance. A harsh and sobering realism was ever present in my early days. My father's



drawer in the big kitchen was full of broken tobacco pipes and spare sets of false teeth. In it he also kept his medals and mementos of war. A collection of black and white photographs was also always there. Most of them were of bloody, twisted bodies of his dead friends. They were part of the British tank regiment which spearheaded the push into Palestine, driving a bloody wedge between the Arab peoples and establishing the state of Israel shortly after the second world war. Most of the “Death or Glory Boys” had found the former and their inglorious fate was permanently burned into the celluloid. The photos gave me a very early glimpse into other harsh realities—a stark contrast to the peaceful beauty of nature surrounding me—and a clue to understanding part of the reason why things were the way they were in our home.



### **Deepening the Wound**

The mythological journey of the Hero is the journey of soul. It is the adventure of self-discovery which calls in different ways to us all. In this journey there are certain milestones, rites of passage and initiatory junctures which cannot be avoided. One of these significant stages is the receiving of a wound. We have all been wounded and there is a very deep soul wound in the world. The purpose of our life experience is to heal it.

The karma of the soul is being played out in the world and the physical body. Everything which occurs on the surface of life is for a far deeper reason. Ancient and indigenous cultures understood and still understand instinctively the part pain plays in the evolution of consciousness and purification of the soul. Wounding was and is integrated into their ritual and ceremony, and is purposefully associated with their Source of spiritual empowerment through these ancient rites of passage. Our society and culture has no such structure in which to use pain intelligently to re-shape the psyche of the youth in an appropriate container guided by the mentorship of elders. Life, therefore, must administer wounding in seemingly random events of misfortune or fate.

When I was around nine years old, maybe even younger, a gang of local roughs and scruffs had assembled at the farm. It was summertime and the shed was full of hay

bales. We climbed to the top of the haystack and a bountiful amount of corn lay in piles which resembled sand dunes about twenty feet below us. There was a large thick rope suspended from the steel framed roof hanging down about ten feet away from the edge of the bales. Our fun that day was running full sprint and diving off the stack, grabbing the rope, swinging around the shed like Tarzan on a vine, and dropping into the dunes of wheat below. When it was my turn, on my second revolution above the corn, I smashed into a large steel girder and dropped twenty feet, sliding down the wall of the shed and landing on the back of my left thigh, on the very sharp edge of a brick wall. I then fell the remaining eight feet onto the very hard concrete below.

The leg wound appears regularly in myth and legend. Jacob's leg was wounded by the angel in the morning after they had wrestled all night. These kinds of wounds are soul wounds. They open up channels in the psyche which otherwise remain closed. It was, perhaps, the severest pain I have ever endured, magnified no doubt by my tender age. What it also did was permit me a flash of a terrible near-death experience from a former incarnation. It was a bewildering moment that wounded me deeply. Later that year I broke both my legs and my right arm.

Life is always communicating, teaching and showing the way, if only our eyes are open to the true brightness behind the daylight. I remember my favorite pony that as a boy I was often chosen to ride. "Trigger" was his name, and he was pure black with four white socks and a brilliant white blaze. Trigger was a rig, which means that when they castrated him they did not get both of his stones. Rigs are inherently wild, unpredictable and mad. I loved riding Trigger because without any warning he was prone to rearing up on his back legs and just galloping off and away. He had the most sophisticated equipment for keeping control of a horse—a double curb chain bit, double reins and martingale tied tight—but it was useless on Trigger. When he was off there was no stopping him and secretly I really didn't care. Imagine the scene at the local gymkhanas where we would all gather to compete. Everything and everyone was in good, old-fashioned English order and there is but one horse and rider galloping here and there, rearing and charging around, a shining spark of chaos in an organized and structured hierarchy. The secret joy I felt as I struggled to hold Trigger's head fed a

part of my aliveness that the system would have much preferred dead. I loved that horse and his spirit and for years I have mirrored his madness and unpredictable surging rush for a freedom that I knew not where to find. I give thanks for the lessons he taught me.

Animals have always played a significant part in my life. They are wonderful messengers and carriers of the frequency of innocent being. As a boy, dogs were always my best friends. Hunting was a big part of farming life and the dogs were there to assist the hunt. If a dog got too far ahead of the hunters and flushed out the birds out of range of the guns, then my dad, screaming and cursing, would fire a warning shot across his back and call him to come. If the dog still kept running ahead my dad would shoot him dead in the field. I lost a lot of my best friends that way. One day my brother and I were digging a grave for one of those friends. It was a bitterly cold morning and the spades and iron bar barely made a dent on the deeply frosted ground. Struggling to hold back the tears, we made a pact I shall never forget. During the emotion, a car rolled in to the farmyard. A woman emerged, took out a wheelchair, and proceeded to help her husband into it. They disappeared into our house. My brother turned to me and asked me to promise him that if ever he could not do for himself and ended up in a wheelchair, disabled or whatever the case, that I would shoot him. I agreed and made him promise the same. He was sixteen, I was eighteen. Seventeen years later it was a promise I was destined to fulfill.

At the age of eleven, life changed in a big way for me—for the first time, I experienced life away from the nest. I was enrolled in a boarding school about twenty-five miles away from the farm. It was a traditional school based on corporal punishment and something called fagging, where the younger boys were obliged to serve the older ones. Designed to instill a servant/master mentality, it was a more sophisticated version of the caste system from which I had come, the preferred tool of motivation shifting from fist to stick. I had the school record for canings, mostly for smoking and running away. Virtually every Saturday I and some of my friends would just head for the hills, running we knew not where and did not particularly care, just following that innate and primordial urge to escape from the cage of our oppressor. It was during this time,

perhaps as puberty kicked in, that the experiences of my youth began to integrate and a more intelligent rebel was born.

Thankfully the cushion of laughter provided a release valve for our stressed-out psyches. Along with the birth of punk rock came Monty Python and the apparently official approval by the British Broadcasting Corporation to express our insanity, frustration and eccentricity with gay abandon. This, to us, was a very welcome and unexpected release and we took full advantage of it—so much so that for the seven years my secondary education endured, we did little more than laugh and rebel while feigning interest in the system's tripe.

Being such a scrawny runt of a kid, my immune system, which had soaked in that sad and blessed, toxic womb, had inherited a certain toughness that I now was being called to express. The windswept rugby fields provided the arena for the beginning of an athletic career and the first genuine footsteps upon the path to achieving impossible dreams. To be a capable and competent rugby player, one needs skills, toughness and speed, and perhaps above all an ability to master fear and keep a cool head in the heat of the battle. Of course I possessed none of these abilities but I did have the spirit of that trampled flower, destined one day to shine. Like most boys, my main motivation to succeed was to receive the approval of my father, to hear the words that mean so much. To a beaten dog the tender touch which comes from the hand that both owns and wounds him means more—so very much more—than any amount of tenderness from a stranger's hand. For years and years I just wanted him to watch me play. Sometimes he did, but he could not hide his contempt at the pathetic performance of his wimpy son diving out of the way of collisions and tackles, instead of into them, overwhelmed once again by fear. The runt, however, persevered.

They were wonderful days, and absolutely unique. Gone now, perhaps forever, the fabulous spirit which pervaded the amateur game of rugby. Our school fields were close enough to the senior men's clubhouse and very often, after we played for the school in the morning on Saturday, the captain of the local fourth team, short on players, would come looking for us at lunch and invite us to play. Can you imagine us? Stuffing down our beans and chips, fetching our still wet, dirty kit, fourteen or fifteen

years old, following Basil, the 230 pound gentle giant, up to the ground to play against fully grown men. It was like sending kids out against gladiators in the Coliseum—such a challenge!—and thus the warrior seed was watered.

Apart from reinforcing a distaste and distrust for anything being forced upon me by the system, school also succeeded in presenting spirituality and religion in a sufficiently repulsive light that I could not actually even bring myself to say the word “God” until I was almost thirty years old. That particular combination of violence and indoctrination is the perfect catalyst to drive any spirited child a long way away from the pulpit and the Bible. Church was obligatory and misbehavior within the cold stone walls, was a capital offense. This was an almost impossible challenge to overcome. After receiving communion in front of the altar one was obliged to return to one’s seat in the congregation. Imagine the self control being called forth as on that short but oh, so significant journey you were faced by the faces of all your best friends, twisted and contorted in ways designed to trigger the laughter and hilarity which was the safety valve for all of our madness. This impossible challenge was dramatically compounded because sitting behind our friends, with boiling, threatening countenance, was the teaching staff, the wielders of the big sticks. Sometimes we could manage it, sometimes we could not. If smiling in church was a sin, then laughter was the devil himself. I don’t ever remember reading it in the Book, but the rod was never spared in exorcising the beast from our fledgling souls if we cracked up on the pilgrimage back to our seats.

Like I said before, exposing us to punk rock and Monty Python was a subconscious green light from the system to go crazy, and we took it to the extreme. This extraordinary permission to loudly express our eccentricity was the absolute antithesis of post Victorian England conservatism. The healing effect of the gut-splitting laughter we shared so often had more value and healing power than the beatings we received to balance the karma. No amount of brutality could suppress the unstoppable outpouring of spirit through cathartic laughter. This was shamanic experience in its purest form. There we were, this merry band of hobbits rebelling against the very processes which would have turned us into orcs—or worse still, like it did to some of the lads, mere

specters, wandering grey and shell-shocked in a psychological graveyard, bleeding sad tears and soul wounds for the rest of our lives.

They say all life is a metaphor for deeper, invisible causal forces at work. Perhaps, then, even the most base demonstrations of childlike behavior, when interpreted accurately, represent powerful, significant shifts in gigantic invisible realms.

I was in my final year at school and re-taking the exams I had failed miserably the year before. My imagination had been primed by a new teacher and his class of contemporary English literature. Bill Byford and our study of twentieth century contemporary great authors—not so much their work, but the lives of these legendary scribes—had ignited the passion in me to write. Not just to write, but to produce great literature. I realized at this tender age, in the midst of a teenage metamorphosis, that the reason why they were all great writers is that they lived great and adventurous lives. Thus began my commitment to live life as a grand adventure.

The very system that had sought in vain to imprison my spirit had inadvertently set it ablaze. My consciousness, like some perfect wild creature, suddenly saw its way out the cage. This marvelous and significant turning of the tables on the institution was, rudely, played out in a church.

It was Christmas time and in a gesture of yuletide unity, the local clergy decided to join forces and share a service together in the shining stadium of the local Catholic church. We were all invited and the usual threats pertaining to misbehavior were communicated with appropriate menace suiting the grand proportion of the occasion. The whole town would be there and we, the school boarding house, were carrying the reputation of the school into the meet. We were all suitably sober and morose, nodding compliance to the master's decree, who laid out clearly the consequences of any nonsense stopping barely short of death itself.

It was a change from the usual routine and we were in high spirits as we were frog-marched in crocodile file down the mile into town. The high spirits turned quickly into incredulous rapture as we were ushered into the highest seats in the house, rather resembling the royal box at the opera, complete with gold leaf architecture and

cherubs all around us. The biggest bonus of all was that for the first time in our religious history we, from our happy vantage point, were also sitting well away, above and behind, all traces of authority. This was all too much fuel to contain. Placing sixteen young madmen together like this and expecting them to behave themselves, at a religious service in their final year of school, especially after struggling to suppress and contain the natural eruptions of euphoria for so very long, was asking for a little too much. The madhouse carryings-on continued unabated throughout the service, culminating in one of our gang, obviously inspired by Ayurvedic medical advice pertaining to the serious detriment to health if one suppresses any release of natural gas, chose the perfect moment of silence to shift the residue of his baked beans from an internal to external location. The sound of this trigger, not unlike a Chinese firecracker, was the final catalyst for an emotional release of such power that all sixteen of us promptly disappeared from public view beneath our pews and became instantly incontinent. Thus, my formal education was complete.

## **Part Two**

### **The Wild Man is Out the Cage**

Getting out of school was a great relief. The traditional template for the oldest son of a Lincolnshire farmer was to follow the father's path onto the farm, so it was a natural movement for me at seventeen to find myself behind the steering wheel of a tractor cultivating the land. One day at the local village pub, I was introduced to the landlord's sons who were both playing rugby for a works team in town. I began training that week and the innocent madness I had hitherto been expressing with my school chums was now shared with grown men and amplified by huge amounts of ale. I took the training seriously and my skinny body began to toughen. We trained on weights between rugby practice nights and also ran about five miles once or twice a week. We traveled around to away games within a forty-mile radius of our home base and often resembled the bus of inmates from *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*. They were wild and carefree days, full of drunken hilarity as our rudimentary rugby skills began to improve.

Work on the farm and life at home was still a challenge and I began to wonder what was beyond the shire. The answer to my yearnings came one day in a pub in town when I was eighteen. After a particularly violent confrontation with my Dad, I left home in the middle of the night and was staying with my rugby-playing chums. We were talking about travel and adventure and I mentioned that I had an uncle who lived in Durban, South Africa. I was immediately dispatched to purchase a map so we could plan a travel route. I returned to the pub with map in hand and we eagerly spread it out on the floor. My goodness! Africa is so big and Europe so small. It looked like a mere hop and a skip to Egypt—we could probably drive it in a couple of days! In our enthusiasm we failed to notice that the map I had bought was a map of Africa which also included a small map of the world as reference. Africa was shown large and the rest of the world was shown small, giving the appearance that we had a very short distance to travel. These were all minor details to Vikings like us, and the next step was



to find suitable transportation for the grand adventure. That night we visited the local gypsy haunt where, after 11 pm and suitably lubricated, just about any man in there would sell you his van. We found the right fellow and did the deal in the car park for fifty quid. We left our newfound friend alone in the dark, surrounded by a pile of his belongings which he had simply thrown out of the van onto the ground before giving us the keys.

Off we went. I was eighteen years old and this was the beginning of my international traveling adventures and my first experience of genuine hunger. After driving south through France and a month's work picking grapes in the breathtaking beauty of Les Pyrénées, we headed east for Italy. Before we even crossed France it was obvious that our financial resources were dwindling rapidly. We spent the next six weeks traversing Italy and Greece, living on bread and jam and catching chickens wherever we could find them before eventually conking out in -26°F weather in Yugoslavia. This was the end of my first attempt to make it to South Africa. Eventually I did arrive, not as a starving waif but, seven years later, as an accomplished rugby player playing my part in another very successful team.

## **The Rugby Years**

I think that above all else, rugby taught me the power of a group and of the voice. While still at home, I found myself playing for a works team in Lincoln after school. At first, with the exception of a few key individuals, we were a pretty untalented lot, odd shapes and sizes, ignorant and uncouth. What we did have, however, was team spirit. We loved to drink beer and sing. We loved the game, we loved the team, we loved each other, and we loved to sing rugby songs while swagging down impossible quantities of ale. Rugby in England at that time in England was considered a “gentleman’s game.” It was born and nurtured in the exclusive schools of southern England where the offspring of landed and titled gentry were being groomed to lead the country. As all games do, it had spread in popularity and geographically away from the blue blood clubs of the south to every corner of the British Isles, attracting working-class types from every strata of society. This was a mini revolution in its own right as the

conservative well-to-do were often locking horns with a variety of ne'er do wells on a Saturday afternoon. Rugby, like many sports, is a great leveler. Class and education are irrelevant credentials on the rugby field where ability and performance speak loudest of all. Here we see the warrior archetype in a rudimentary form where men can appreciate each other for their skills and powers and abilities, rather than judge each other from false positions of class that the system has programmed us to strongly believe in. Unbeknown to me at the time, this sense of honor between combatants would one day save my life.

I suppose those formative years of young manhood were my first primitive introduction to personal empowerment strategies. They clearly defined a template for victory against all odds. Group cohesion in dynamic creative movement, and the power of harmony in soulful song, are incredibly powerful resources. They are perhaps the most effective means of galvanizing the latent potential that exists within us all to throw off the shackles that corporate, political, pseudo-religious and spiritual slave masters have long imposed in their efforts to divide, conquer and enslave the human spirit. Team spirit and harmonious singing allowed me and my teammates to transcend the limitations of our skills to achieve levels of performance far beyond our regular abilities.

In our second season together we were ambitious and confident, and we entered a local competition known as the second team cup. All of the senior clubs in the county of Lincolnshire had four or five teams playing each week. We had one. Our regular fixtures were always against the fifth or fourth teams of these senior clubs. Sometimes we won, sometimes we lost, but we always had a loud and hilarious night full of song and laughter. For the cup, all the names of the teams went into a hat and a draw was made. It was a straight knockout contest—if you lost, it was over. Our draw was to play in weekly succession against the top three teams in the county.

We got off to a roaring start, winning our first game and playing out of our skins. The harmony that had galvanized our spirits through our song and laughter had now transposed into flowing team rugby. We scored magnificent tries, sometimes with all fifteen players touching the ball. The second game was miraculous. Scunthorpe was the

hardest, toughest and best team in the county. Aggressive and able, they stood head and shoulders above the competition and were the out-and-out favorites to take the cup.

We played them at home in the evening on a Wednesday. Miraculously, one of their cars got lost en route and ended up arriving twenty minutes late. Because darkness was falling there could be no delay in kickoff time, so we began the game significantly outnumbering them and we raked up a good lead. When their full complement took the field they were still a little disoriented and we scored again before half time. After the break we had to endure the full wrath of “Scunny,” as they tried to intimidate us off the field. But it didn’t work. We hung on, playing as one, flying into rucks and mauls, tackles and kicks with such spirit that in that one half, as a team, we truly came of age. It was a nail-biting, nerve-wracking finish, but the whistle finally blew and “The Bees,” as we were known, had beaten the best club in the county.

Our next hurdle was the senior team in our town, the local champions. Lincoln Rugby Club had a reputation for arrogance and exuded a superiority complex which they did not fully deserve at the time. Fortified by our victorious coming of age, we ripped into them with controlled aggression, shocking our opponents across the whole field. We continued to play our open, expansive, full team game and our camaraderie and spirit simply overwhelmed them. We ran out fairly comfortable victors in the end.

As we had already beaten the best teams, the final was a bit of an anti-climax, but it was a hotly contested affair which we deservedly won in the end.

At the time I was also attending the local agricultural college and was the captain of the rugby team. Sometimes I would play three full contact games a week. That is equivalent to being in three car wrecks in a seven-day span. We would train on the nights we were not playing, and continued our beer drinking exploits with unabated enthusiasm. On top of this, I was very often handling some of the most toxic chemicals in the public domain. It was the early days of the agro-chemical industry and farmers were guinea pigs for the early prototype sprays. Fungicides, herbicides, larvicides, insecticides, pesticides, extremely powerful weed killing agents, and all kinds of

synthetic fertilizers were and still are an integral part of modern day farming methods. All of this poison enters the food chain. I was handling and breathing it regularly. A body can only take so much, and mine had already been hammered from the start. I would often collapse in a burning sweat and vomit for hours as my body tried to purge itself of the toxicity with which it was being assaulted. No one understood it, least of all the medical system, of course. Riseholme Agricultural College was my first introduction to serious physiological breakdown. Being only twenty years old I bounced back and continued to play for both college and club.

At the end of the season our star player of The Bees decided to join Lincoln Rugby Club to pursue his ambitions of playing representative rugby for the Shire. My best friend followed along, and I soon after.

All three of us made it into the senior first team. I, at twenty-one, was the youngest on the team. During our second season, we hit the harmonics and were unbeaten throughout the whole year, winning forty-seven games in a row. To date, that team is the most successful team in the club's history. I myself played for Lincolnshire Under-23, while both my friends played Senior County. We all lived our dreams. I lived even beyond mine. It was an astonishing achievement, especially after receiving so much discouragement from my former peers. The secret to it all was undoubtedly the team spirit through song. We taught the Lincoln Rugby Football Club every song we knew, and they loved it. Many Saturday nights we would often have every single person, even the stuffy old stalwarts, singing their hearts out, weaving together all our spirits. It was a wonderful time—one of the happiest in my life. It laid the foundation for further adventure and a massive shift in the evolution and unfolding of the contents of my soul.



### **The Southern Hemisphere Calls**

There was a player in Lincoln rugby club who came from Taranaki in New Zealand. He was a bit of a wild man, and, apart from being regularly found scrapping on the ground with his wife, was a likable chap. One day he invited me to come to Taranaki to work

on his pig farm and play rugby in New Zealand. It was a portal of opportunity which immediately shined brighter and brighter in my imagination. Things were still pretty challenging on the farm. One night I presented the idea to my Dad, asking him what he thought about me going off for a year to play rugby and get some experience on other farms before taking over from him at home. To my surprise he thought it was a good plan. Immediately I set things in motion and in the spring of 1984, at the age of twenty-two, I was winging my way across the world into a new chapter of my life which would define the man I was to become.

I landed in Auckland and immediately began my writing career by visiting the offices of the largest newspaper in the country. I prematurely announced that I was a freelance journalist doing a story on rugby in New Zealand. Amazingly enough, in true New Zealand fashion, they offered me a desk and an old-fashioned typewriter. I had seen a typewriter before but that wasn't quite qualification enough to figure out how not to get the long metal printing arms all tangled up, much to the amusement of my newfound peers.

Within a week I was playing for a club in Auckland's senior first division, writing ridiculously verbose and dramatic match reports for the local rag which somehow were never edited. I turned out for the Senior Reserves (second team) in ferociously competitive games in a club which put out forty teams on a Saturday. It was a tremendous shock to my system. Country rugby in Lincolnshire was a girl's game compared to the sheer aggression on display here. Coming from the birthplace of rugby and having enjoyed the pure spirit of the "gentleman's game" for so long, it was somewhat sickening to witness the cheap shots, brutality and violence that were and still are part and parcel of the Kiwi game. The "win at all costs" mentality was fully integrated into their way and is perhaps the reason why the New Zealanders are invariably the best team in the world. From my point of view, when win-at-all-costs dominates over the beautiful, free flowing spirit of the original amateur ethos, then something essential and vital dies. It is exactly this invisible, priceless thing that has all but disappeared from the world and has turned the daily lives of so many into a battlefield instead of a magical garden.

Auckland first division was intense and possibly boasts the highest standard of competitive rugby played anywhere in the world. That year the Auckland side was unbeatable and provided most of the players for the New Zealand national team. I was way out of my depth. Talk about being thrown in at the deep end! If the move from The Bees to Lincoln First XV was a big stretch, this was a quantum jump into another universe, and provided me with the one of the most significant initiations of my life.

The club had what was for me a strange custom: immediately after finishing playing their game, some of the Senior Reserve players were asked to stand by as replacements for the Seniors. I remember standing on the sidelines of Eden Park, one of the most famous international stadiums in the world—battered, bleeding and bruised, praying so hard that no one got injured—as temporarily psychotic men collided with each other with ferocious impact, ripping shreds and chunks out of each other in a merciless, driving game. It was a good honest reality check. We can quantum jump in life from one level to the next, but we need the skill set to pull it off. It took me two more seasons of initiation, one in Auckland the next in Sydney, before I trotted out on the rock hard grounds of South Africa to reach the pinnacle of my rugby-playing career.

While living in Auckland, I studied massage and now possessed two diplomas. I immediately opened my own practice and rented a room from a local chiropractor. As fate would have it, he was married to the world record holder for the women's marathon at the time. Her name was Alison Roe and she had suffered a terrible injury. Her hamstring muscle had pulled so violently that it had actually detached a piece of her pelvic girdle. She had an operation in which the surgeon sliced through the gluteal muscle, removed the bone, and stapled the tendons and ligaments back to the pelvis. When I met her she could barely walk without pain. At the time I was also a student of Dr. Charles Garfield, the sports psychologist for the American Olympic team. He had impressed upon me the vital importance of visualization and the power of imagination. The results of his studies demonstrated that the optimal ratio between physical and mental training to guarantee the best results was 75% mental to 25% physical. I took this wisdom into my massage practice and began working with Alison,

encouraging her to use the power of her mind to visualize herself healthy and complete, while I rubbed away the scar tissue. Within six weeks she was once again breaking New Zealand records. For the rest of my time in New Zealand I worked with many of the country's top athletes, rehabilitating even the most painful injuries rapidly and with constant success. I earned the nickname “Healing Hands Good,” which I took with a pinch of salt, but the whole episode opened my mind to extraordinary possibilities. This experience provided the foundation for the powerful technology I have incorporated into the personal development programs I have shared with thousands of people all over the world. The same wisdom has allowed me to carve a successful career working with many world champions and record holders, particularly from the southern hemisphere.

While in Auckland I began a deeper exploration into boxing and joined a professional gym. I was a regular sparring partner for the pros and enjoyed a short but very successful amateur career. Rugby and amateur boxing were my two primary ways of facing fear, but both of them required a capacity for violence that innately I did not possess. The pattern I was dealing with on the inner psychic planes was being played out on the rugby field and in the boxing ring. But it wasn't time for me to walk away from the rough and tumble of the game because the initiation was incomplete.

### **Fight the Good Fight with all thy Might**

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*—Ephesians 6:12*

In many ways the whole human world is a battlefield. War, the desecration of nature, all forms of social disharmony and schism, and even toxicity and disease are a reflection of the state of the human psyche. The simple truth is: ***we are at war within ourselves.***

The theme of conflict within has appeared in all mythology and story since the beginning of time. Every culture, indigenous or foreign, ancient or modern, without exception, is replete with the theme of struggle for supremacy between two sharply opposing forces. This archetypal motif, as perennial as grass, as constant as the sun, has hidden within it the secret keys to unlock the wellspring of human greatness.

The modern world today, magnificent mirror that it is, reflects back to us the contents of our soul. All of the wonder—the dizzy, spinning marvels of our creation—are soaked in the blood of innocent children, and no amount of tears can wash that blood away. The whole world is crying out for the healing of the schism within us all. This great dramatic call for peace is not for the warrior within us to lay down and sleep, but to awaken. Perhaps Percy Bysshe Shelley put it as well as anyone when he wrote,

*Rise like Lions after slumber  
in unvanquishable number  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
which in sleep had fallen on you  
Ye are many—they are few*

When the penny finally and definitively drops and we realize that all of this world, with all its twisted horror and heart-opening wonder, is actually a reflection of Oneself, it heralds a marvelous maturation of the psyche. It is as sobering as it is awe-inspiring. This moment occurs in myth and legend when the reluctant hero finally accepts the challenge of the quest for which he has been chosen. Usually accompanied by an overwhelming emotional catharsis, it is the shamanic death of his former persona which the hero is destined to endure. Recall Neo, in *The Matrix*, when he resisted the prodding of Morpheus before finally accepting and accommodating the massive challenge of the new perspective on reality with which he was faced.

The part of us which is being called to face the Goliath or Minotaur within is as unlikely a hero as Harry Potter or Clarke Kent—but that is exactly the point, is it not? Deep down inside of you, you know this is true. And part of you yearns for this meeting more than anything else in your life. Once the fear of accepting the call of



your soul has been faced, then only the frustration which remains comes from not knowing how to answer it.

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.*

—Marianne Williamson, *Return to Love*

The Warrior within, the spiritual warrior of light and consciousness, has to rise from the grave of ego and ascend into the expression of its higher self. This is a process of initiation. It is an internal process of becoming which has its roots deep in the soul and is catalyzed by an attitude of forgiveness, the core of compassion and the highest octave of love.

Just as a baby must crawl before it can walk, this deep shift in consciousness follows a definite archetypal sequence. It is very helpful for an initiate upon the path to be aware of this well-defined, inescapable pattern. Like any journey, knowing which direction to travel, and what to prepare for along the way, can make the difference between success and failure, or at least increase the possibility of successfully navigating the challenges with the appropriate equipment and skills.

In myths this is often represented by an encounter with a wise guide who prepares the reluctant hero for the trials that lie before him—the meeting with the monster, so to speak—and imparts a secret which guarantees victory, without which many had failed before. Think of Luke Skywalker and Yoda, or Neo and Morpheus.

True wisdom is harvested from the fires of experience alone and I hope the stories I share with you from my own experience inspire and catalyze the resurrection of that essential part of you that may be bruised and battered and lying in chains in some neglected part of yourself.

This wise counsel also exists within us and it is highly advisable to attune to its silent promptings. Additionally, though it may not seem so, we are surrounded by invisible helpers. The invisible realms form the overwhelming substance of life and are perhaps far more relevant to our futures than the gross lumps of stuff we consider the limits of our reality. The true warrior is wide awake to these invisible realms and is keenly attuned to their vibrations, listening intently, tuning in to subtle movements in the ethers which may offer a subtle clue or prompting of when, where and how to advance.

My experiences with the inner realms and the battle within have been extremely vivid since a tender age. Today I am acutely aware of subtle shifts in the field from which all substance takes its form. Our rudimentary five senses perceive only a tiny fragment of one percent of the quantifiable energy spectrum which surrounds us.

This minuscule fraction, as wonderful as it is, is then processed through a conscious mind that is so conditioned and programmed by negative, distorting influences that it is virtually insane. For any of us to arrogantly conclude that we know what's going on behind the superficial scenes of our lives, and thus base our conclusions on materialistic calculations alone, is as fragile as a spider's web in gale force winds.

Great winds of change are blowing, blowing away karmic webs of ego fantasy. The challenge now is to awaken from slumber and to seek the connection with life which transcends the five senses and sharpens our awareness. With trust, faith, and certainty, in sweet surrender a marriage occurs with that great, all-encompassing something which fills the vast emptiness between atoms and galaxies with a benevolence we are all destined to fully imbibe. This subtle yet profound shift in consciousness requires consistent focus of our will and intent.