



Life Launch

creating a new normal one intention at a time

David Trotter

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To Randy Powell

Thank you for shining a light
in the dark spaces and
walking with me as I
re-launched my life.

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creating a new normal

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Preface

my heart for you

In the beginning of 2008, I just couldn't take it anymore. I was sick of my marriage and burned out on my job. I felt completely stuck with my life, and I had no clue how to get out of the mess I created for myself. I wanted out.

From a cursory look at my life, you would have never known.

I had been married 14 years, and we had two beautiful children. My wife was a kindergarten teacher who was both attractive and a saint in the eyes of others. I had a high-profile job as the founder and leader of a growing non-profit. No debt other than a mortgage and one car payment. Life was good...or so it looked from the outside.

On the inside, I was dying. I lacked the freedom and peace I longed for in my life. Even though my wife was amazing, I didn't see her as a partner in the truest sense of the word. I was constantly tired and run down from working 70-80 hours a week, and I had few close friends to speak of.

I was dying a slow death.

Fed up with everything, I finally decided on a re-launch, but things didn't turn out exactly as planned. Although I radically changed the direction of my life with a few decisions, this led to a chain of events ultimately landing me in a psych hospital for three dark days.

At my lowest point, I questioned if I wanted to press on in this life. Somehow, I continued to believe that I could truly have the life I longed for, but I had no clue how to find it. The only thing I could do was ask questions...the same questions...over and over and over again. These five questions seemed to keep emerging every time I'd come up against a challenge or opportunity.

These questions, what I now call The Process of Intention, led me out of the darkest season of my soul toward the new life I hoped would finally emerge.

Two and a half years later, I have a new normal.

I have more freedom in my life than ever before...
and I'm not overwhelmed with work.

I'm developing the marriage I've always wanted...
but it still requires effort.

I love my children more than ever...
but my patience is ever-growing.

I have many new friendships now...
which used to be few and far between.

I have a new normal, because I was willing to make some intentional decisions to find the life I truly wanted. Are you living the life you truly want? If not, I invite you to start asking intentional questions and experiencing the transformation that's available to all of us. A new normal awaits you.

David Trotter
Lakewood, California
August 2010

Getting The Life You've Always Wanted

section 1

You have one life to live.
The question is...how will you invest it?

If you live a full life, you'll exist in your 'earth suit' for 70, 80, or maybe even 90 years. In my case, my intention is to live until I'm 100 years old...and enjoy every moment including my final breath.

You do realize that your *intentions* have everything to do with the type of life you experience, don't you? If you intend to live a rich, meaningful life with intimate relationships and creative expression, that's the kind of life you'll live. On the other hand, if you intend to live a life of working 9 to 5 and waiting for the weekend to roll around, you can definitely experience that instead.

It's your choice.

You have the power to create intentions that will change the course of your life.

My guess is that you've come to some sort of realization recently causing you to desire something different in this life. Perhaps, you've been longing to live out your passions or begin a new romantic relationship or develop a greater degree of physical health. Whatever reason provoked you to pick up this book, your intentions will determine whether you take action to re-launch your life or not.

Write Your Own Permission Slip

Remember in elementary school the fear of forgetting your permission slip for the biggest field trip of the year? My teacher (and probably yours) threatened the entire class with the dreaded consequence of being left behind.

No one wanted to be *the only kid left behind*. The fear of having to sit in on another class felt so overwhelming that every one of us would find a way to get the single-most important piece of paper back into our teacher's hands...*with* our parent's signature emblazoned upon it.

The idea of 'permission' has been so ingrained in most of our minds (for good reason at an early age) that many of us are still looking for permission as adults.

Instead of feeling the freedom to pursue what's in our hearts, we're waiting around for someone to give us permission to re-launch our lives. Ironically, they (whoever 'they' is) don't even know we're waiting for them to say something...nor would they think we needed their permission to begin with. Oftentimes, the need for permission is so nebulous that no one can give us the thumbs up other than ourselves.

What do you feel like you need permission to do? What exactly is it? Feel free to write your own permission slip, and let's experience a life launch together!

I Got Stuck With This Life... Can We Trade?

chapter 01

As my head hit the pillow, it was starting to dawn on me. I was stuck...stuck in a life I hadn't set out to create.

It was one of those unedited moments of life where all the background noise of the day had faded away. The kids were tucked into bed, and my wife was sound asleep from helping 25 first graders sit relatively still and learn all they can in between recesses. The flickering TV was finally off, and the laptop that was an extension of my own hands was stowed under the side of the bed...just in case I needed it in the middle of the night.

My brain was winding down from its incessant processing as I tried to figure out how to continually fund the non-profit I founded. I was turning down the flow of worry that usually opened its valves full-blast that time of night...especially about management issues surrounding my staff.

That's when it surfaces, doesn't it?

That's when the deepest, lingering feelings start to escape the locked recesses of our heart where we try to hide them from the world around us...and even from ourselves.

If I actually feel what's going on down there, I may have to come to grips with what those emotions are telling me. I might actually have to do something about the feelings of boredom or dissatisfaction or hopelessness.

Despite my best efforts to bury them...my dissatisfactions with life started trickling to the surface one by one.

I was stuck in my career – sick and tired of financial and management issues. I was bored in my marriage – more like roommates than anything else. I was overwhelmed by my kids – driving me nuts constantly. I was disappointed in my friendships – which barely even existed. I was depressed about my weight – heavier than I had ever been. And, I was tired of not having enough money – longing for more freedom.

That pretty much wrapped up my entire life. I was stuck in a long rut, and I didn't know how to get out.

If you came to me with this same scenario asking for advice, I would have been able to lay out a strategic, 10 step plan to turn your life around. In fact, that was somewhat of my job. I was in the business of helping people make significant changes in their lives.

Ironically, I was the one who was stuck, and all I could think about was trading my life for a new one.

Remember in elementary school when your mom packed that pimento cheese sandwich in your lunch? Or, maybe it was liverwurst...or Spam...or whatever made you gag. You were stuck with it, weren't you?

That is...unless you were able to talk the weird kid who actually liked

that crap into trading with you.

That's what I wanted to do. I was dying to trade my life for something else...something adventurous and romantic and fun.

Frankly, I didn't want to do the hard work of making intentional choices in order to climb my way out of the ditch I had dug over the course of 14 years of marriage. I didn't want to re-think my life's calling after investing 10 years of hard work into building a specific approach to my non-profit leadership.

Pretty soon I found myself sitting in a therapist's office spilling my guts. I went on and on about all the woes of my life and how completely dissatisfied I was.

"David, do you think there's a possibility that your marriage could be saved?" the therapist asked with an air of optimism.

After hearing all his great insight and ideas, I finally let this guy have it...there was no way he was going to talk me into loving the life I had. I was done!

"Sure, my marriage could be saved...if I actually wanted claw my way out of a hole the size of the Grand Canyon! I'd rather just blow it all up and start over."

So, that's what I did.

I left my wife for her best friend, and we moved in together. I resigned from the non-profit I founded, and I started living off \$3,000 in cash and a credit card with a \$32,000 limit.

Let's just say...*I wasn't stuck anymore!* I launched myself in a completely different direction. I was intentionally creating a new life, but it didn't exactly turn out the way I had hoped.

My wife's best friend left me after six weeks, and she moved back in

with her husband and four kids. After throwing away a 14-year marriage and a 10-year career, I was rendered completely non-functional, and I checked myself into a hospital for three days to get some desperately needed help. After I got out, I moved 30 minutes away from my family to be near friends, and I battled suicide for a couple of weeks...that is, until I apologized to my wife and set the trajectory of my heart back toward her.

What transpired over the next two years was a windy road that led to reconciliation with my wife and kids, the development new friendships, the start of several businesses, and ultimately...the re-launching of my life.

Do You Have the Life You've Always Wanted?

Thankfully, most of us don't feel *that* bad about life...nor do we do something that drastic to find the life we've always wanted. Yet, recent studies show that over 10% of the American population (that's more than 27 million people) are taking anti-depressants on a daily basis.

What does that tell you?

It tells me that we're a culture in acute need of feeling better about our lives. We want meaning and purpose out of our days. We long for intimate relationships with our lovers and our friends. We desire a life that's creative and enjoyable...yet something is preventing us from experiencing it.

Unfortunately, many of us are simply medicating ourselves, not just with anti-depressants, but with alcohol, drugs, affairs, overspending, and any other 'hit' that will take off the edge of meaninglessness in our lives.

The truth is that life dissatisfaction is the result of living an unintentional life.

Rather than remaining stuck in an existence you never wanted, I am inviting you to capture a vision to re-launch yourself with a trajectory toward a rich and meaningful life.

To get started, I want to challenge you to think about your current situation. What's not going as well as you'd like it to?

Most of us go to the extremes when we encounter areas of dissatisfaction. Some of us worry, blame, and complain about it every chance we get. Others of us just shove that dissatisfaction deeper and deeper into our hearts so that we won't have to actually deal with it.

I want you to get honest about what's really going on in your life...right now.

To help you think through the satisfaction level, let's look at what I call "The Seven Spheres of Transformation"...

1. Life Passions

Everyone has 'life passions' that are waiting to be discovered. These are divinely imprinted interests that are without explanation. Although someone in our lives may have introduced us to them early on, something stuck in a way that other things didn't. This may be a passion for medicine, construction, baseball, or art. It could be a zeal for cooking, interior design, or plants. I don't know what it is for you, but you'll need to discover it in order to have the life you've always wanted.

It's not a matter of whether you were given a life passion or not. The question is...have you discovered what you're passionate about? Once you've made that discovery, the next step is to live it out in a way that leaves a mark on this great world where we spend a few short years.

You may have heard it said this way, "Find something you love so much that you'd be willing to do it for free...then find someone to pay you to do it." Are you living that kind of life? Or, does it seem ludicrous that it's actually a possibility?

2. Romance

Although there are some individuals who have no interest in a

romantic relationship (perhaps because of negative experiences or their life stage), I find that most people long to develop an intimacy with someone who will love them authentically. We were created with a desire to love and be loved, and sexuality is a major part of that.

If you're single, are you confident in who you are? Are you comfortable with loving yourself so that you're available to love someone else? If you're married, are you passionate about your spouse? Are they truly your partner in life or simply a roommate? Or, an inmate? Be honest with yourself...do you have the romance you truly want in your life?

3. Community

A healthy individual usually has 1-3 very intimate friends, a circle of 10-20 ongoing friendships, 20-75 meaningful connections, and an unlimited number of acquaintances. If a person is significantly lacking in any of these areas, most likely there is a missing sense of community that can leave one feeling empty and disconnected.

Mutually beneficial friendships at different levels of intimacy create a deep sense of satisfaction in life. There's nothing like experiencing the comfort of being with others who know you and embrace you...just for being you.

Unfortunately, so many of our relationships in school and the workplace are based on *performance*. "If you perform the way I want you to, then we can continue the relationship as it is. If not, things will change." True friendship begins to move beyond a need to *perform* for other people to a more authentic connection.

Do you have friendships that are meaningful to you? Do you have a few people that would walk with you through life...no matter what?

4. Money and Possessions

Money is merely a tool to provide the resources you need to sus-

tain your life. The question quickly becomes...how much is actually enough? Our culture tells us that we can never have enough... but many of us go into deep debt trying to accumulate *bigger and better stuff*.

The bigger house, the nicer car, the fancier clothes, and the latest and greatest gadgets are calling your name constantly. They call out to you through advertisements and through the testimony of others telling you how much you need whatever it is that you don't have.

How does your view of money impact the way you spend your time, the job you have, and the possessions you obtain? Are you satisfied with the income you generate? Does it cover your necessities? Or, do you always feel like you're coming up short? What role does generosity play in your lifestyle?

5. Creativity and Play

As a kid, we're given the freedom to be creative and play almost all day long – every day. That is...until we go to kindergarten. Then, we're taught how to play nice with others and be creative within the boundaries of a teacher. And, in most schools, creativity is encouraged just a little bit less and less until we finally make it to college. In this time of preparation for the 'real world', we're taught facts, statistics, and techniques that are tried and true. Until finally we make it out into the workforce...where creativity is usually sucked out of us completely.

That may not be the case for you, but for millions of Americans, the day to day grind of a job is just that...a grind. There isn't much room for creativity or playfulness. We have a job to do, and the company's future is determined by how effective and efficient we become.

Ironically, it's creativity and playfulness that rejuvenate the soul and stimulate the mind to be even more effective. Are you making room for the creative in your life? Or, has someone squeezed

it out of you in hopes of turning you into a drone that just gets the job done?

6. Physical Well-being

Most of us would like to believe we can live a sedentary lifestyle and eat whatever we want and still feel satisfied about ourselves. What we fail to embrace is the fact that our physical health and well-being are inextricably tied to our mental, emotional, and spiritual experiences in life. We are interconnected beings with physical bodies in need of care and nurturing.

What level of intentionality do you have when it comes to providing your body with nutrition that will serve as fuel – not just satisfying your cravings? Are you finding that your body is cooperating with your mind, or do you feel constrained and limited? Do you feel energized and full of life, or are you struggling to get going? Are there health issues that you've been unwilling to face up until this point? Get gut-level honest about your health. Are you satisfied with the current state of your physical well-being?

7. Spirituality

If you're one of those few people who doesn't believe in a Higher Power or God or Allah or whatever name you give He/She/It, feel free to skip this section. But...for the rest of us, spirituality is a crucial component to experiencing a rich and meaningful life whether we realize it or not.

For the sake of this book, let's call this Being...God. If God created the heavens and the earth and you and me (somehow), perhaps God has a plan for our lives...not a secret plan to destroy us, but to give us a rich, meaningful life. If God created us, there is a sense that this Creator may know what's best for the creation. Maybe, God knows how we were designed to live.

I have to show my hand a bit. From my perspective, I believe that I was designed to love God and the people around me...to follow in God's footsteps by creating amazing things...and to consider

everything around me as sacred. I have an incredible well of Wisdom, Strength, and Grace to draw upon. I want to eliminate any division between those things that are spiritual and non-spiritual in my life. All of life is spiritual in my eyes, and I'm seeking to live an integrated life.

To what degree is spirituality a meaningful part of your experience here on this earth? Do you believe there is a greater depth of experience you have yet to journey through?

A few years ago when I did this quick inventory, I came up feeling pretty empty. I looked at the dashboard of my life, and I was running in the red when it came to RPMs – working 70 to 80 hours a week. I glanced over at the fuel gauge, and it was in the red as well...and on top of that, the check engine light had been glowing in my face for quite some time.

I was done...my engine was burning up!

Perhaps you have been caught in a rut of drivenness and success like I was. On the other hand, maybe you find yourself with little drive at all. Maybe you find yourself in the rut of mere existence with hardly any meaningful reason to live other than waiting for carefree weekends to roll around.

Whatever perspective you're coming from, you are not alone.

Frankly, walking through these seven spheres of your life is meant to make you sick to your stomach. If you're feeling completely dissatisfied, I'm glad. I've earned myself an A+. The truth is that you were just as dissatisfied before you picked up this book, but you've probably been burying it as deep as possible...hoping it would just biodegrade in your soul. Unfortunately, it doesn't...and it won't. The dissatisfaction swirls around in our hearts until it finally starts to seep out of our lives.

For me, it leaked out by micro-managing my staff, worrying constantly about things out of my control, over-working to try to feel *in* control, and ultimately developing an interest in a woman other than my wife.

Finally, I just couldn't take it anymore, and I pushed the red detonation button. I blew it all up and left the shrapnel behind for a new life. Although my original plans didn't work out so well, I did end up creating the life I've always wanted.

In the midst of my leave-my-wife-for-her-best-friend adventure, my therapist commented, "I have to say how proud I am of you for what you're doing. You've intentionally sought out intimate romance, a new way to live out your passions, and an adventurous life...but I can't affirm *how* you've chosen to do it. You've made a complete mess in the process!"

He was right.

I made some very intentional decisions that were utterly reckless and irresponsible, and the shrapnel from my life flew in every direction. It hit my wife and kids the hardest. They were completely devastated by my decisions, and so were countless others.

As I was living all alone in an apartment 30 minutes away from my family, I had some difficult decisions to make. Would I give up, crawl into a hole, and beg God to take my life (or just do it myself)? Would I sign up for online dating and find a new, adventurous woman? Would I start over-working again – trying to lift myself up out of the pit of my own despair? Or, would I seek health and wholeness trusting that my future was bright even though I couldn't see evidence of it quite yet?

Believe me when I tell you...it wasn't an easy decision.

Thankfully, there were a few friends that re-surfaced when everyone else stayed away from my mess. They were willing to walk with me through the process of re-launching my life.

Over the course of two years, I discovered that *a life launch is the process of creating the life I've always wanted – one intention at a time.*

It's not about developing a master plan and living it out perfectly or all

the time. We all know those don't work, and we end up more discouraged than ever!

It's about knowing who you've been created to be. It is the process of discovering what you really want out of life, embracing truths that will keep you focused, and taking intentional, practical steps toward the mental picture of your preferable future. And, it's about walking with other 'life launchers' along the way...people who are willing to journey with you through the ups and downs of life.

After hitting rock bottom, I made the courageous decision to pick up all the pieces and launch my life in a new direction...a path that would cause me to ask the same questions over and over ensuring that I was making the intentional decisions that would lead to my preferred life and the new normal I longed for.

- Who am I?
- What do I want?
- What truths will keep me focused?
- How will I take action?
- Who will walk with me?

By continually reflecting on the answers to these empowering questions, I was intentional about my own health along with the restoration of my relationship with my wife and kids...and I was miraculously welcomed back into our family's home six months after I abruptly left.

I have a new life and a new normal now.

It's not the life I thought I would have when I left on that dark day...it's even better! I have set my intentions toward a healthy, enjoyable, and adventurous life where I'm experiencing ongoing growth in all of The Seven Spheres of Transformation.

A life launch isn't a one-time experience...it's about a 'one-intention-at-a-time' experience. It's about living so intentionally that you're experiencing more of the life you've always wanted each and every day.

Do you have the life you've always wanted?

Are you living your life passions with meaning and purpose?

Are your relationships rich and meaningful?

Do you even know who you are and what you bring to this world?

You're in need of a
Life Launch.

For most of us, life dissatisfaction is the result of living an unintentional life. Rather than remaining 'stuck' in an existence you never wanted, Life Launch will provide you with the tools to re-launch your life with a trajectory toward true success.

The Seven Spheres of Transformation

Life Passions – how will you leave your mark?

Romance – who are you partnering with?

Community – who is walking with you?

Money & Possessions – how will you manage your resources?

Creativity & Play – what rejuvenates your mind and soul?

Physical Well-being – how will you care for your body?

Spirituality – how will you respond to the Divine?

**If you're ready for a change in your life,
you're ready for a Life Launch.**



David Trotter is a creative communicator with over 10 years of experience leading non-profit organizations. He invests his time writing and speaking on life motivation, marriage, and spirituality as well as consulting businesses on marketing communications.

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