**Wrestling Possums - The Simple Truth About How To Be More Effective**

<http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/11/05/the-simple-truth-about-how-to-be-more-effective/>

Here’s a challenge. It will take one minute- and WILL make a huge difference to your ability to achieve goals and success in what you do. And- it is simple. To do something extremely hard to do: to do LESS. Here’s why.

**Simplicity is the highest form of achievement.**

It’s as simple as that.

What I asked my colleagues to do was simply this: “Select three things- just three. The most critical things- that will make the most impact. And put every ounce of effort behind those three things.. make them outstanding… and do that before doing anything else on the list.”

We HAVE to simplify everything we do.

Here’s the point. You can do anything- but not everything. Stop trying to do things better. Instead, **do fewer, better things.**

Do less- and get more from it. You see, clarity comes from simplicity. Our lives are frittered away with detail and complexity. Complexity creates pressure.

**How Do You Simplify?**

Not easy. Unless you take the greatest step you can take- and that is to learn to let go.

Even with writing, the best writers will tell you they edit, edit again, and keep on editing. If a word can be left out, then delete it. If in doubt, take it out.

Arianna Huffington is a big fan of simplicity. She relieves pressure on herself by selecting projects to drop….things she planned to do, and by not doing them they are creating pressure… well, she drops them off her ‘to do’ list altogether.

Now- I am certainly no poster child for simplicity.

But it’s okay. While I still struggle to DROP things- to let them go, at least I am getting better at RUTHLESSLY PRIORITISING. And by ensuring razor-sharp focus on the ‘right things’ to get done (fewer, better things), that’s a bloody good start.

**Challenge For You**

What are you going to do to simplify your work and life? Make a start right now.

1. What is hanging over you that is causing some angst that you simply don’t need to do, or have, or aspire for?

2. Can you just drop them off your list altogether?

3. And what are the three most critical things you need to put more, better focus on?

**Wrestling Possums - Why Applying The Brake Helps You Accelerate Your Career**

<http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/10/28/why-applying-the-brake-helps-you-accelerate-your-career/>

I did something really weird in Melbourne last week. You see- I turned left. And by doing so, I was reminded of the biggest mistake I continue to make, in my life and career. Do you make it too? If ‘yes,’ then STOP! And turn left, like me. Here’s why.

The day started early. Emails and calls, even while walking to the six hour intense training session for 30 of our STW Group up and comers that I then led. As soon as the session finished, it was back to urgent emails and phone messages, and a quick sit down at a sidewalk café to make one particularly challenging call. It was now 4 pm, and I knew I could get back to my hotel with a fast walk in time to get in two more hours of ‘to do’ list before a dinner engagement. I started walking. And then it happened.

I turned left.

Instead of crossing the bridge to the city and my hotel, I turned left into the Victorian Art Gallery. Not sure why. Just did. Moments later I was in stillness, looking at Picasso, Pissarro, Turner and the Orientalists. Then I spent half an hour in the book shop there, bought some pencils and cards, and a book on line drawing. I turned left for an hour, but it’s impact was profound. Here’s why.

**Sometimes you have to slow down to speed up.**

John Eales told me that. In his newspaper column, that is. And he’s right.

One hour spent turning left gave me clarity, and inspiration.

Point is- I ended that hour refreshed. My mind was so much clearer, about a myriad of minor decisions and issues. And about some more profound feelings.

Yes- absolutely take yourself seriously in your life and career, be a 100 percenter, read the blogs, work to become a thought leader, think about ‘Brand You’, attend the talk, ‘turn up’ when others just can’t be bothered, push yourself to be the very best you can be. The list goes on.

**Wrestling Possums - The Key To A Winning Team Will Be Music To Your Ears**

<http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/10/14/the-key-to-a-winning-team-will-be-music-to-your-ears/>

A chance meeting in Melbourne gave me a new insight into how to build winning teams. Here’s what happened- and the lesson in it for you, your business, your life.

We arrived at the restaurant. My 12 year old mate suddenly grabbed my arm: “LOOK! Look who it is!! It’s…it’s Archie Thompson! And…Besart Berisha!” - two strikers from the Melbourne Victory football club. The entire team was in the private dining room. We approached Thompson. He graciously chatted, and then invited us into the team dinner room. We looked in from the door. What an inspiring group of young people- beautifully mannered, dressed, welcoming. The mood in that room was excited, warm, energised, inspired, bonded. I wanted to cut off a slice and take it home.

I returned to the table. “Now, that’s a winning culture,” I said. “They will do very well this year. I know this, because I just did one very simple thing….” This is what I did.

**I listened to the music in the room.**

Here’s the point- and the ask of you.

First, ‘**Listen to the music.’** If you are a leader, listen to the music in and from your team- does it feel right, strong, harmonious, on key? If not, then look squarely in the mirror, because YOU are the composer. Others have to conduct your tune or play the chords. If it feels off key, take responsibility. It is YOUR doing. Change the tune. Give your team better music to work with. Oh- and you always have the choice to change the players. No doubt. But look hard in the mirror first. If you’ve got the integrity and courage to do it.

If you’re a team member, and the music feels kind of like that Chinese opera/Spanish flamingo fusion depleting headache material, then you have a choice. Tell the composer (leader), and push him/her for change, or take the lead yourself-  and try to ‘conduct’ a more positive, inspiring rhythm yourself. Don’t follow the prescribed script- improvise and play a better tune. Or, join another band.

And what about other relationships in your life? With parents, children, lovers, partners, friends. How does that music sound?

**Four questions for you. Be absolutely truthful with yourself now…..:**

1.    Think about your work team- how does the music sound right now from your team? Or within a client relationship?

2.    If you are the leader, what can you do to change the score- to change the music?

3.    If you are a team member, get clear on what is making the sound jar- is it the composition, the conductor, colleagues, or is it you- you just don’t like playing the trumpet anymore? And – what can you do about it?

4.    And then think about the three most important personal relationships in your life? How are they sounding right now? What can you do TODAY to improve the music?

**“If music be the food of love, play on…”** So wrote Shakespeare in ‘Twelfth Night’ I think. Point is- Use ‘music’ as the food for progress. Listen to it. Use it. Improvise with it. Change it. Make better music. In everything you do.

**Wrestling Possums - What The Media Tycoon Told Me About Building Success**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/09/30/what-the-media-tycoon-told-me-about-building-success/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/09/30/what-the-media-tycoon-told-me-about-building-success/)

I had been losing heart recently about something I love doing. Then- at breakfast last week with one of the most powerful media industry leaders in Australia- he said something that gave me the compass point to getting my mojo back. Simple. Powerful. It’s a secret to success.

CEO Mike asked me to join him at a breakfast meeting in Melbourne with a genuine icon of the Australian media industry. This leader had agreed to share his thoughts on how to build long term success in doing business in Indonesia.

**“If you want to make progress, you simply have to keep schlepping around.”**

He explained this Yiddish word – ‘schlepping’- meant: *“… to keep moving around – to continue a journey or path- sometimes with effort, often reluctantly or laboriously.”*

I needed that. You see- for the past few months, I have been losing heart in this blog, Possums. Subscriber and follower levels were not increasing, the number of retweets and sharing of posts via social media was dropping, the amount of negative feedback via emails increasing. Point is, I was kind of feeling ‘spent.’ Struggling to find content, and it seemed to me, the audience was drifting away. So- I stopped writing for a while.

Then five things happened in a week that has lifted my heart.

I have realized that by **keeping on schlepping around-** to keep going, even if it feels like progress is limited and outcomes marginal for a while- … by keeping on, good things come from it. Very good things. Things that add value- to individuals, businesses, my own tribe. And importantly- for myself. Things that pump my tires in a world where we’re surrounded by static that deflates. Frankly- I need the positive reinforcement.

Here’s the point: **“Keep turning up.”** Woody Allen says it’s 85% of the secret of success- just turning up. Persistence. Consistency. Determination. Relentlessness. Even when you don’t feel like it. Even when you don’t think you are making a difference. **Keep schlepping around.** Good things DO come from it. You ARE making progress, ARE making a difference. Promise.

**Wrestling Possums - How To Keep Strong When The Pressure Is On**

<http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/09/24/how-to-keep-strong-when-the-pressure-is-on/>

I gave a presentation yesterday to a room of STW colleagues. And it was on slide 17 of my presentation on how to be more effective and efficient every day that I was reminded of this great piece of advice.

**The happiest people in the world have trained themselves to become ‘learned optimists.’**

Try to become a ‘learned optimist.’ Train yourself to react positively to the things that happen to you in your job and life….to react optimistically to each setback, body blow, each issue as it winks at you. It can become a habit- a very energizing, empowering habit. ” When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.”

**I Resolved To Try To Respond With Cheerfulness To Every Problem That Came My Way.**

Instead of reacting to issues with furrowed brow, I have resolved to try to react with cheerfulness and a sense of adventure. As Jobs said: “Remembering you’re going to die is the best way I have found to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose.”

Get things into perspective. Problems and issues are just turbulence along your fast moving journey. Tackle them with humor, enthusiasm, a sense of playfulness- and remember- it just does not matter that much. “When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.”

Also, I find this idea useful to keep front of mind– **what you do every day is not a prison sentence with no release date.** You have options. Powerful, inspiring, intriguing options. You turn up by choice. The power is with you. Referencing Steve Jobs, who said the best thing that ever happened to him was getting fired by Apple. One door closes. 20 open.

Here’s the point. I got clarity, confidence, hope, inspiration about the fact that **I am actually in control.** Of my mindset. My persona. My today. My tomorrow.

Every one of us, you and me included, will be in a role where sometimes the pressure just feels too much. That’s normal- par for the course.

Tackle the issues and pressure with three things in your tool kit:

**1. An optimistic frame of mind-** make a decision now to treat each set back and issue with optimism and positive intent  
**2. Remember- it’s simply not that serious-** this is business. That’s all. It’s important. But it sure is not worth screwing with your core happiness and wellbeing. Treat it as an adventure. A game. Fun. A privilege.  
**3. Remember, you have options-** exciting options. Be clear on what they are. Keep them nurtured and fresh. Knowing they are there keeps you sane, a sense of freedom and control. You are invincible.

Take control of your mindset. Pull yourself back into the groove so you can give the best you can. Use the three steps. It works for me.

**Wrestling Possums - How To Find Inspiration When You Need It**

<http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/09/09/how-to-find-inspiration-when-you-need-it/>

I have been looking for clues as to what genuinely inspires me. And I found it when a colleague did not like a suggestion I made. There it was. The answer. Right in front of me. Now- does this hold true for you? Is this a key to your inspiration?

*“You must get closer to the client work,”* I encouraged my colleague, who spends most of his time ‘managing’ business issues. He looked uneasy. Silent. *“What’s up? “Well,“* he replied hesitantly. *“It’s just that…the client work thing… it’s kind of not what I do these days… I am just, well, not sure I am able to do it anymore.”*

You see, it was clear what my colleague needed to do. It would absolutely revitalise and inspire the pants off him. Here it is.

**To truly thrive, learn what makes you uncomfortable- and then attack it- head on.**

If we duck and weave away from what makes us uncomfortable, that feeling of inadequacy, of being a little second rate, not good enough, a pretender- it builds. It seeps under the skin. It puts doubts into your head.

There is another way.

It needs a little courage. But when you get started, it becomes addictive. Here it is.

1. Write down the stuff that makes you feel uncomfortable. Write down the feeling. How does it make you feel? Why does it make you feel that way?
2. Then make a plan to push yourself into that ‘discomfort zone.’ How can you expose yourself to those circumstances over the next few weeks?
3. Take action- schedule them. Make it happen.

When you tackle discomfort, your heart races, the endorphins flow, you’re alert, right on the edge, and – here’s the rub- you feel alive! And when you walk away from that discomfort zone, having had the courage to go over its threshold, your head is held high, shoulders back, spirits soar*.*

Expand your comfort zone often, **but not as much that you feel overwhelmed.**

**Little steps of progress- big licks of inspiration**- all to be found in stepping into your discomfort zones. Give it a go! Back yourself. You won’t regret it.

**Wrestling Possums - The Most Important Question To Ask If You Want To Thrive**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/08/13/the-most-important-question-to-ask-if-you-want-to-thrive/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/08/13/the-most-important-question-to-ask-if-you-want-to-thrive/)

A wise colleague generously shared a powerful insight that has sat front and centre in my mind. This is part of what he wrote to me. “To be inspired is to ‘breathe in.’….. There’s also nothing wrong with surrounding yourself with the things, and especially people, who give you heart, even comfort.” And in that statement is THE question to answer if you want to thrive. Here is it.

**Who are the people in your life who give you heart?**

‘To give you heart’ means to lift your spirits, to put a spring in your step, to give you courage, resolution, fortitude. To make you feel safe, yet excited, hopeful. Optimistic. *‘*To give heart’ is not just about ‘inspiring.’ It’s more gentle, yet more powerful. It makes you feel a sense of adventure, self-belief, a desire to flirt with uncertainty. It makes you feel invincible, just for a few moments. It makes your heart literally beat a little faster, but ‘nice’ faster.

That concept- who ‘gives you heart’, has been sitting with me, and I thought you might like it. So- here are four important questions if, like me, you could do with help to give you a little heart from time to time:

**Who Gives You Heart?**

Think hard about who the people in your life are who make you feel the way I describe  – that when you are with them or leave them, make you feel energised. Not those who you would hope would ‘give you heart’, or you take for granted that they do, but who actually make your heart lift, your eyes rise, shoulders back, onwards!

**Who Depletes You?**

Now, try to identify who you spend time with who actually drain you, deplete you, suck the energy and optimism out of you. The takers. They don’t mean to. It just happens. That’s the dynamic between you two.

**How Do You Spend More Time With The Energisers, Less With The Depleters?**

Hard to do- I know. Often the depleters are people we love deeply, who need us, who we want to give to. That’s ok. But maybe some of them don’t need as much time from you. And maybe, just maybe, you need to make sure you are spending more time with those very few, rare and special individuals who give you heart. Make sure you are clear about who those people are.

**Are You An Energiser or A Depleter?**

Last question. It’s only fair to think about yourself, and the impact you have on others. Are you an extreme- are you energising? Are you depleting? I reckon it’s fine to be both from time to time…. sometimes we need to take, sometimes give. Are we giving the best of ourselves to those who need us, and are we being fair with those we are taking from.

So- who gives you heart? Really- are you sure? Who? And- are you seeing enough of them?

**Wrestling Possums - How To Get Lashings Of Inspiration- Whenever You Want It**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/07/23/how-to-get-lashings-of-inspiration-whenever-you-want-it/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/07/23/how-to-get-lashings-of-inspiration-whenever-you-want-it/)

I need to find my inspiration elsewhere. How? Where? The answer on how to get inspiration whenever you want it is right here. It’s like flicking on a switch. And hey presto, here it is. This is how you do it.

**Inspiration is for amateurs- the rest of us just show up and get to work.**

I read this in this week’s “Brain Pickings Weekly.” Forget Rome. Forget character buildings and cool music. If you really want to get inspired, sit down and get started. **Hard work supersedes inspiration.**

When you need to do something and don’t want to, then JFDI (just f\*\*\* do it). And just do it for 10 minutes. If at the end of ten minutes you don’t feel like it, then stop.

Once you get started, and get into the groove, you don’t stop. You get inspired. You create, and get it done.

Now, I love to be surrounded by tactile, comforting things. I have an office. It’s filled with old wooden furniture, books, art, ornaments, mementos …stuff that make me feel safe, calm, at peace. As Picasso said, “Art washes away the dusts from our souls every night.” And that‘s kind of what my comforting space does.

But my very best work has been done on airplanes, in coffee shops, looking at a wall in a second rate hotel room. I had no distractions. I just got focused, got started. Got inspired. Created.

As colleague Sven Baker just told me over breakfast in Auckland yesterday, as we discussed this post : **” Love the problem, design the solution.”** He gets inspired by the problem or task at hand. The more gnarly it is, the more enthusiastic he gets to push himself to tackle it head on, with passion and inspiration. He does not wait for inspiration to fuel him. He just JFDIs.

The power is 100 percent with you. Do not delay. Get focused. And get started. Remember- hard work supersedes ‘inspiration.’ No excuses. Get cracking right now. Show up, show up, show up, and after a while the muse shows up too.

**Wrestling Possums - 7,000 Reasons To Read This Post! It Will Change Everything**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/07/09/7000-reasons-to-read-this-post-it-will-change-everything/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/07/09/7000-reasons-to-read-this-post-it-will-change-everything/)

Three years of weekly Possums posts, I decided last week not to write a Possums post. Instead, I’d await the deluge from 7,000 aggrieved subscribers and followers asking me why I had not posted. I expected the result I got which was zero.

Now- here’s the point. I have been reflecting on what I do and how I do it for a couple of weeks while on holiday….how can I best add more value? Here’s it what I will be doing:

**I will DO less, and lead more.**

I have always been energized by productivity- getting stuff done, pushing momentum, setting deadlines, adding pressure, taking action. Sometimes in writing a ‘to do’ list, I write down ‘to do’s’ I have already done that morning, so I can immediately cross them off the list. Weird, but I like the feeling. Point is- I am good at ruthless prioritization.

But it’s not enough. Andy Lark suggested this refinement- when doing a ‘to do’ list, allocate how much time you will spend against each action. It’s a sharp idea. Keeps you very focused. You get more done.

But, it’s not enough! l realized the key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities. Big difference. Being able to solve problems is nowhere near as important as being able to pick the right problems to solve. Focus on the big problems- where the big impact is. Think hard about how to change the allocation of your time.

Notes from the conference in South Africa two years ago from a mega-successful entrepreneur-***“Redefine how you add value. Only be doing the work that only you can do.”***

And from my Cannes Creativity Festival notebook..

***“Re-define how you add value: DO less and lead more.”***

DO less- lead more. Make sure I am spending my efforts on fewer, bigger actions that can deliver the most impact to our clients, businesses, colleagues, momentum, family, for me. And make sure I only do what only I can do in that process.

**Wrestling Possums - A Simple Lesson From Calvin Klein To Help You Achieve Great Things**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/06/24/a-simple-lesson-from-calvin-klein-to-help-you-achieve-great-things/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/06/24/a-simple-lesson-from-calvin-klein-to-help-you-achieve-great-things/)

At the Cannes Creativity Conference, the global Chief Creative Officer of Calvin Klein took the stage at an ‘off Broadway’ session, to explain how the company had built a global brand. What a story.

She then outlined the business’s four core operating guidelines- and it was Value Number 2 that grabbed my attention. I just loved it. It was the inspiration I needed to lift my head and say: “YES! Let’s get cracking.” Here is what that key Calvin Klein guideline says:

**Dance With Controversy**

Simple. Powerful. Here’s more….

“If you really want to connect with an audience in a modern, interesting and meaningful way, then say or do something that provokes- something that creates tension and conflict, and thus genuine engagement. You have to be brave enough to do it, and it needs to be constructive and valid. Quite simply, be prepared to be controversial.”

Not the exact words, but the overall message. I was telling a potential creative director hire for one of our STW businesses this story. “Don’t be liked,” he said. “Be hated or be loved, but you don’t want someone to just ‘like’ you.”

Tom Peters talked about this concept this way: ***“If you want a career on the high seas, don’t join the navy- become a pirate instead.”*** Avoid becoming just another sailor in the standard white uniform saluting the flag.

**Often just telling the truth is enough to dance with controversy.** Are you brave enough to speak with candour?  Candour after all is ‘truth without malice.’ It is hard to do. Often powerful people simply do not want to hear the truth, and won’t appreciate you telling them the realities. **Facing reality and speaking the truth is to salsa with controversy.**

The biggest message from a week at the Cannes Creativity Festival was about the speed of change.

Uncertainty can breed fear. You can retreat into safe territory. You can resist being who you really are, resist rocking the boat when others are shackled with their fears.  Pause a moment. Think hard about who you really are, what you really feel, what is the best way to make an impact and deliver the value. Sometimes this means taking a risk- it means being a pirate.

**Wrestling Possums - One Critical Decision That Will Turbo-Charge Your Career – And It’s Fun!**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/06/17/one-critical-decision-that-will-turbo-charge-your-career-and-its-fun/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/06/17/one-critical-decision-that-will-turbo-charge-your-career-and-its-fun/)

If you want to have more fun every day, be a better employee, client service person, deliver more value, then stop spending big time trying to improve weaknesses. No kidding. Instead- do this one thing and accelerate forwards. Here it is.

**Be less focused on working on ‘weaknesses’, and put much more energy on building on your strengths.**

I figured that 100 units of effort on working on a weakness might take me from being poor at something, to being just below average.

But 100 units of effort working on building a clear strength would take me from being really good at something, to becoming ‘fricken awesome’ at it.

Here’s the rub. **Employers and clients want ‘fricken awesome.’** Always. They will pay extra for it. And so long as your ‘weaknesses’ are not socially unacceptable or undermine the power of the good stuff – well, they’ll forgive you for them.

Not all will agree with me. Some will say: “NO! STOP! A failing is we practice our strengths and ignore our weaknesses. Your strengths will only take you as far as your weaknesses will allow. So- work damned hard on your weaknesses.”

Know your weaknesses, accept their reality, work consistently and with the right effort to make sensible progress to soften their dark shadow.

**But put the passion, big energy, enthusiasm, extra hard yards in making your strengths unbelievably great.** Play to your strengths. Strengthen your strengths. Know what you company most values you for, and then get better and better at it. Focus on what you do really well, and become absolutely brilliant at it- famous for it.

**Wrestling Possums - The Key To Achieving Goals- Simple and Powerful, Yet Damned Hard To Do**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/06/10/the-key-to-achieving-goals-simple-and-powerful-yet-damned-hard-to-do/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/06/10/the-key-to-achieving-goals-simple-and-powerful-yet-damned-hard-to-do/)

There is a simple, unglamorous, obvious key ingredient to achieving goals, dreams, aspirations. It is right here in front of us, but so damned hard to do. Are you able to do it? If you can, victory is yours. Here it is.

CFO Lukas inadvertently gave me the message for today’s Possums when he told me this: “Well, it’s time to quote from that movie ‘The Best Marigold Hotel’, when the son who is trying to restore the old hotel in India says:

***“Everything will be alright in the end, so if it is not alright, it is not yet the end…”***

You have never failed if, every time you get knocked down, you stand up again. It is as simple as that. And I believe it. Passionately. Sure – it is better to ‘win’. Bang. Done. Thank you ball boys and girls. But that’s not life. Setbacks are table stakes. It’s how you tackle setbacks that counts.

There is 15 year old girl I know. Things were not going well (not big things- just everyday life things). I spoke to her. She was dispirited and disheartened, self-esteem and confidence battered. We talked about **persistence**. About never giving up, learning from setbacks and picking yourself up, and going again. I told her about Gandhi, who had said: “Adversity is the mother of progress.” She did not appear to listen. And I kind of forgot about her for a while.

Then we bumped into each other last week. “How are you going?” I asked. “Pretty good,” she replied energetically, with a big smile.

“Things are good. You see, soon after we chatted, I did something I am really proud of. I went and got a job. Just 10 hours a week, mainly weekend work, at a neighbourhood café. Not many of my friends have a job. I earned $120 last week, and banked it. Oh- and I have been really working hard on my sports game- scored a goal last week- the coach was really pleased with me. And that musical I told you about… I wrote to the director and asked she consider me if anyone withdrew from it. I explained how passionate I am to be in it. Last week she called, There had been a drop-out, and I’m in. I did really well in my exams by the way- better than ever before. Oh- and I also nominated myself as a candidate for House Captain. I don’t have much chance- there are some excellent candidates- but, as you said “You have to be in it to win it” and I am having a go. I am confident I can bounce back from any disappointment, and am pleased I put my hand up …..”

Now- that’s what I call refusing to stay down. Pull yourself up. Take the setbacks. Take the lessons they bring. But do not give up on yourself. Never give up. You see, in India they say ***‘everything will be alright in the end, so if it is not alright, it is not yet the end…’***

A question for you. Are you ‘pressing on?’

**Wrestling Possums - The Key To Falling In Love With Your Job Again**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/06/04/the-key-to-falling-in-love-with-your-job-again/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/06/04/the-key-to-falling-in-love-with-your-job-again/)

I have discovered the secret to making sure your job is filled with great moments, experiences and buzz. It’s the key to preventing staleness, stagnation and depletion. Here it is.

From the movie “The Grand Budapest Hotel” and “Citizen Kane”, you see, both depleted men returned to the source of their greatest happiness- and wanted to spend time in that memory again. And here’s the insight I got from that- powerful and real. And I am putting it into action right now.

**When have you been happiest in your careers, and why? What are your fondest memories so far?**

Get clear on that, and the future is great.

I thought about my “Rosebud” moments in my career, those experiences that when I think back over 30 years, stick out as the most special, fun, inspiring, energising, memorable, meaningful.

And here’s the magic. Every one of them related to doing exciting, daring, worthwhile work with clients. It’s the client relationships that have given me the biggest buzz.

So, for me to stay in love with what I do every day- to get new “Rosebud” experiences- I simply HAVE to stay engaged on some client challenges, in the trenches, delivering the work, heart beating fast, creating the value and building the bonds.

Nothing beats it for me. I reckon if you want to be in a service industry, then make damned sure you LOVE delivering outstanding client service, that you get deeply invested in your clients, that you care about their brand, their business, their success, their well-being.

**So- what to do about it?**

Think about your career so far. Think about the moments most memorable to you, where you got the greatest buzz, energy, pleasure, pride, meaning. Think now about what you are doing today…..are you spending time on the stuff that have given you the “Rosebud” moments in the past? If YES, delete and move on- there’s nothing to see here. If NO, then good for you- you have an insight. An insight to falling in love again with your role, job, career.

**Wrestling Possums - Top 10 Tips To Building Powerful Influence- In Business and In Life**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/05/28/top-10-tips-to-building-powerful-influence-in-business-and-in-life/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/05/28/top-10-tips-to-building-powerful-influence-in-business-and-in-life/)

What is the most valuable thing the most influential people in your life have given you? What is it that has made all the difference? Here’s the answer. It is the secret to building genuine and deep influence. Do you do it?

Before I share the *Top 10 Tips To Building Powerful Influence*, here’s the one thing the most influential people I know always do. It’s this that is more important in building influence than the other nine tips added together. Quite simply, this is the most powerful thing heavy duty influential people give you- every time: **The gift of time.**

If you want to build influence, to develop meaningful, important relationships, to be able to develop a network that you can call upon to help others –then be prepared to give others your time- and your energy.

Why do I do it? Well- it’s a privilege to be trusted, to be wanted. Second, it’s hugely rewarding to help. And thirdly, because I know it builds my footprint of influence. It just helps. It opens doors, brings luck my way, creates opportunity. Makes life more interesting and meaningful.

**Top 10 Tips To Building Influence**

Here are the habits of highly influential people. How do you rate against each?

1. **Be generous in giving people your time, and energy**
2. **Don’t criticise, condemn or complain**
3. **Give honest and sincere appreciation**
4. **Arouse in the other person an eager want**
5. **Become genuinely interested in other people**
6. **Smile**
7. **Remember that a person’s name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language**
8. **Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves**
9. **Talk in terms of the other person’s interests**
10. **Make the other person feel important – and do it sincerely**

Building influence is about slowing down, giving other people really quality, no-holds-barred and no agenda time, it’s about listening, getting ‘present’ in conversations, asking questions, making suggestions.

It is about making yourself available, and making yourself user-friendly. It’s about working on human connections and relationships, generosity of spirit and time, and putting other people first.

**Wrestling Possums - Listen To This- The Most Powerful Tip I Know For Business Success**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/05/07/listen-to-this-the-most-powerful-tip-i-know-for-business-success/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/05/07/listen-to-this-the-most-powerful-tip-i-know-for-business-success/)

When colleague Dave says these four powerful words of advice, I know they are pure gold. Yet I struggle to follow them. If you want to succeed in whatever you do, then don’t be like me. Listen to Dave, and embrace these four magical words. Here they are.

**Shut the f\*\*k up.**

It’s as simple as that.

STOP TALKING, and start listening. BE SILENT. Be patient. Let the other person finish what they are saying.

Then take it a step further. Here are five other big tips to becoming a great listener.

1. Yes- we know. **Shut the f\*\*k up.**
2. Don’t interrupt. (Peters calls it ‘the 18 second manager’… are you someone who listens for 18 seconds and then interrupts with your view….?)
3. Maintain eye contact.
4. Keep as present as you can- force distraction out of your mind- get as interested as you can.
5. And here’s another gem- this time from CEO Mike: *“Listen to what is being MEANT, not to what is being said.”* I love this. Keep searching for the real message they want to convey- what is being meant by those words?
6. And finally, when they go silent, ask questions. Delve a step further, clarify, probe for more context… do this before then giving your view.

Dave has helped me a lot with my listening. When we have a meeting, we start with chit chat, then he puts his hands on my shoulders. *“Chris- I want you to focus now. Look in my eyes. Keep absolutely present. I need you to listen to me for a few minutes. And then I need your counsel.”* And as I start to listen, sometimes I drift away. *“Focus!”* Dave murmurs. I listen. And then I interrupt. *“Stop!”* says Dave.*“Stay silent. LISTEN!”*

And gradually, I improve. Step by step. Meeting by meeting. I am forcing myself to improve. To go into a room prepared and ready to listen. And it all starts with reminding myself and embracing Dave’s most powerful tip of all.

**Wrestling Possums - A Price Of Leadership – Now Is The Time For You To Pay It**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/04/30/a-price-of-leadership-now-is-the-time-for-you-to-pay-it/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/04/30/a-price-of-leadership-now-is-the-time-for-you-to-pay-it/)

It’s ANZAC Day – the annual remembrance of those fallen in Australia’s conflicts. In watching the documentaries of war stories and legends, I look at what those men and women did, risked, attempted, and then think about how I would act in similar circumstances.

Fact is, in the face of great threat and unimaginable horror, ordinary people do find the courage to step up- to do amazing acts of bravery, to risk all to help and protect others- to show leadership under fire.

I do take a powerful leadership lesson from this reality to share with you today. Respectfully, here it is:

**The cost of leadership is self-interest.**

Every business is under unprecedented attack as technology changes everything. Seven years ago, Nokia was the leading mobile phone maker in the world and Apple was not in that business. Seven years later-KAPOW! And think about Uber- how it came from nowhere to stuff the taxi and limo business. This fundamental ‘game change’ is happening everywhere.

So pause a moment and think on this- **who is working on a plan right now- today- to ‘Uber’ your business?**

**This is where sacrificing self-interest comes in.**

Simon Sinek puts it something like this: *“We are happy for our leaders to get perks. But when danger comes, we expect them to run towards the danger- to put themselves at risk to protect us.”*

So here’s the question- if you lead a team, an account, a P&L, an office, a division- whatever- if you are a leader, **are you running towards the danger?**

Are you putting yourself in the shoes of those out there who are thinking today about how to ‘Uber’ your client, your account, your team, business? Are you thinking about solutions, no matter what personal risk might be involved?

To ‘step up’ today you have to have **the courage to tell the truth to power.** You have to be able and willing to tell hard truths to powerful others who often don’t want to hear it. This might be senior clients, colleagues in your business, industry associates. Remember- just because they don’t like the message does not mean it is not true.

Also, **be prepared that your ideas might not be right.** But at least have them- air them- see if your clients, partners, colleagues are prepared to consider and debate them. See what their ideas are. Speak up. Agitate for debate. Drive restless and relentless thinking and questioning about what’s coming- and how we must adapt and adopt to thrive tomorrow.

Every one is a leader. Every one of us can help colleagues, teams, clients, businesses and ourselves tackle issues, deal with change and move forward.

**Wrestling Possums - The Secret To How To Motivate Others- And Yourself**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/04/15/the-secret-to-how-to-motivate-others-and-yourself/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/04/15/the-secret-to-how-to-motivate-others-and-yourself/)

Are you brave enough to truthfully identify and share what your ‘blibula’ spot is? “It’s a spot on a dog’s stomach which when rubbed, causes his leg to rotate wildly.” [The Brand Guy](http://the-brand-guy.com/) told me about it.

Three hours reading an awesome book- “What Got You Here Won’t Get You There- How Successful People Become Even More Successful,” written by Marshall Goldsmith. And here’s the key to what it told me.

**For humans, our most important hot button- our blibula spot- is quite simply, self-interest.**

Self-interest is what drives us, in life and in business. The trick is working out exactly what that self-interest hot button is for you at this stage of your life. Here’s a way to do it. And I am borrowing heavily from Marshall Goldsmith’s book here in sharing this insight.

People will do something- including changing their behavior- only if it can be demonstrated that doing so is in their own best interests as defined by their own values.

The key is being able to find out what someone’s hot button is… to find out what OUR hot buttons are. For ambitious, ‘driven’ people, the motives behind their self-interest (particularly as they are working their way ‘up’ towards their goals) usually boils down to four items:

**Money**… eg through pay increases

**Power**… eg through promotions

**Status**… eg for a bigger title and office

**Popularity**… eg by a burning desire to be liked by everyone

So- think about this. **Why do you turn up to work every day? What motivates you- today?** Is it any of the big four- money, power, status, popularity- or something more profound- something deeper.

As Goldsmith so perfectly surmises, my motivation is driven by self-interest of ‘something deeper and more subtle that has developed over time…’, of ‘leaving a legacy, being an inspiring role model, creating a great company.’ His words, not mine…but somewhere in all that lies my motivation at this stage of my career. Maybe it is a burning desire to be remembered well. Finally- ‘popularity’ rules again?

What about you? If you know what matters to you TODAY- what drives your self-interest- it’s easier to commit to change. And remember- people only change their ways when what they truly matter is threatened.

So- what truly matters to you- what genuinely motivates you to come to work every day and achieve? **What is your blibula spot?**

**Wrestling Possums - How To Keep Clients Coming Back For More- And More**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/04/08/how-to-keep-clients-coming-back-for-more-and-more/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/04/08/how-to-keep-clients-coming-back-for-more-and-more/)

My favorite hotel stuffed up a critical ‘moment of truth’ last week. So basic. So damaging. And a powerful lesson for us all. If you have clients, then read this post. Follow this one tip, and you’ll keep clients longer- much longer. Here’s how.

I’ve stayed at the hotel once a month for 14 years. Loyalty personified. Last Tuesday, I was given the worst room in the hotel- wrong bed configuration, and a heavy smoker clearly having recently frequented it. Wrong. All wrong. I asked to change rooms. Hotel fully booked. I asked again. Minimal response. “But it was not what I booked,” I pleaded.  Bad luck- it’s all we have. I rushed off to a meeting. Tried to resolve by phone. The outcome- it does not matter. Here’s the point.

This hotel failed in the most basic imperative of outstanding client service. Here it is:

**It failed to deliver Zero Moments of Dissatisfaction.**

**The most critical Moment of Truth** in a client/service provider relationship is quite simply, **when something goes wrong.** Either the client has stuffed up, you have stuffed up, or the client is upset about something. How you react in these circumstances creates a powerful new perception in the client’s brain- they evaluate their relationship with you almost entirely on this moment. Get it wrong- and you are cactus. Get it right- triumph!

Kiwi Andy gave me a new insight. “Ok- moments of truth are important. But if you want to run a genuinely outstanding service business, focus all your attention on ensuring **Zero Moments of Dissatisfaction.”**

**So- what to do for your business**

Think about all those moments and triggers where your clients get irritated and frustrated with your agency. Lots of them will be from very simple things. Slow response to a phone message. Inability to get hold of you. Typos. Deadlines missed. No car parks for their visit. An invoice over budget and no prior warning. List them out. And then work hard on minimizing and eradicating them. ZERO moments of dissatisfaction.

Now- of course things will go wrong. That critical Moment of Truth will arrive. And when it does- react with speed, sensitivity, emotional intelligence, genuine intent to fix the problem, empathy and humility. Do what is needed to fix it.

Meanwhile- **work every day to minimizing Moments of Dissatisfaction.** Become an agency with a great track record of Zero Moments of Dissatisfaction, and business will thrive.

**Wrestling Possums - Four Habits To Keep You Positive And Strong, Every Day**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/04/01/four-habits-to-keep-you-positive-and-strong-every-day/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/04/01/four-habits-to-keep-you-positive-and-strong-every-day/)

I get lots of feedback. From all walks of my life. Most of it ‘constructive’ – where I must improve, miss the point, could do better, need to stop or start doing something. Most of it fair. Still- it can wear you down. I cope with it, positively, through these four powerful habits.

First and foremost, we have to do this one thing really, really well:

**We have to become our own best coaches.**

Here are the four habits I use to keep myself strong- to ‘coach’ myself – every day:

1. **Be kind to yourself:** Make sure the voices in our heads are kind. Take the feedback, learn from it, and give yourselves constant coaching on how you are doing, how to improve. I give myself feedback with humour and kindness. I laugh at myself, shake my head at my foibles and weaknesses, forgive myself, and beam at my strengths and triumphs.
2. **Be optimistic:** Dr Martin Seligman, founder of Positive Psychology, calls it Learned Optimism. We need to train ourselves to react to what happens to us with an optimistic view – to become outstanding ‘disputers of negative thoughts.’
3. **Give Yourself Opportunities For Positive Feedback:** I do this though the training I lead. I can see the generally positive impact on attendees. This boosts me. Ok- I know that is ego driven- but I need it for my confidence. So I make sure I get it.
4. **Be Grateful:** For me this is real. I have been training myself to regularly acknowledge the good in my life, and to feel gratitude for it. I was grateful for the confidence of exciting options I have if I wanted to do something else. This time won’t last forever. It’s not all beer and skittles, but it is a blessing and keeps me ‘vital and energised’.

No matter what mood I am in, what I have constantly with me is my best ‘coach’ of all –  me. The positive voice and actions  help keep me strong, resilient,  forward looking, enthusiastic, safe, nurtured, happy and real. Not all the time- but enough.

We need also to ensure we are catching those around us doing things right- sharing positive feedback with others, rather than being obsessed with the wrongs, and improvements needed. After all- *“We are all fighting a tough battle.”*

What do YOU do to stay positive? Tell me please- I am keen to learn new habits.

**Wrestling Possums - How To Triumph During Times Of Rapid Change**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/03/25/how-to-triumph-during-times-of-rapid-change/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/03/25/how-to-triumph-during-times-of-rapid-change/)

I am most times the oldest guy in the room. And I am only 53. Where did everyone else go? How did I survive to still be in the room, contributing, learning?

Here is one idea to help shape the way you respond to the challenges of change- as a business, and as an individual.

**Become Indispensable.**

For **businesses**, remember- clients do NOT see you as a partner. Outraged? Here’s why I say this. If I stuff up with my clients two times in a row (maybe three at a pinch), what happens? Yes- Kapow! I am fired. These are supplier relationships. Partnerships are far more enduring- and tend to be only within our most personal relationships.

So we have to become absolutely indispensable to clients. We do this by becoming **Trusted Advisors.** Here we build perceptions with clients around three things:

1. *Credibility*- we are genuinely credible in what we say, what we claim expertise in, as counsellors
2. *Reliability*- we are proven as being true to our word in all we do, accessible and consistent
3. *Intimacy*- our relationship with the client goes beyond just an ‘order taker’- we build genuine bonds as individuals.

But it’s not enough- we also have to become *proactive business problem solvers.* We have to know the client business so well that we can identify issues, and take proactive, relevant ideas to the client that solve problems.

For our **careers,** we have to constantly be working on our professional personal ‘brands’, evolving our offers. Get very serious about working on yourself as a project- work on yourself harder than you do your job. Take your brand seriously. Here’s how:

1. *Do I deliver powerful outcomes?* Am I someone who delivers results, consistently, on time, on budget? How can I sharpen my efficiency and effectiveness?
2. *Am I expert in something?* How can I deepen my expertise in that area and become even better and more famous? How can I add a new area of expertise and depth to my capabilities toolkit?
3. *Do I think enough about, and have a point of view about, the future?* It’s not enough delivering great outcomes and being an expert in something, I also need to have one eye firmly on ‘what next’, and to alert my supervisors about the trends and likely changes afoot. If I am known as someone thinking ahead- anticipating and alerting- then I am even more valuable and indispensable.
4. *Do my colleagues see me as supportive and trustworthy?* Am I doing enough to build relationships, do the right thing, supporting others?

**Become Indispensable…**.. as a business to your customers, as an individual to your colleagues and supervisors. Get started now. Make a list. Set deadlines. Review regularly.

**Wrestling Possums - The First Rule Of Crisis Management- Use It Every Day To Succeed!**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/03/11/the-first-rule-of-crisis-management-use-it-every-day-to-succeed/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/03/11/the-first-rule-of-crisis-management-use-it-every-day-to-succeed/)

The first rule of crisis management is an absolute MUST. Here is it.

**Always plan for the worst case- for more bad news.**

You see- in crisis management, experience suggests the crisis WILL get worse. A great crisis team immediately splits, with some addressing the crisis, others immediately scenario planning what could go wrong next and how to respond should that occur. By anticipating escalation of the problem, you are ready to tackle it- quickly, efficiently, calmly- minimizing damage. And- having those worst case scenario plans in place gives you the confidence to get on with the immediate priorities with optimism and clarity.

Whenever you are about to embark on an action or path where you fear a significant repercussion, remember the first rule of crisis management:

Plan for the worst case. Here’s what to do.

1. Sit quietly with the potential worst case scenarios. Okay- the client fired us; I got fired: that leader has quit and left the building immediately; as feared three on a team resigned in protest; I have cancer and have a fight ahead. Whatever it is, think clearly about the probable worst case that could happen.

2. And quietly plan exactly what you would do if that was the case. Write down all the options.

3. Develop an action plan. Be very specific about what you would do, step by step, to handle that worst case should it actually happen.

4. Review the plan. Put it in your drawer.

5. Sigh deeply. Lift your shoulders. Fill your very being with confidence and optimism. And go forth and tackle the situation head on.

What’s the worst that can happen?

Simple. You open the drawer, get out your plan. And get cracking- not a second lost, and with the confidence that ‘it will be okay.’ You know it will be okay- you have a plan to make it okay.

On the other hand, as I did when that specialist rang me 18 months ago after the tumor biopsy to say: ”All clear- benign”, you open the drawer, and tear up the plan.

Whenever I feel the fear about ‘what if’s’, and am trying to build the courage to tackle an issue despite that fear, I pause, and develop a very clear action plan to tackle the worst case scenarios. For big things, and for smaller things. Give it a go. It works.

## Wrestling Possums - What Four Brave Men And Women Told Me This Week- Could You Do It?

## <http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/02/19/what-four-brave-men-and-women-told-me-this-week-could-you-do-it/>

Three men. One woman. Separately. Talking to me over coffee tables. Each did something inspiring. Surprising. Their actions oozed courage. And epitomize a habit critical to coping in tough times, at work and in life. Are you up for it?

Four conversations. Four very different relationships. In each, something rare happened. You see, each told me of something causing them sadness, pain, anxiety, stress, fear. I was privileged. They exposed vulnerability. And, I know, felt better and stronger for having taken that step, and for talking about it. And here’s the point- it’s about something I am getting better at doing, and encourage anyone who will listen to do so as well. Do you do this?

**It’s constructive to reflect on what makes us anxious and sad- to dwell in it for a while, understand it, respect it, adapt with it.**

Here’s the point- and my view only from my experience- sometimes it is constructive to sit a while in the melancholy we might feel. It can be counter-productive keeping ourselves so incredibly busy that we avoid recognizing, respecting, and having the courage to connect in with the anxiety or sadness that might be within us. Also then to think about how small steps of progress can be made with that. It’s also really powerful to **TALK TO OTHERS** about what is hurting you- to have the courage to share your feelings.

Business IS tough. Our roles ARE getting harder. Pressure DOES keep rising. Demands ARE accelerating. We have a responsibility to acknowledge this, and help ourselves and our colleagues cope.

Accept pressure ‘gets us down.’ We can’t be ‘up’ **all** the time.

**Recognize and respect your anxiety and sadness when it bubbles within you. Don’t bottle it up. Have the courage to talk about it with someone you trust.**

I find this approach really helps to reboot my energy and optimism- at work and in life-and is an important ingredient to resilience, and pushing through to the next challenge and next step.

**Wrestling Possums - Why Taking The Exit Door Is The Key To Surviving In Fast Changing Times**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/02/12/why-taking-the-exit-door-is-the-key-to-surviving-in-fast-changing-times/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/02/12/why-taking-the-exit-door-is-the-key-to-surviving-in-fast-changing-times/)

It was 3 a.m. in my hotel room in New York. The fire alarm shattered the calm. What happened next stays with me vividly, every day. It sums up why so many fail to survive life threatening crises, or survive the change underway in business. Here’s why.

I thought the alarm would stop. It didn’t. All on our floor headed out into the corridor, dazed and scared. But I stopped. I did not want to go through that door. And that hesitation sums up why so many fail to adapt to the tsunami of change underway in business. It’s summed up in an expression I heard last week. Here it is.

**Progress always involves risks. You can’t steal second base and keep your foot on first.**

To stay a step ahead of change- to disrupt ourselves more than our most disruptive client is disrupting us- we have to have courage. And STW is fortunate to have a cadre of brave leaders across our group.

Change is really, really, really hard to do.

**But change can also be awesomely inspiring. Really.** To take risk. To push into the uncomfortable. To take your foot off one base if you are to get to the next. To take that Exit door when you don’t know exactly where it is going to lead.

If the rate of change outside an organisation is faster than within, the end is near. Same applies to us- our offers to our employers and clients must keep evolving. We are only as good as our NEXT result! . We have to keep changing, or they will change us… we’ll be out. Don’t let that happen!

**Feel the fear. Embrace it.**

And back yourself- take that bold step….dash to second base… step through that Exit door. Chances are, you’ll be fine. Seriously. Keep moving. Keep believing. Keep trusting.

**Wrestling Possums - Something Incredibly Powerful To Help You Triumph In Tough Times**

[**http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/02/05/something-incredibly-powerful-to-help-you-triumph-in-tough-times/**](http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/02/05/something-incredibly-powerful-to-help-you-triumph-in-tough-times/)

Former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating is passionate about **the power of confidence.**

“Confidence,” he says. ‘is not something you can get by swallowing every now and then a can of ‘confidence’ spinach. It has to be continually with you.” He believes confidence comes from experience. That’s true. And confidence also comes from something every one of us has within our grasp. You have it. Here it is.

**Confidence is preparation.**

That’s it. If you prepare thoroughly, you will gain huge confidence. Yes- your heart will still beat fast and palms will moisten, but you will have eagerness in your stride to get into the challenge.

Here are **three powerful tips** to build, maintain and protect confidence.

**Preparation delivers confidence.**

It’s the golden rule. As you face moments this year, stay calm: think carefully about how you can best PREPARE. What research can you do, how can you uncover a genuine insights, who can help you, how can you ‘role play’ in your mind everything that could transpire and how you will handle each moment. Sweat the detail in preparation.

**Take A Step Back If You Feel You Are Losing The Edge**

Cricket great Sir Geoff Boycott says to build confidence, sometimes you have to go back to basics, and start preparing from the start again.

If, for example, you feel your presenting style is off its game, go give a few talks to internal meetings and low risk sessions. Rebuild confidence for that major new business pitch when the stakes are high.

**Controlling The Demons In Your Mind**

“Believe you can and you are half way there.” So said Roosevelt. Sometimes, no matter how much I prepare, there’s a voice that keeps whispering to me, “You’re kidding Chris- you will fail here, no question.”

To build confidence in turbulent times, we have to become, as Dr. Martin Seligman says, “ Brilliant disputers of negative thoughts.” The “No I can’t….” needs to be immediately countered with ….”That’s rubbish- of course I can. It is in my grasp…” I know most of you have those voices in your head too. They are like chattering monkeys in mine.

It’s Sunday night as I write this. I need to plan now each and every meeting, role-play in my mind, start rehearsing, plan how I will maximize the times I have in cabs and at airports, prepare for what can go wrong, and right. You see, preparation gives me confidence.

**Wrestling Possums - Here’s The Best Advice You Will Get All Year**

<http://chrisjohnsavage.com/2014/01/28/heres-the-best-advice-you-will-get-all-year/>

I am going to share some brilliant advice I have just received. It is a gem- and if you deliver on it, will make 2014 an outstanding year. Promise. Here it is.

**“Take more time, cover less ground.”**

So said Tomas Merton, quoted in Daniel Klein’s powerful philosophy on the best path to a happy and fulfilling life, “Travels With Epicurus.” Klein goes on to suggest another powerful habit, which I reckon dovetails perfectly with this theme:

**“Be clear what gives you pleasure, and do more of it.”**

So- this is what I plan to do. Some of you might feel this is a bit anal- but that’s me. If I don’t force myself to slow down- to pause and reflect- my life flashes past and I feel it becomes a missed opportunity. Sometimes you need to slow down to speed up. And in 2014, I WILL take more time, and cover less ground, and cover that ground with more presence, and thoughtfulness. Here’s my two part plan:

1. **Get clarity on what gives me pleasure**

Seriously- are you clear on where you get the most pleasure from in your life? I am clearer today than I was two weeks ago, now that I have been really thinking about it. It shocked me. My pleasure comes from very simple things- being together with family having a meal somewhere new, walking with my Mother and holding her hand, the feeling after a solid run, learning something new, great conversations, doing something for others and so on.

2. **A weekly one hour ‘Fresh Air Session’ with myself**

I am diarising now for the rest of the year, a one hour meeting with myself, at my Third Place (not work, not home, but somewhere else where I can relax and think). I will use that hour to revisit my clarity on three things:

a) **what is most important to me in my life**, and check whether I am giving those the right focus

b) **revisit my ‘pleasure’ list …** am I finding time to sprinkle my weeks with what I get the greatest buzz from

c) check in on **what I need to STOP doing**- what has crept in to my life that is not productive and needed, and how can I stop spending time and energy on that

Take more time, cover less ground. Be clear on what gives you pleasure, and do more of it.