Good evening friends, this evening is about the book “Screw it, let’s do it” by Richard Branson.

We are going to cover the best lessons that are presented in this book by the author.

So the first lesson that Richard talks about is **“Take The First Step”.**

Plato once said, 'The beginning is the most important part of any work.'

A journey of a thousand miles starts with that first step. If you look ahead to the end, and all the weary miles between, with all the dangers you might face, you might never take that first step. And whatever it is you want to achieve in life, if you don't make the effort, you won't reach your goal. So take the first step.

Second is **“Believe It Can Be Done”**.

Richard’s mum, Eve, is a perfect example of this.

During the war, she wanted to be a pilot. She went to Heston airfield and asked for a job. She was told only men could be pilots. Eve was very pretty and had been a dancer on stage. She didn't look like a man. That didn't stop her. She wore a leather flying jacket and hid her blonde hair under a leather helmet. She talked with a deep voice. And she got the job she wanted. She learned how to glide and began to teach the new pilots. These were the young men who flew fighter planes in the Battle of Britain.

After the war, she wanted to be an air hostess. Back then, they had to speak Spanish and be trained as nurses, but Eve chatted up the night porter at the airline and he secretly put her name on the list. Soon, she was an air hostess. She still couldn’t speak Spanish and she wasn’t a nurse. But she had used her wits. She wouldn’t say no. She just did it.

Third is about the **“Birth of Virgin Music”** and the lesson **“Have Fun and Money Will Come”**.

Throughout 1977, Richard had been working on making something out of Virgin Music. By the end of the year, Richard needed a break. His girlfriend, Joan and he had split up. He was sad but he likes to make the best of things. He always likes to get away from London in the winter. Music, sun and sea makes him feel good.

The distance from London gives him the space and freedom to think and plan out fresh ideas. He went to Jamaica. It was part holiday, part work. He swam in a worm sea. He sat on the beach. He listened to some great reggae bands. Then he heard a new kind of music. It was made by local DJs and radio jocks, who were known as `toasters'. It was a kind of early rap, so he was at the start of something big. Jamaican musicians won't take checks so he signed up almost twenty reggae bands and some toasters from a case filled with cash. They went on to sell lots of records with them. It was a perfect example of his motto — have fun and the money will come.

**Now a touch of reality:**

If you do have to work for a boss at a job you don't like, as almost everyone does at some point, don't moan about it. Have a positive outlook on life and just get on with it. Work hard and earn your pay. Enjoy the people you come into contact with through your job. And if you are still unhappy, make it instead your goal to divide your private life from your work life. **Have fun in your own time, you will feel happier and you'll enjoy your life and your job more.**

Next is:

**Be bold. Calculate the risks and take them.**

In 2004 Richard made a TV series, The rebel Billionaire. The final episode had a twist at the end. Richard offered the prize winner, Shawn Nelson, a check for one million dollars - but there was a catch. He could take the check or toss a coin for an even bigger mystery prize. If he lost the toss, he would lose it all. Richard held out the check. Shawn took it and saw the long line of zeros. Then Richard took it back, put it in his hip pocket and held out a silver coin.

'Which one will it be?' Richard said. 'The coin or the check?'

Life is full of hard choices. Which one would Shawn go for? Shawn looked shaken. It was a huge gamble. All or nothing. He asked Richard, 'what would you do?' 'It's up to you,' Richard said.

Richard could have told him that he takes risks, but they are calculated risks. He weighs the odds in everything he does. Instead, Richard said nothing.

Shawn had to make up his own mind. Shawn walked back and forth, trying to decide. It was tempting to gamble. It would make him look cool. Also, the unknown prize might be amazing. At last, he said he couldn't risk losing that much money on the toss of a coin. He owned a small company. He could use the money wisely to help his business grow. It could change his life for the better. It would also help the people who worked for him and believed in him. 'I'll take the check, ' he said.

Richard was pleased and told him 'If you had gone for the coin toss, I would have lost all respect for you'.

He made the right choice and didn't gamble on something that he couldn't control. He got the million dollars but not the mystery prize. The big prize was to be president of Virgin for three months. Virgin has 200 companies so Shawn would have learnt a lot. It was a golden chance. Richard does say that '**Believe in yourself. You can do it**' but he also says, '**Be bold but don't gamble.**'

The next lesson is:

**Challenge yourself.**

Everyone needs something to aim for. You can call it a challenge, or you can call it a goal. It is what makes us human. It was challenges that took us from being caveman to reaching for the stars. If you challenge yourself, you will grow. Your life will change. Your outlook will be positive. It's not always easy to reach your goal but that's no reason to stop. Never say die. Say yourself 'I can do it. I'll keep on trying until I win.'

**Ricky’s First Big Challenge:**

Ricky’s first big challenge was when he was five years old. He went to Devon for two weeks one summer with family and relatives. When they got there, he ran onto the beach and started at the sea, he couldn’t swim and his aunt Joyce bet him ten shillings that he couldn’t learn to swim by the end of the holiday. Ricky took the bet.

Most days, the sea was rough and the waves were high, but Ricky tried for hours. Day after day, he splashed along with one foot on the bottom. He grew blue with cold and swallowed a lot of sea water but still he couldn’t swim.

Ricky had lost the bet and his aunt told him to never mind as there is always a next year.

As they set off for home in the car, Ricky gazed out of the window. He wished he had learned to swim, he hated losing the bet. And, the family hadn’t got home so they were still really on holiday. Ricky thought, now was his last chance.

“Stop the car,” he shouted. His dad followed as both of his parents knew about the bet and they obviously knew their son. Ricky jumped out of the car, stripped quickly, and ran across a field to the river. When Ricky turned his head, he saw everyone standing and watching him, his mum smiled, waved and called out “You can do it, Ricky”. As soon as Ricky got in the middle, the current caught him. He went under, choked, came up and swept downstream. He put one foot on a rock and pushed off, and soon he was swimming. He swain in an awkward circle, but he’d won the bet.

Next: **Stand on your feet.**

‘IF YOU WANT MILK, don't sit on a stool in the middle of the field in the hope that the cow will back you up.'

An old recipe for rabbit pie said,' First, catch the rabbit.' Note that it didn't say, 'First, buy the rabbit, or sit on your bottom until someone gives it to you.'

Lessons like these, taught to Richard by his mum from when he was a toddler, are what have made him stand on his own two feet. He was trained to think for himself and get things done.

**Stand on your feet (The Virgin Story)**

Although Richard relies on himself and believes in his goals, he lost faith in himself once. In 1986, Richard was told that he should take Virgin public. Two of his partners who knew him well, were not very keen. They said he would hate losing control.

But the bankers said it was a good idea. It would give him more capital to work with. Other big private companies, like Body Shop and Sock Shop, had gone public. They were doing well. Pushed hard by the bankers, Richard launched Virgin on the stock exchange.

Around 70,000 people applied for shares by post. Those who had left it too late lined up in the city to buy shares in person. Richard writes he will never forget walking up the long line of people to thank them for their faith in him. He was very moved when they said things like, 'We're not going holiday this year, we're putting our savings in Virgin' and, 'We're banking on you, Richard.'

But it wasn’t long though that he realized he had made a mistake. Now instead of having casual meetings on his houseboat to discuss what bands to sign, he had to ask board of directors for a meeting for which he would usually have to wait for four weeks. Plus, these people had no idea what music business was all about.

They didn't see how a hit record could make millions overnight. Richard could not sign someone who was hot before his rivals did. Or they'd say things like, 'Sign the Rolling Stones? My wife doesn't like them. Janet Jackson? Who's she?'

Richard has always made fast decisions and acted on his instinct. But now, he was stifled. Most of all, he no longer felt that he was standing on his own feet.

Then, there was a huge stock-market crash. Richard felt that he was letting down all the people who had bought Virgin shares. Many were friends and family as well as Virgin’s staff. But many were like the couple who had given him their life savings.

Then, Richard made up his mind. He would buy all the shares back — at the price everyone had paid for them. He didn't have to pay that much, but he didn't want to let people down. He raised the £182 million needed and Virgin became private company again.

After this Richard writes, “I felt nothing but relief. Once again, I was the captain of my ship and master of my fate. I believe in myself. I believe in the hands that work, in the brains that think, and in the hearts that love.”

Next: **Live the moment!**

Richard’s grandmother lived life to the full. At the age of 89 she became the oldest person in Britain to pass the advanced Latin American ballroom-dancing exam. She was ninety when she became the oldest person to hit a hole in one at golf. She never stopped learning. In her mid-90s she read Stephen Hawking's book, A Brief History of Time, which may make her one of the few people to have read it all the way through! Shortly before her death at the age of 99 she went on a cruise around in Jamaica wearing only her swimming costume. Her attitude was that you've only got one go in life, so you should make the most of it.

**About having regrets, Richard writes:**

In a way, regrets are like wanting the peach you have thrown away. It’s gone, but you are filled with remorse. You wish you hadn't thrown it away. You want it back. Richard believes that the one thing that helps is to have no regrets. Regrets weigh you down. They hold you back in the past when you should move on.

**About living in the future:**

Always living in the future can slow us down as much as always looking behind. Many people are always looking ahead and they never seem content. They look for quick fixes, like winning the lottery. Goals are important. Money is important. But the bottom line is money is just a means to an end, not an end in itself. And what is going on now is just as important as what you're planning for the future. So, even though Richard’s diary is full for months ahead, he has learned to live for the moment.

Next: **Value friends and family.**

If anyone asks Richard what he believes in above all else, he would say his family.

And it is true that sometimes families split up. Then, some people don't have anyone. But close friends can be like a family. We all need a strong support network.

Even though Richard was taught to stand on his own feet, Richard writes, “without my loyal family and friends, I would be lost”.

Next: **Have respect.**

One time Richard had to go to a meeting. He was already late, so he grabbed some papers and jumped into a taxi. On the way, the driver got very chatty. He had recognized him and said “I know you. You're that Rick Branson. You've got a record label.” And after that, the cabby would not shut up. He told Ricky that he might be a cabby by the day but he was also a drummer in a band.

He asked if Richard would like to hear his demo tape. Richard’s heart sank. People were always playing tapes to him in the hopes they would be discovered. But Rick didn't want to be rude. 'That would be lovely,' he said. The cabby had house around the corner and he had got Richard to accept his offer for tea, and just outside this house when Richard heard 'I can feel it, coming in the air tonight...' coming from the speakers. Cabby jumped out of the front seat and held the door open for Rick. The cab driver was Phil Collins, laughing like mad.

When Richard made “The Rebel Billionaire”, he copied the idea from Phil. He made himself look like an old cabby and drove the young contestants to the manor house. Rick had his ears peeled and listened to what they said in the back. Rick also noted how they treated an old man who couldn't lift heavy cases. Rick learned a lot about them from that, much to their dismay. Respect is about how you treat everyone, not just those you want to impress.

It is very important to always keep eyes and ears open and to be polite. They say that you never know who might hear or see you.

**Is money root of all evil?**

It's said that money is root of all evil, but it doesn't have to be. Money can be used for good.

The biggest charities in the world were started by rich men and women, but some were begun with next to nothing.

Harvard, the wealthiest college in America, is a charitable trust. It started with a few books and just £350.

IKEA started in a garden shed. Its parent company is a charitable trust.

The man who dreamed up the Big Mac started life selling paper cups. His company now gives $50 million a year to charity.

And, you don't need to be rich to do good. Children used to collect silver paper and empty cola tins to raise money for good causes. There are many ways of helping others.

**That was all about the book, hope you liked it and thank you all very much for coming.**