



Brilliant Life

The Bonus Chapters

Here are some chapters and ideas which didn't quite make it in to How to Have a Brilliant Life (the editor's pen always wins); some I agreed with, some we had a scrap over (and she won) so this is my chance to publish them.

Your Extended Family

Now here's a funny bunch, cousins, cousins twice removed on your mother's side. You know the ones. You post a seasonal card and send your best if you meet another family member who will be seeing them but that's about it.

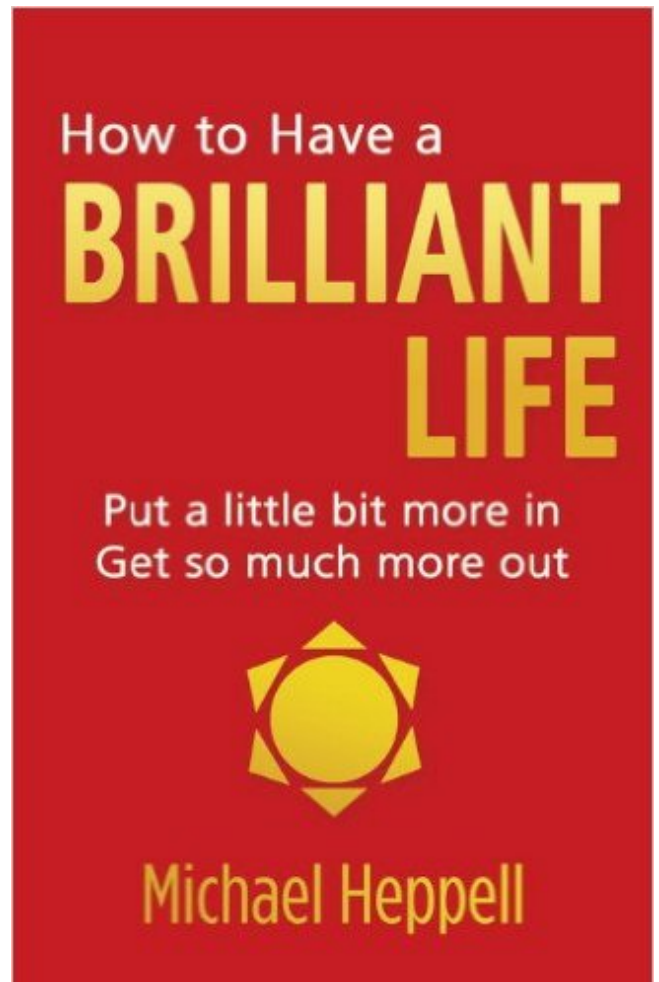
And that might just be enough. Or it could be that you are one of the last remaining relatives of this person. It's a possibility that the card you send is only one of a handful they get these days. Isn't it worth stepping it up a level for them?

Here's a simple idea which has a massive impact. Start to send them post cards and the odd note. Create a little address book that you'll remember to take with you and when you're travelling send a post card saying where you are, with a little bit of news.

Find out if they are on email and make a habit of sending them the occasional message.

I know there's a part of you that asks, 'Won't they think it's strange if I suddenly start to get in touch?' Well yes they may, but ask yourself this, if a member of your extended family suddenly sent you a card or an email, how would you feel? My guess is you'd be happy so long as it was authentic.

Here are a few ideas to get you started on what to write.



I was just thinking about you so I thought I'd write

Remember me?

I can't believe how long it's been since we last saw each other so rather than wait until we saw each other again I thought I'd write.

Or why not give them a call. Picking up the phone and talking to an extended family member can seem a bit daunting so here's a couple of conversation starters and builders.

'Hi this is Tom*, I made a New Year's resolution to call all of my relatives and thought I'd call my most interesting relatives first and you are first on my list.'

'Hi it's Tom*, I've read a book called Brilliant Life and in it the author, Michael Heppell, suggests you call up your relatives who you don't see that often. So I am!'

And if you've been working on the other chapters in How to Have a Brilliant Life you could always say, 'Hi I was just talking to your mother / father / aunty / uncle etc the other day....'

*don't say 'this is Tom' if that's not your name as it could cause unnecessary confusion

Brill Bit

Start a family web page. There are dozens of ways to do it. You don't need fancy software and it's free! Don't be the one who says, 'We should have a family website', be the one who does it.

'If you don't believe in ghosts, you've never been to a family reunion.'
Ashleigh Brilliant (nice name!)

Greater Good

So what is a greater good? Is it God, Religion, Beliefs? Greater good is all of those things and the real beauty is it can be many different things to different people. This chapter is about trusting it's there and connecting to it.

When Bart was asked to say grace at the Simpson's dinner table, he characteristically said, "Dear God, we paid for all this stuff ourselves, so thanks for nothing."

Because we have something good is it our doing? Or is there a greater good which gives us these gifts. In some ways Bart may be right, we got it because we went out and worked for it. But what else had to happen for us to 'get it'?

Time for a disclaimer. This section is not about organised religion. But it will challenge your thinking about there being some other; force, energy, person, set of principles or whatever you want to call it. I want to challenge you.

If you have a strong belief system and a set of guiding principles which steer you through your life then I guess you are feeling confident about reading this section. If not there may be a little apprehension.

Hide and Seek

OK, just to get you started. If I was to ask you to 'find God' where would you look?

I believe most people need to find their own spirituality first. I like simple models. Spirituality can be defined as, 'A sense of connection to something "greater" than oneself'. If that's a fair description then I'm guessing you will have had at least one 'spiritual experience' in your life. If you haven't then take a trip to the English Lake District, walk to the top of Hallin Fell and look at the breathtaking view across Lake Ullswater.

Or if you don't have time to travel to Cumbria then look at a leaf, study an animal, watch children playing and take in the amazing richness of life around you. How did this happen?

You won't find the answer to this in your logical brain - you'll find it in your soul.

So let's get to 'how?'

If you asked Deepak Chopra he'd say, 'There is a place of consciousness deep within where one's individual impulse of growth is identical with the movement of the cosmos. That is the point where your desire and the will of God are the same.' Which sounds amazing, but HOW do you do it!

No net please

Step one... don't do a Google search. You'll be given over 3 million pages to choose from. Most will want to persuade you to join their way of thinking, buy their programme or meet their guru. I don't think you'll find your own spirituality on the internet.

Quieten your mind

I talked about the importance of deep relaxation and meditation several times in How to Have a Brilliant Life, mainly because you'll have to do it several times! Find a quiet place and just enjoy the moment. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable and do your best to think of nothing.

Write your questions

Write down the questions you are asking yourself. When you commit a question to paper different parts of your brain (the less logical ones) get a chance to answer.

Be open to suggestion

I'm reminded of the story of the man who was caught in the floods. When the water was a metre high a fire engine came by and the fire fighters asked him to jump aboard, 'No thanks, my God will save me', he said.

An hour later the waters had risen and he was stranded on his roof when a boat came by. 'Jump aboard!' shouted the captain. 'No thanks, my God will save me', he said.

An hour later he was floating and struggling to stay above water when a helicopter came by. The winch man sent down a rope and urged the man hold on, 'No thanks, my God will save me', he said. 20 minutes later he'd drowned.

When he met God he asked why, when he had so much faith, he didn't save him, 'What do mean?' said God, 'I sent you a fire engine, boat and a helicopter!'

The answers to many of your questions on your search to become a more spiritual person could be right in front of you.

Learn the beliefs of others

Read and research a wide selection of philosophies. It's important that you find what's right for you - it may be a selection of teachings which help you to get there.

Get away from it all

A retreat is one of the most popular ways to help find your spirituality.

Brill Bit

Fancy a quiet night at the pub? Just ask, 'Would anyone like to talk about the greater good in the universe and our connection to it through our spirituality'. You'll be left well alone.

'Spirituality is... the awareness that survival is the savage fight between you and yourself.' Author Unknown

'Most importantly, the meaning of spirituality lays the seeds for our destiny and the path we must follow.' Dennis Banks

Here are three other articles which I wrote for our regular newsletter. If you have signed up for our, '90 days of brilliance' then you'll receive our news letters in the future. If you haven't you can do so by visiting www.MichaelHeppell.com.

The first one 'The cure for an average life' is one of the pre-runners to How to Have a Brilliant Life. I hope you enjoy it.

The cure to an average life

Just the other day I was described as, 'The cure to an average life'. It's one of those moments when you find yourself wondering is this a compliment or not! I decided it was.

I asked the person why they used that description and quickly found that he was actually mistaken. I wasn't the cure, I was the 'physician' who simply diagnosed that with the amazing talents and creativity he had (and I believe we all have) he was living his life at just above regular.

My job as a Personal Development 'physician' was to get him to recognise that and instead of being angry about the present, to get him excited about the future he could create.

When I asked him what it was specifically that made the difference, this is what he said.

"It was when you suggested a different way to look at a work / life balance that I understood it was me and me alone who makes a difference. When I got home I talked to my wife and told her your ideas on a work / life balance. She stopped dead in her tracks and proclaimed, 'That's it, that's what's missing in your life'. She begged me to use the ideas you shared, I did, and that's what made the difference."

I asked him once again who had really made the difference, and he agreed it was him and not me - I simply gave him the tools. He then went on to suggest I write my next book on this one subject! Rather than do that I thought I would share the simple concept with you here.

Brilliant work / life balance

Have you noticed when people talk about a work / life balance (WLB) they really mean a pain / pleasure balance? In other words they associate pain, with work (or the commute to work, or their boss, etc) and pleasure to the time spent away from work. They then tell themselves that a WLB is getting enough 'good stuff' outside of work to tip the balance high enough to get through their working day!!

So here's your choice

Change your experience of your work.

Change your occupation or company. If you don't love what you do, leave your work and find another job.

Keep the battle going. You can make the constant struggle between work and life outside of work a stress filled battle, until it eventually kills you! I won't spend any time on 2 and 3 as they are self-explanatory. So here are 7 simple tips to start to make your work a blast.

- 1) **Choose your attitude.** Taken from the wonderful book 'Fish' this simple statement says it all. Get this one right and you don't need 2 - 7!
- 2) **Put some pace in your day.** By literally moving faster you will not only experience a faster day, you'll get more done and be more likely to leave on time.
- 3) **Create a reward system for yourself.** Don't wait until your company creates a system of recognition. By creating a reward system for you, you will not only win all the time, but you'll also win prizes you want!
- 4) **Step up!** By taking on more responsibility you will feel better about the work you do and who knows it could equal a promotion.
- 5) **Stop working for money.** In Robert Kiyosaki's book 'Rich Dad, Poor Dad' he states that the rich don't work for money. Neither do happy workers. Work for the customer, work for satisfaction, work for you. The money will then be a bi-product of your efforts.
- 6) **Get some training.** Well I would say that wouldn't I? However, I guarantee that people who are trained in their jobs and have personal development skills to cope are happier - every time.
- 7) **Add some colour.** Your brain loves humour and colour. Take a look at the environment around you. Is it colourful and bright? If not, what can you do about it now, and in the medium term?

This next chapter could have been tucked in to *Brilliant Life* in the Family section. I wrote it in June 2005; it's a bit self-indulgent but I won't apologise for that as it's every bit as relevant today.

Why Dad Is Cool

I would never have described my dad as cool in the conventional sense - he'd rather squint than wear sunglasses, his fashion sense rarely gets beyond a new golf jumper, and he knows very little about new technologies and time saving gadgets. Oh, he certainly won't be reading this as he has never sent or received an email in his life.

When I was in my late teens I remember getting frustrated about stuff like 'not moving fast enough with the times' but as you get older you start to spot other things, which are more values based, those are the things that make my dad cool.

My dad actually drills holes in the fence and packs it with food for the woodpeckers, my dad trained the national junior roofing team who went on to win the world championships, my dad gives people a chance when others wouldn't give them the time of day, my dad always says please and thank you, my dad built my brother and I a tree house, and now I need to stop or the list could crash the internet!

The message is simple - sometimes those who are closest to us don't get the respect they deserve because we are too busy looking for the 'cool' people. Or we are too busy trying to be cool ourselves to remember our own and how some special people helped shape those values.

Finally two short stories; the first was published in April 2005 and received more comments than any other newsletter. The second you should read every day.

Dog Poo

Picture this... I'm strolling along a wonderful coastal walkway enjoying my family holiday with the warm sun setting in front of me, the breeze gently blowing and the scent of sea air in my nose when suddenly I hear "Pooooo!!!"

I look down, left, right, in front and behind, and in a nanosecond, with some swift footwork, manage to avoid the doggy's deposit on the pavement.

And that's when I start. I go in to my usual rant about how if I was King of the world I would have a special law passed where every dog would wear nappies, or owners would have their dog's poo posted back to them, etc, etc.

Half way through my tirade my daughter asked, "Daddy, why do you bother getting angry over something you can't do anything about?"

And once again the teacher becomes the student.

Reflecting last night on that lesson, I thought I would write a list of everything which annoyed me but I had no control over. It's an insight! There are over 30 other dog-poo level instances, which even at a subconscious level occupy some of my thinking. Most of them I have chosen not to think about ever again or choose to laugh or smile about, but one I can take action on right now.

More than 30,000 people read this newsletter and if everyone just took a couple of nappies, a couple of envelopes and found a few dogs....

Choose to have your best day ever!

So, according to 'experts', the Monday closest to January 22nd is supposed to be the most depressing day of the day of the year. They work on the fact that it's a Monday, it's cold, you've no money left after Christmas, bills are arriving and a bunch of other stuff. Excellent - if that's the most depressing day out of the way when's the happiest! Isn't choice a wonderful thing? I think I'll choose to have my happiest day next Monday - or why wait, I might just have it today!

The point is, if we allow people to tell us when our most depressing day should be, they take a little bit of our freedom to choose, too.

We have a choice. You have a choice right now. Continue to read this now or later. Whatever your choices you make today, make them brilliant ones.

Quality Recovery Time

When athletes want to attain peak performance they would obviously warm up before the race, match or event, but more and more you will see athletes warming down and the day after a major event they experience something known as quality recovery time. Basically this means they plan their time around the rejuvenation of their muscles, cardio system and physiology.

As usual in these e-mails I am going to link this to the way that we work and live our lives. We often prepare for a big deal, presentation, promotion, interview or significant event in our working lives. When we execute the necessary actions it feels amazing, especially when we start to get the results we desire. But without our own quality recovery time we become frustrated, stressed and full of anxiety. When we are in this state we cannot possibly be performing at our peak.

So why not take a holiday every day. I haven't got the time, I hear you cry. I've got a business to run, a team to manage, a boss to please or a target to hit. But we can all find 10 or 15 minutes a day when we can focus on relaxing correctly and rejuvenating our systems. Some call it meditation, some call it mental programming; it's just a chance to chill but there are some rules. Relaxation does not include watching Eastenders or Coronation Street. That, believe it or not, is entertainment. Relaxation does involve closing your eyes (but not going off to sleep), controlling your breathing and focusing on positive outcomes and visualisations.

For those of you who think that only hippies do this, here's a list of people who are known to practice techniques like this on a regular basis.

Jack Welch, Chief Executive, General Electric
Alan Shearer
Richard Branson (well, some hippies!)

Steven Redgrave
James Dyson
Winston Churchill
Thomas Edison

When I realised the real importance of relaxation I recorded a brilliant relaxation and visualisation programme called 'White Island'. Every week we get powerful testimonials from people who share the wonderful experience of deep relaxation.

So this week the message is not to step up; it's to sit down and relax. Take a deep breath and relax.....

Thank you for downloading and reading this bonus chapter.

Be Brilliant!

Michael Heppell

www.MichaelHeppell.com

