

ED JAMES
MARK TAYLOR
NICKY TAYLOR

BE MRE KID

HOW TO ESCAPE THE
GROWN UP TRAP AND
LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL!

OMG this book is so me! I always say a day is wasted without laughter. The tips and stories shared by Ed, Mark & Nicky in this book will help you to live a life filled with more fun, joy and enthusiasm. . . who doesn't want more of that!!!?

Alison Hammond, TV Presenter

Kids are so authentic and there's no reason for us to lose that when we're older. Kids see the wonder and awe in the smallest things every day. The concept and practical suggestions in *Be More Kid* remind us how important it is to bring out the best in ourselves and how we can do that in way that also brings out the best in others.

Ben Shephard, TV Presenter

This book gives you the tools to bring the belief, energy and passion you had as a child into your current life with transformational results.

Sarah Stirk, TV Presenter, Sky Sports & Entrepreneur

As a kid growing up in Birmingham, all I wanted to do was become a chef and have the most successful restaurant in Birmingham. This book reminds us of the important things that make us happy, and it gives down to earth, practical advice to make sure we are being true to who we really are and living our own dreams.

Glynn Purnell, (the Yummy Brummie)
Michelin-starred chef

This concept really works well both personally and in business. It's what we've built the HDY Culture on and is the glue that binds us together.

**Geoff Percy, Non-Exec Chair of HDY Agency,
SLG and H Bronnley.co.uk**

Be More Kid is a completely fresh approach to personal development that aligns with my passion for health and fitness. Never underestimate the positive effect that playing and having fun can add to both life and business. I still play with toys everyday - they've just got bigger!

Alan Barratt, CEO Grenade

BE

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May this book speak to the child within us all
and set them free ...

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Last but not least, we are thankful for the journey that each of us has travelled, the lessons that life has taught us, the expertise that we have gained along the way and the privilege that we now have to be able to share this with others. If we are able to Make THE Difference to just one person, then we have achieved our purpose.

INTRODUCTION

As Rachael sat in the chair, she seemed to diminish in size. It was as though she had left the façade, the one she showed to the rest of the world, at the door. This was the real Rachael, the person with fears and doubts, unsure of herself and exhausted from pretending.

To her family and colleagues she appeared confident and self-assured, knowing exactly what she wanted from life and doing what was needed to make it happen. On the inside she felt far from confident, she felt as though she was never enough and she had lost her way.

She no longer knew what she wanted.

What she did know was that she was tired. She knew that to everyone else her life looked idyllic and she knew she should be grateful for what she had, but there was something missing.

What was worse was that Rachael believed that she was the only person who felt this way. Yet the previous week it had been Jo sitting there saying virtually the same thing. A couple of days before that it was Tom.

Tom had shared something he felt deeply ashamed of, something he didn't feel he could tell anyone. It was a huge weight on his shoulders. He felt as though he had suddenly woken up one day and found himself with a wife, a large mortgage, three children and an expensive car. He hated his job but he was stuck with it – he desperately needed the money – so he went to work day after day; he was bored and he felt like running away, trapped in a life he didn't enjoy.

For Jo, everything irritated her. She found herself shouting at the kids and her husband for small things that she knew weren't even important, but she couldn't seem to stop herself. She was overeating, drinking more than she knew was good for her and avoiding exercise, even though she knew she would feel better for it if she made the effort. She had started making silly mistakes at

work, and she wanted to get her life back on track before it became worse than it already was.

Rachael, Tom, Jo ... and all of the others before them and who will probably follow them, their lives weren't how they wanted them to be.

As kids we have big dreams, anything and everything seems possible, and we believe that there is so much time ahead of us to achieve those dreams. Then over time we stop thinking about those dreams and ambitions, we lose the motivation and determination that we once had ... and we don't even notice it.

The great thing is that the resources we had when we were kids are still there; we've just forgotten how to use them.

In 2011, Bronnie Ware – an Australian nurse – wrote a book called *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying*. Bronnie Ware cared for people in the last 12 weeks of their life and recorded the common themes that patients had regarding regrets and what, on reflection, they would have done differently in their life. These are the five regrets that were mentioned most frequently:

- 1 I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
- 2 I wish I hadn't worked so hard.
- 3 I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
- 4 I wish I'd stayed in touch with my friends.
- 5 I wish I had let myself be happier.

We have written this book, *Be More Kid: How to Escape the Grown Up Trap and Live Life to the Full*, for everyone who wants to get the very best from their life, so that no-one need have these same regrets. It's not a self-improvement book about giving up chocolate or alcohol, which you may be relieved to hear, but rather a book about changing your deeper mindset to understand what really matters to you, and being happy.

We have included practical exercises for you throughout the book. To get the most out of it, these exercises should be completed as you read through

each chapter, and it's our intention that you read the book in chapter order, as each chapter builds on the previous one. There are also additional resources available on the website at www.be-more-kid.co.uk, which gives you the opportunity to download electronic copies of the full version of the exercises. You will also find additional exercises, as well as videos and access to podcasts, that focus on some of the topics discussed in the book.

Parts of the book may make you feel uncomfortable, parts may challenge your thinking – that's ok. Change means going outside of your comfort zone, and there are no wrong feelings or responses or answers. All we ask is that you have an open mind and give it a go.

Have you ever noticed how differently children react to things that might incapacitate an adult?

This story shows that it's not what happens to you, but how you react to things that determine happiness and success.

Ed's story

When my little girl was six, she broke her arm. She was playing with her brothers on the top bunk and fell off, landing badly on her arm. I still remember hearing the thud from downstairs when she landed. The reason I'm telling you this is because this is the moment that made me look at her, and in fact all kids, in a totally different light.

Back to my daughter and the starting point to this 'philosophy'. She coped incredibly. The only time she cried was when she first fell. She then handled every little thing that was thrown at her. The operation was stress-free, she enjoyed choosing a sling and cast because she was able to have her favourite colour – pink! She proudly told everyone at school what had happened and how long she'd be without the use of her arm for. In short, she not only accepted it, but totally embraced it. She opened drawers with her good arm and closed them with her head. I still have a picture of her at Disney on Ice smiling and proudly showing her pink sling off!

Comparing a child's typical response to how an adult would react in a similar situation, and contemplating other comparisons between kids and adults, we realised how many amazing resources we have as a kid that we lose touch with as we grow into adults, and how much we would all positively benefit from being able to reconnect with these resources again, combining them with the knowledge and experience that we now have as adults.

Research we've carried out over the last three years, in preparation for writing this book, has shown us that there are far too many people who are not happy; and there are a number of common reasons that they give for this.

They are not happy because they are not doing the things that are important to them, and feel guilty for wanting to. They don't have the relationships that they crave. They are yearning to be accepted for who they are, rather than feeling the need to fulfil other people's expectations. Feeling full of doubt and having self-limiting beliefs around confidence and trust, trapped by finances, in jobs and relationships that are not working for them. People feel stuck and they don't know how to free themselves.

Surely there must be more to life ... ?

When there are so many people who are so desperately unhappy, often leading them to anxiety and depression, you might question what prevents them from changing their lives?

The problem is that we are not taught how to control our emotions; we are not taught that we can actually change our thinking if it doesn't get us the outcomes we want, and we're not given the tools that we need to do that. There is a common mentality that we are not in control of our own thinking, not in control of our own lives – that things just happen to us. An attitude of blame is prevalent. The problem is that whilst we continue to absolve ourselves from responsibility and avoid being accountable as individuals, we are not the driver in our own lives, we are merely passengers, and therefore completely disempowered.

Our desired outcome for writing this book is to help you become the driver in your life, to assist you in recognising and reconnecting with some of the resources that you once had as a kid, and help you use those resources together

with the knowledge and experience that you now have as an adult, to live a life that is more fulfilled and content.

Will challenges still present themselves? Yes of course! Life will still happen; yet you will be more resilient to those challenges when they do arise. And remember: if you keep doing things the same way, nothing is going to change.

We are sharing our years of expertise in human behaviour, as well as our own experiences of how we have risen to life's challenges, so that you can improve your life for the better, and to show you how you can have fun while doing it. This book is all about how to live a better life and 'Be More Kid!'

PART I

STUCK AND SETTLING FOR

In January 2018 we sent out a survey to a group of adults asking them lots of different questions about their lives. The results that came back were pretty conclusive. Most people felt that they are ‘stuck’.

Things weren’t terrible, but there was this nagging sense that there must be something better, that they should be doing something more. Everything had become predictable, every year was the same, and people felt like they couldn’t make a change. Their only solution was to numb themselves with food or alcohol, or escape with a two-week holiday once a year.

We call this the ‘Grey Zone’.

The Grey Zone is the place where many of us ultimately end up because we settle for less than we know we can have. Because it’s easy and comfortable. Because it’s the thing that everyone does. Go to school, maybe go to university, get a job, find a partner, get married, have kids, get a dog, and play out the same years on repeat until you retire, then die. And that’s your life.

Just ‘good enough’. Isn’t that a terrifying thought? What happened to the dreams you had when you were a kid? What about all the big things you wanted to achieve – or even the little things, like playing an instrument or learning to speak Spanish?

The real problem with the Grey Zone is that we don’t feel in control. There are so many external pressures trying to keep us stuck. Advertising everywhere says we won’t be complete without some new material possession or package holiday that we can’t afford, so we buy it. It makes us feel good for a couple of

days, and then it's straight back to the Grey Zone. It's a trap that so many of us fall into: we get promoted into the well-paid job, move into a nice house with a mortgage, buy a car on finance, live a life we can't afford ... and then there's no way out.

If you begin to hate the job, well, too bad. Now you need the money to pay off the debt. To quote Fight Club: 'We buy things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like.' Sound familiar?

The end result is that we feel like passengers in our own lives, not in control, seeing ourselves running on a treadmill without knowing how to get off. The truth is that we do have control. It is totally possible to get off. In this first part we'll be bringing your attention to some of the common Grey Zone feelings, and why things are the way they are. It's important to really understand what's going on and where you're at before trying to make changes, so let's dive in.

CHAPTER 1

WHY ARE YOU CHOOSING TO BE UNHAPPY?

Something we have found that many people have in common in the Grey Zone is that they wish their lives were better, and they spend time thinking and daydreaming about how things could be different. While having dreams for the future is great, Grey Zone daydreaming is different.

It's not being excited for something you're working towards, but rather wishing for an escape from where you're at without actually doing anything about it. Or knowing that you're capable of doing something amazing, and fantasising about doing it, but then making excuses and rationalisations for why you're not trying it out – as one of our survey respondents said, 'Life's getting in the way'. Empty wishing without any real motivation or intention to take action is not getting you anywhere.

Grey Zone inhabitants don't take any action because they don't really believe that what they dream about could come true, or are terrified of failing. And many people become bitter that they don't have what they want already. They stop truly dreaming about what they could achieve, and start wishing

they had already achieved it. It's a kind of giving up; resigning themselves to the comfortable grey life, while simultaneously wanting to escape.

Kids aren't like this.

Kids dream about being an astronaut, or a ballerina, or a pilot, and they really think that's what they'll be one day. There are no limitations on what's possible. They don't worry about whether they'll succeed or fail. When they play-pretend that they're an astronaut on a spaceship going to the moon, they know that it's play, but the enjoyment they get from it is as if it's real. They're not annoyed that they aren't an actual astronaut yet! Quite the opposite: for them, imagining what it would be like is motivating, it encourages them to read books on space and look through their telescope, and they feel fulfilled.

Then gradually school teaches them that trying and failing is bad – that there are wrong answers, and that it's embarrassing. Adults may well tell them that their dreams are unlikely to happen, and as they grow up they start to believe it too. We are programmed as we grow up to be filled with doubt and negativity, so that doing what we actually want and making changes to get there seems incredibly difficult. Impossible even.

Part of the work we do as coaches is to get rid of all this negative programming so that people can start to dream like they did as a child, and to start making decisions that are actually right for them so they can experience the outcomes they want.

The art of play is something that kids naturally understand, and adults often don't. It's enjoying being in the moment, and the process of getting to where you want to be, every bit as much as enjoying the end destination. It's about having fun right here, right now, as part of the journey to what you want long-term. Compare that to how most of us think: wishing that we were somewhere else, someone else, doing something else, but never believing that it's possible, whilst at the same time feeling life is unfair that you don't have it, what a paradox!. In this case, kids' thinking makes more sense. When was the last time you just let go and played like a kid?

The bottom line – the reason behind all this daydreaming – is that people want to be happy. And it's a good aspiration. There've been lots of surveys and