

Ron Monteiro



# LOVE

## MONDAYS!

A Proven Process to Bring Joy  
Back Into Your Work Week

Special ORACLE  
NetSuite Edition



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*To my amazing wife and best friend Farah who inspires me and always encourages me to spread my wings and fly.*

*To my two incredible kids, Jas and Samuel, who teach me how to be a better person every day.*

*To my parents Violet and Antonio who left a comfortable life in Kenya to give their children better opportunities in Canada: a sacrifice that cannot be repaid but will be paid forward.*

*To my 100-year-old grandma Maria, who continues to light up every room she steps into!*

*You are all the 'why' behind my quest to help millions of people love their Mondays.*



# Praise for Love Mondays

**Jim Alling**

*Former President, Starbucks,  
Former COO of T-Mobile, Former CEO of TOMS shoes*

From the time I first met Ron, I have known him to be a human sponge who dedicates enormous energy to learning from people and everyday situations. I also know Ron to be a person whose greatest joy comes from helping others. Those two fundamental elements of Ron's personality are evident throughout this book. I think it is impossible to read "Love Mondays!" and not capture some insight (like a little gold nugget) that you will carry with you long after you finish reading.

**Dino Bianco**

*CEO of Kruger Products, Former  
President of Kraft Foods*

I really enjoyed reading Ron Monteiro's new book "Love Mondays" about life and business lessons we can use everyday. The book provides simple informative tools and a framework based on real scenarios and insights garnered by his extensive work with many leading companies and teams. Everyone at some point needs a re-orientation and refocus on their career and life, this book helps you get out of the everyday mindset and reflect on who you are, what you enjoy doing and how you can have positive impact on those around you. It was an inspiring read and mostly read on a Monday!

## **Mark Sanborn**

*President, Sanborn & Associates, Inc.*

*Author, The Fred Factor and You Don't Need a Title to be a  
Leader*

Work is what we do to make money and make meaning in our lives, so why not make the most of it? If you want to learn how to love Mondays, Ron Monteiro is on a mission and has actionable ideas for you on how to do it. In this book, he shares what's worked for him, and you can learn from his experience to make your journey better.

## **Dr. Nancy Mackay**

*CEO and founder, MacKay CEO Forums*

Ron's vision of a world where everyone loves Mondays—and every other day—is both bold and refreshing. His journey to finding a career that fuels his passion offers powerful insights for leaders who want to help their teams find fulfillment and make a meaningful impact. This book is a must-read for those committed to building a culture where everyone loves what they do!

## **Christine Cruz-Clarke**

*VP, Global Head of Marketing Excellence at Kraft Heinz*

"If you have ever experienced the anxiety that accompanies the Sunday night dread, this book is for you. Ron shares his uplifting journey and offers a blueprint for how to create a career that excites you. 'Love Mondays' is a roadmap to finding passion and purpose in your work."

## **Dr. Bhante Saranapala**

*The Urban Buddhist Monk, Author of ARE YOU KINDFUL?*

In a world where so many are racing toward an undefined destination, Ron's book invites us to pause and ask a crucial question: Do you truly love what you do? I highly recommend this book for anyone seeking greater happiness and fulfillment in their work. Happy Monday!

## **Asif Masani**

*Author and influencer*

Mondays will never be the same. Ron's book completely changes the way you think about Mondays. Instead of dreading the start of the week, he gives you the strategies and tools to actually look forward to it.

He combines real-life stories with practical advice that you can start using immediately. You'll learn that it's not just about getting through Mondays; it's about turning them into something you're excited about!

If you're tired of dragging yourself out of bed on a Monday morning, this book is going to be a game-changer for you. It'll help you make every Monday (and every day) something to look forward to."

## **Howard Behar**

*Ex President of Starbucks. Author,  
IT'S NOT ABOUT THE COFFEE*

Ron's mission to help others love what they do is both inspiring and practical. His book is a perfect blend of entertainment and education, making it a valuable guide for anyone seeking fulfillment at work. Here's to your Happy Mondays!





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# Foreword

I still vividly remember getting an email from Ron asking if I would be interested in designing an Excel course for a client of his. Little did I know that this email would change my life. Up to that point, Ron and I had talked a few times and presented on a webinar together, but we were not much more than acquaintances. Today, I talk to Ron virtually every day as we find more and more ways to make a difference in others' lives while loving our Mondays.

"Love Mondays" is a practical book that tells the fascinating story of how Ron went from a top-notch Finance professional to a world-class trainer and coach and provides a framework for us to do the same. The truth is most people are not happy in their jobs but are unsure or unwilling to do what is necessary to change that fact. I was one of these people for many years. That is why "Love Mondays!" is a book the world needs and one I cannot recommend highly enough.

What sets "Love Mondays" apart is Ron's unique blend of practical advice and heartfelt storytelling. He doesn't just tell you to find your purpose; he walks you through the process, sharing his own trials and triumphs along the way. I have witnessed many of Ron's trials and triumphs first-hand over the last few years. As someone who has made the leap from corporate to entrepreneurship, I can attest to the

value of Ron's four-step process: Find Your Purpose, Build Your Bridge, Burn Your Boats, and Flex Your Muscle.

During our time working together, I've seen Ron embody these principles. His dedication to a growth mindset, his willingness to take calculated risks, and his unwavering commitment to helping others have been genuinely inspiring. I am not sure I would have made it without him supporting me on my journey. Whether it's developing new training programs or reaching out to potential clients, Ron approaches each task with enthusiasm and a contagious growth mindset.

This book isn't just for those looking to make a drastic career change. It's for anyone who has ever felt that nagging sense of dissatisfaction on a Sunday evening, dreading the week ahead. It's for leaders who want to create environments where their teams thrive. It's for recent graduates trying to find their path and seasoned professionals looking to reignite their passion.

As you read through these pages and do the practical exercises, I encourage you to approach them with an open mind and a willingness to challenge your assumptions about work and success. Ron's insights have the power to transform not just your Mondays, but your entire approach to your career and life. As I read through the pages, I found myself thinking more deeply and questioning what would allow me to love my Mondays even more than I do.

"Love Mondays" reminds us that at the heart of every successful career and business are people—people with dreams, fears, and untapped potential. "Love Mondays" is a guide to unlocking that potential and creating a life where

work is not a burden, but a source of joy and fulfillment as it should be.

I'm honored to call Ron both a colleague and a friend. His friendship and insights have changed my life for the better and I have no doubt that this book will do the same for you. So, if you're ready to transform your workweek and rediscover your passion, buckle up—because Ron is about to show you how.

**Paul Barnhurst,**

The FP&A Guy



# Introduction

## **What It Means to Love Mondays, and the Consequences of Just Tolerating Them**

It was right in the thick of the Covid-19 pandemic. I stumbled out of my master bathroom, walked down a couple of steps, and collapsed in a heap.

“Ron?” I heard my wife Farah shout. I just lay there, incoherent and slipping in and out of consciousness.

I woke up to the sound of sirens and the unfamiliar stomp of the paramedics’ boots in my home. I was seated upright, and the paramedics conducted a battery of tests on me.

Heartbeat? Normal. Vital signs? Good. They advised me to rest and left almost as fast as they had come.

If my heartbeat was normal and my vitals were fine, why did I collapse? I exercised, ate relatively well and lived a full and busy life.

As it turns out, that was just the thing. My “full and busy life” resulted in me existing in a state of extraordinarily high stress.

I was a Senior Finance Director at a fantastic company. I was meeting and exceeding expectations. On the outside, I had “made it”. But inside, I was miserable.

I wasn’t enjoying what I was doing. I dreaded conducting another month-end analysis or financial forecast. I was tired of letting my work schedule control me. Any curiosity I had entering the world of finance felt like a thing of the past.

In the back of my mind, I knew my days as a Finance Director were numbered. But, still, I couldn’t imagine what doing something about my dissatisfaction would actually look like.

It literally took me lying in a heap on the floor, unconscious, and surrounded by my concerned family in the midst of a global pandemic, to realize that something needed to change—and fast.

I knew I had to make a decision. I vowed to myself that I would never let myself feel that same sense of despair, discomfort, and dissatisfaction again.

After a few days of rest, reflection, and supportive conversations with my wife Farah, I was ready to begin my journey to loving Mondays.

So what was my big decision? I quit my “great” job! I went all in on my side hustle and worked on turning it into a fully-fledged business.

In retrospect, it shouldn’t have taken all of those signs to get me to do something. But it did. Oprah Winfrey talks about listening to life’s whispers—the quiet nudge within us that



pushes us to see what's working and what's not. I was ignoring my whispers, over and over again until they became incontestable screams. Now, I want to help others listen to the whispers before they become shouts of despair.

Fast forward three years: today I am loving my Mondays a whole lot more. My business continues to grow, and so does my motivation and enthusiasm for the work that I do. My stress levels, while still high at times, are manageable. I have time and energy to spend with my family and do the things that I love.

I want to stress that I am not the exception; I am the rule. What do I mean by that? It was not a fluke that I felt happier once I aligned myself with my purpose. And, you can—and should—feel this way, too.

This book aims to help you love your Mondays. Whether it's crafting a new career, finding more joy in your current job, leaving your current position, or starting something brand new, I want to help you get started.

As the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said, "The journey of 1000 miles starts with one step." Are you ready to take yours?

## **Do You Love Your Mondays?**

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it, keep looking, don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it." – Steve Jobs

## **How often have you heard any of these statements?**

“It’s only Monday...”

“It’s hump day... halfway to the weekend.”

“Happy Junior Friday!”

Many of us spend our weeks counting down to the weekends or even retirement. But life is meant to be lived, not anticipated or just tolerated.

A 2024 Gallup study uncovered that only 32% of employees are fully engaged at work. This implies that two out of every three people are disengaged or neutral. While somewhat alarming, I see this gap as a massive opportunity!

By sharing my story of loving my Mondays, I hope to help others find ways to become more fulfilled and engaged in their work.

Imagine a world where everyone is actively engaged in their everyday activities. Think of the joy we could experience and spread to others every day!

Why do so many of us settle for jobs that dim our lights? It could be societal expectations, pressure from parents, or a school system that didn’t encourage exploration of what truly fulfills us. Perhaps it’s all of these and more.

I recently spoke with a leader who reached the top of the corporate ladder. From the outside, it seemed like he had achieved everything, but internally he was miserable. On the other hand, I also know executives who love their work. What’s important isn’t what we end up choosing, it’s

realizing that we all have a choice. None of us is forced into a path that drains us. We have the option to choose a path of fulfillment and joy.

Take my family's experience: my parents moved from Kenya to Canada with four kids, sacrificing their comforts and familiarities for our futures. Each of us pursued traditional paths—actuaries, teachers, accountants, engineers—because success was measured by stability, not fulfillment. It took me over twenty years to build the confidence to chase happiness and fulfillment in my own work.

Imagine waking up on Monday, grateful for the chance to work on something you love. It doesn't have to be a dream—it can be your reality. Yes, it'll take work. But so does working a job that drains your joy. The question is: What kind of work do you want to put into your life?

And remember it's never too early or late to start:

- Malala Yousafzai became an international advocate for girls' education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate at 17.
- Mark Zuckerberg co-founded Facebook at age 19, and by his early 20s, he had built it into one of the biggest social media platforms in the world.
- Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic in her early 30s.

- Steve Jobs returned to Apple in his early 40s and introduced products like the iMac, iPod, and later the iPhone, revolutionizing multiple industries.
- Colonel Harland Sanders founded Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) in his 60s, turning it into an international franchise.
- Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first black president at age 75—after spending 27 years in prison—leading the country through a transition to democracy.
- Pablo Picasso was still creating art in his 90s, continuously exploring new styles and forms, contributing significantly to modern art until his death.

If you dread the Monday morning alarm, this book is for you!

If you know deep down that you're meant for something more, then this book is for you!

If you dream of starting your own business but lack the time or courage, this book is for you!

So, buckle up and follow along with me.

### **Inside, you'll find:**

- My Four-Step Process to Loving Your Mondays:
  - Finding Your Purpose
  - Building Your Bridge

- Burning Your Boats
  - Flexing Your Muscle
- The Leader’s Guide to Helping Your Team Love Mondays
- Activities and exercises to help you on your journey to loving your Mondays
- Insights from “Monday Mavericks”—successful people who love what they do

## **Why I Wrote This Book**

The average person spends a third of their life at work, and job dissatisfaction is at an all-time high. How can we reconcile spending 90,000 hours doing something we can barely tolerate? Why should we have to? The purpose of this book is to help you love your Mondays.

Instead of starting your week with dread, I want to help you build a career that inspires motivation and passion. In Part One, I introduce my 4-Step Process to craft a workweek where every day is as motivating as the next—especially Mondays! In Part Two, I’ll provide a practical and step-by-step approach to help leaders unlock their team’s drive and make the most of the workweek.

Throughout this book, I’ll share personal triumphs and challenges, reflect on remarkable people in my life and history, and provide exercises to guide you on your path to loving your Mondays.

But words alone can only take you so far. It's like learning how to ride a bike—you won't know how it feels until you get on and start pedaling. This book is for those ready to be destabilized, move with intention, and take action toward loving their Mondays.

Are you in?



Part One

# **My Four-Step Process To Loving Your Mondays**





# Introduction

## My Four-Step Process to Loving Your Mondays

### The Four Steps

*"The secret to change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new." – Socrates*

There is no scientific proof or mathematical equation that can tell you how to love your work week. But, in my personal experience, and from talking to hundreds of business leaders, I've gathered a few common themes across the board from people who've learned to love what they do. As a result, I've created a four-step process to help you love your Mondays. The next few chapters will be devoted to exploring each of these steps, but for now, here's a high-level overview of what to expect:

### Step 1: Find Your Purpose

This step involves going within, understanding your unique gifts, and determining what you can offer to the world. You'll need to put other people's expectations aside and focus on what will make *you* happy and fulfilled. In Step One, you'll work on unlearning a lot of what the world has brainwashed us with.

## **Step 2: Build Your Bridge**

Just like anything in life, talk is cheap. This step is about taking action. Taking action will help you build your confidence and competence and help you test out your new path. It will also help you learn from your mistakes and fail forward.

## **Step 3: Burn Your Boats**

From here on out, there is no going back. You are fully committed to devoting all of your energy towards your new mission! Scary? Yes. Rewarding? A thousand-fold.

## **Step 4: Flex Your Muscle**

The only constant is change. In order to stay agile, you will need to maintain a mindset of continual improvement. When conditions evolve—which they will—you'll still be able to thrive.



# Find Your Purpose

## What's My Purpose Anyway?

*"When you start doing what you love to do, you will never work a day in your life." – Brian Tracy*

Finding one's purpose is such a nebulous concept. It used to frustrate me endlessly as I listened to gurus and coaches talk about purpose while I worked on my spreadsheets and financial reporting. I just didn't get it. To me, work was work—purpose or no purpose. Everyone needed a job, myself included, and I found myself in a pretty good one.

Now, I see purpose as one of the main drivers of loving your Mondays. We all have unique gifts in life that we can develop and share with the world. When you find what you are meant to do, your Mondays and every other day become filled with joy.

Funnily enough, finding my purpose was accidental.

I was working in my role as a Finance Director at Campbell's Canada when I got a congratulatory email from my HR partner. I excitedly opened it, expecting a bonus or some kind of gift. Instead, I found out that I was part of a small cohort of employees who were selected for an exclusive training course. Imagine my excitement—I

practically jumped for joy... can you detect a tiny bit of sarcasm?

A dozen or so of us gathered at a swanky hotel, where three facilitators greeted us warmly. I didn't know it at the time, but this training course would change the course of my life.

Wayne Stark, Nick Evans, and Mike Farley built an absolutely fantastic course that started with us all identifying and articulating our values. This was harder than I expected, and most of us struggled. Then, we reflected on events in our personal and professional lives that gave us tremendous joy. We had to answer two simple questions:

1. What was my best career experience?
2. What gives me joy in my personal life?

### **My Value System (The course helped me identify these 10 values)**

**1. Integrity / positive energy:** Integrity means doing the right thing no matter what the circumstances are. It means doing the right thing for the people first as well as the business

**2. Trust:** Trust means someone who can always be counted on. Being consistent and fair with all stakeholders.

**3. Teamwork:** Teamwork means having the ability to work as one team. Developing a common goal regardless of function and working towards it.

**4. Loyalty:** Loyalty means having your team's back (giving everyone a fair chance) regardless of how junior or senior the particular individual is.

**5. Collaboration / Positive attitude:** Working together and providing input and feedback well beyond your functional area.

**6. Competition / Fun:** Developing a winning spirit on the team that is focused on overdelivering business and personal objectives without compromising your values.

**7. Courage:** Being able to stand up to your point of view regardless of whether or not it is the popular opinion.

**8. Discipline:** Focusing on the important priorities and getting them done in a quality manner. There are several distractions that we all have and having the ability not to get consumed by them is true discipline.

**9. Respect:** Treating everyone equally regardless of seniority within the company.

**10. Excellence:** Striving to be the best you can be for your team and the business. Leading by example.

After working through this and spending time reflecting, I had a serious “Aha!” moment.

I was a teacher and coach in Finance clothing. While I’d built up a successful career in Finance, my favorite elements of my job were teaching courses and coaching my team. All of a sudden, everything became so clear. I decided to start carving out a new path.

The beauty of having a purpose is that it can be your North Star—something you come back to again and again to help you make the tough decisions.

If you're having trouble articulating your purpose, keep reading. I offer three practical methods to help you find your purpose, including exercise and activities to get you to explore what you're really meant to be doing with your precious time.

### **Find Your Purpose By Clearing the Noise**

My current professional purpose is as follows: "To help myself and others build confidence, increase joy and fulfillment, and love Mondays."

This simple statement helps me make decisions in all aspects of my career.

Should I do a free speaking engagement at the University of Toronto? Yes, because it is helping the young minds of tomorrow, thereby aligning with my purpose of inspiring others to love what they do.

Should I do a speaking engagement on building a growth mindset? Yes, because it can both help me build my confidence and help my audience progress on their path to loving Mondays.

Should I invest or partner in a business idea in the cannabis sector? No, because this has no connection to my purpose and I know that I am not particularly motivated by money.

### **Reader Exercise:**

List out the activities in your personal life and professional life that give you joy, as well as those that bring you anxiety. Take your time here. Try to erase all of the expectations that your parents and society placed on you. Be as honest as possible with yourself.

<b>Brings Me Joy &amp; Fulfillment</b>	<b>Brings Me Anxiety &amp; Fear</b>
E.g. Soccer, Coaching, Creating speeches, and Training session	E.g. Reading a detailed contract or doing my taxes.

I suggested completing this very same exercise with my wife, Farah. She met with Mike Farley and realized that, above all, she desired peace in her life. It has set her on a new path focused on self-growth, meditation, journaling, and yoga.

These days, she often jumps out of bed at four in the morning to begin her morning routine. She has gone ALL-IN on yoga, and she is much happier and more energetic than before this journey began.

She is finding her purpose, and all those around her can see how it has changed the trajectory of her life for the better!

## **Find Your Purpose By Determining Your Ikigai**

So, now you know what brings you joy, and what activities dim your light. But what does that have to do with finding your purpose?

I'd like to introduce you to the concept of Ikigai.

The term 'Ikigai' is a brilliant Japanese concept that translates to "reason for being" or "reason to wake up in the morning". Its goal is to help us find joy, fulfillment, and meaning in life, and it is often visualized as the intersection of the following four elements:

1. **What You Love:** This includes your passions and interests—those activities or causes that fill you with enthusiasm and make you lose track of time. These are the activities you would do even if you weren't being paid for doing it!
2. **What You Are Good At:** These are your skills and talents, the things you excel in. This element reflects your natural abilities and the areas where you have developed expertise.



3. **What the World Needs:** This aspect involves understanding the ways in which you can contribute to the betterment of society, using what you love and what you're good at. It's about finding a purpose that is larger than yourself, addressing needs, solving problems, or making the world a better place.
4. **What You Can Be Paid For:** This is the practical side of ikigai, where your passions and skills meet economic opportunities. It's about finding a sustainable way to live, by doing what you love and what you're good at and improving the world.

The essence of ikigai lies in combining these four elements. When you find an activity or purpose that aligns with all of them, you have found your ikigai. It doesn't necessarily have to be a grand or world-changing mission—it can be something as simple as being a good parent, creating art, or helping others in your community.

Ikigai is not just about career or financial success; it is about a holistic approach to well-being. The pursuit of ikigai encourages you to live intentionally, with a sense of purpose and connection to others.

While ikigai is rooted in Japanese culture, its principles resonate universally. It encourages a balanced life, where work, passion, and service to others coexist in a meaningful way.

"The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life" by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles provides much more detail about this brilliant concept. I've included a link to their book in the "Educational Resources" section.

Here are a couple of examples of folks who have found and are living their 'Ikigai':

One such example is from Okinawa: a fisherman named Seikichi Uehara, who was in his late 90s when interviewed. Seikichi's Ikigai was tied to his love for the sea and his role as a fisherman, which he continued even at an advanced age. Fishing was not just his job but his passion—he would go out on his boat every day, connecting with nature and staying active, which kept him physically fit and mentally sharp. Despite the modest income from this profession, the joy and fulfillment he derived from it gave him a reason to get up every morning.

Seikichi's work provided more than just financial support; it was a source of daily purpose and social connection, as his fish contributed to the well-being of his community. His humble yet meaningful lifestyle embodies the idea that Ikigai can come from professions that are not necessarily financially lucrative but offer deep personal satisfaction, community engagement, and a sense of contribution to something larger than oneself.

Another example from the same region is that of many elderly women who continue to weave traditional textiles, known as bashōfu. These women often live simple lives, but their craft gives them purpose, keeps them engaged with others, and allows them to pass down cultural traditions to younger generations. Despite earning little from this work, it's a key part of their Ikigai—providing structure to their days, mental engagement, and a strong sense of cultural pride.

*Find Your Purpose*



**Reader Exercise:**

**Now it's your turn!**

Questions	Answers
What do you love to do?	
What are you good at?	

What does the world need?	
What can you get paid for?	

**Here's my version, if you're feeling stuck:**

Questions	Answers
What do you love to do?	I love teaching and coaching.
What are you good at?	I'm patient and creative and I am good at explaining concepts and helping people grow and develop their skills.
What does the world need?	More people who invest in others through coaching and training.
What can you get paid for?	Personal coaching, keynote speaking and training in the corporate space.

Note that there are areas like soccer that I am good at, but at 50, I am barely hanging on in my recreational men's league that I have played in for the last 25 years. As much as I want to join Barcelona or Arsenal, I think that ship has sailed.

If you can find something that hits all four quadrants, you have found your Ikigai.

Another similar take is from a book called "The One Minute Millionaire" by Mark Victor Hansen and Robert G Allen.

According to them, the four characteristics of people who are expressing their genius include:

1. **Passion:** If they weren't getting paid for it, they'd do it for free.
2. **Talent:** They are good at what they do.
3. **Values:** Their work is important to them.
4. **Destiny:** They have a sense that what they are doing they were born to do.

Call it your Ikigai or your characteristics to success, both provide great frameworks to help guide you towards loving Mondays.

## **Find Your Purpose By Letting Go of the Outcomes**

*"When you let go of the need for any and all outcomes, life becomes a creative magical adventure." - Deepak Chopra*

Our society often measures success in terms of wins or losses. Did we secure the contract? Did the presentation go well? Did we sign the customer? Did we win the sports game?

One of my biggest learnings in life is to focus on the process and let go of the outcome. If I do my very best, even if the outcome isn't what I hoped for, I try to be happy. I put in my best effort and that is what counts!

Former Boston Celtics coach Brad Stevens lives for the process. His reaction is exactly the same for a missed basket and a made basket. He truly believes that if you focus on the process, which includes giving 100% at practice and executing the game plan perfectly, the odds will be in your favor and the score is irrelevant. Many phenomenal sports coaches have this philosophy and end up with fantastic winning records. They focus on all the actions that are necessary to build a winning culture well before the team takes the floor, court, or field.

The ironic truth is that if you focus on the process, the outcome will generally be better. Getting caught up in every small win or loss can hold you back. Easier said than done, though.

As a business owner, my first year was filled with ups and downs. I always felt like I was on a roller coaster. When I sold a session with a client, I was on top of the world. When I delivered a great session, I was ecstatic. But I also experienced tremendous anxiety when things were slow. I simply wasn't able to appreciate the journey. I wanted the outcomes and didn't see the value in the process itself.

If I didn't see immediate results, I felt like I was losing. But the point of a process is that it takes time. For example, a large part of my work involves sending many emails and messages to potential clients. Most of the time, I don't hear anything back. It's frustrating, definitely. But, over time, I see their responses trickling in, and I know that if I stick to the process, the clients will come.

I've also come to realize that those laborious emails and initial touchpoints are just as important as the ultimate training session or speech that I end up delivering. It has taken a very conscious approach to think through all elements of my process and know that every single step is important. Now, I try to enjoy the whole process: from drafting a personalized email to building a presentation for the initial meeting, all the way to the final delivery of the presentation.

One of my favorite books "The Great Work of Your Life: A Guide for the Journey to Your True Calling" by Stephen Cope, talks about finding our best lives with the following four steps:

1. Look to your dharma (your inherent purpose, or true calling in life). We've talked about how to find this by defining your ikigai.
2. Do it full out. We'll talk more about this in our "Burn the Boats" section.
3. Let go of the outcome. Admittedly, this was a hard one for me to embrace (hence the section of the book devoted to it!) I was always outcome-based and goal-oriented. But I learned that if you give 100% of yourself

to each part of the process, and are open to different results, you'll unleash a new appreciation for the work you do. The results will follow.

4. Turn it over to god. This doesn't necessarily have to be a religious perspective. As I've discussed, there's only so much we can do and control. At some point, we have to turn it over to the universe and be open to what may come.

### Reader Exercise:

Think about a recent event in your life that didn't go as planned. Maybe you didn't get a dream job. Maybe you were passed up for a promotion. Maybe the business that you started didn't work out.

Can you think of any positives in this event?

Write down some positives that emerged from a challenging event in your life. This will help you improve your ability to let go of the outcome.

Event	Outcome
My example event:  I did not get a CFO job that I desperately wanted at the time.	My example outcome:  I may not have started my business if I did get that job. (it was a blessing in disguise)



Event	Outcome

## Conclusion

Sitting down and really digging into my purpose has been life-changing. Knowing what drives me has become the filter through which I make all my decisions—whether it’s who I choose to spend my time with, what opportunities I take on, or even what I say no to. It’s like having a built-in compass that helps me decide where to invest my most valuable commodity: my time.

Think about it like this—every day, we get 24 chips of time to spend. You can’t hold on to them, you can’t save them for later, and once they’re gone, that’s it. Having a clear sense of purpose is like having a roadmap that tells you exactly where to cash in those chips. Without that, you risk

throwing them away on things that don't really matter to you.

Here's an example: Not too long ago, I got a message from a student who had attended one of my lectures. He wanted to meet for coffee, and before I had really clarified my purpose, I might have brushed it off—"That's nice, but I'm too busy." Now? It was an easy decision. It was a HELL YES! Why? Because helping others love their Mondays is a core part of my purpose. It wasn't just a coffee meeting—it was an opportunity to live out my purpose and help someone else find their own.

And on the flip side, knowing my purpose makes it just as easy to say HELL NO! when something doesn't align. If it's not moving me closer to what really matters to me, it's out. No second-guessing, no guilt, no wasting my chips.

This applies to my social life, too. I used to say yes to just about everything and would use my chips haphazardly. If a friend asked me to go out for drinks, I'd be there. But the next day, hungover and tired, I'd need time to recover and lose even more of my precious chips. I'm now much more selective about which events I attend. When I do say yes, I go all in and enjoy myself. Chips well spent.

But here's the thing—finding your purpose isn't a one-time deal. Your purpose evolves as you grow and gain more life experience. The more you reflect, the more you refine it. This isn't a "set it and forget it" situation. You've got to check in with yourself regularly, make sure you're still on track, and adjust as needed. I personally revisit my purpose at least once every quarter—it keeps me aligned, focused, and clear on what really matters.

So, congrats! You've completed Step One of Loving Your Mondays: you've identified your purpose (or at least the current version of it). But this is just the beginning. Now it's time to take action and build your bridge to turn that purpose into something real, something you live out every day.

Let's get started!



## Build Your Bridge

### Plank By Plank

“Imagine you’re building a bridge.” That’s what my coach Wayne Stark said to me. How does an imaginary bridge lead me to love my Mondays?

At this point in my journey, I was pretty clear that I wanted to leave my corporate job and start my own business. I didn’t want to be a Finance professional anymore. I wanted to be a coach, consultant, and trainer.

Knowing this wasn’t enough, though. I felt like a novice swimmer who was trying to cross a raging river. Picture class five rapids!

I didn’t know the first thing about starting a business! How do I register the business? What name do I use? How much do I charge for my training sessions or coaching? I had hundreds of these questions in my mind and no answers.

Enter “the bridge”.

Just like anything in life, talk is cheap. This step is about taking action to build your confidence and competence and help you test out your new path.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to build your bridge by:

- Finding a Coach
- Moving Forward (With Caution)
- Giving More than Taking
- Leading with Gratitude



Traveling to San Francisco to facilitate a training session was a moment of victory for me. Standing by the Golden Gate Bridge, this was one of my 'I have made it' moments! I had built my bridge, plank by plank, and crossed the raging river.

## **Build Your Bridge By Finding a Coach**

Folks who work with a great coach or have a mentor have a massive advantage in loving their Mondays. My coach Wayne had walked my path several years before me. He had worked in the same industry as me and had started his own consulting and training practice. He had successfully made the transition that I hoped to make.

Wayne also had a level of energy that inspired and motivated me. The chemistry was there from the get-go. He was my Mr. Miyagi and I was Daniel-San.

Think about your own personal circumstances.

Do you feel stuck in your job?

Do you feel like you don't know where to start?

Are you lacking the confidence to try and move to a different job or company?

Do you have a business idea that you're itching to explore?

These feelings are normal—we all experience them. The power of having a mentor or coach can work wonders in helping us overcome our fear of change and failure.

I believe this is a muscle that we can develop if we are willing to try and surround ourselves with 'Yes, you can' type of people.

After my calls with Wayne, I believed I could do anything. It was like he gave me a boost of "Red Bull Belief" which helped me motivate myself and move forward. At the end of every coaching call, I had a clear plan and an accountability partner to share my progress with at our next call.

Often just starting is the hardest part. Having an accountability partner—someone who you share commitments with—dramatically increases your chances of taking action.

I also want to stress that having the *right* coach or mentor is paramount—don't expect just anyone to fit the bill. If it's not working, don't be afraid to make a change. Your person is out there!

### **Reader Exercise:**

Who in your life can be your first Wayne? Go ahead and give them a call.

### **Build Your Bridge By Moving Forward (With Caution)**

#### **My First Plank: Starting for Free**

An important step for me was building confidence and competence. I needed to prove to myself first that I was actually capable of developing and leading training sessions. Wayne and I discussed offering free training sessions for friends of mine who were in senior positions. I turned to Andy Hull—then Senior Director at Nestle—and Tunku Pal—then Head of Finance at SodaStream Canada—who both readily agreed. I will always appreciate the leap of faith they took in me.

I developed my 'Storytelling for Finance' sessions, delivered them to their teams, and received both positive and constructive feedback. Those free sessions were huge for me in terms of helping me believe it was possible.

I always encourage folks who want to be entrepreneurs to test out their concepts for free. But this could also apply to working for a company. Can you do an unpaid internship or take on additional responsibilities outside of your role to test the waters?

## **But When Do I Get Paid?**

I knew my business couldn't last if all I could secure were unpaid sessions. The next line across the bridge was getting a paid session. Having worked at companies all my life, this was a big leap for me. I did not feel comfortable asking potential clients for money and didn't have a clue about how much to charge them. So with Wayne's guidance, I started meeting with potential clients and pitching my training sessions.

I was having very little luck initially getting a paid session. The bills were piling up and I was getting many rejections. I was getting more and more discouraged and seriously considered going back to the corporate world.

Soon, I began to feel desperate. I was running out of runway. How much longer could I withdraw from our personal savings in order to fuel this experiment? This crucial period of doubt and discomfort is something we've all likely experienced in some shape or form.

Then, out of nowhere, I got a win! I connected with the Finance leadership team at McCain Foods who were eager to have me present! Shawn Fernando took a chance on me, as did Natasha Rathee and Deepak Bhandari at their respective companies. These were my first three clients. I will always remember their faith in me.





KICT Inc. training & development

Invoice

Date	Invoice #
April 29, 2021	2021-500

Invoice To McCain Foods c/o Shawn Fernando
---

P.O. Number	Terms
	Payment due 10 days after completion of Services

Project
N/A

Description	Quantity	Rate	Amount
Story-telling & business communication for Financial Professionals - 90 minute seminar (April 29, 2021) HST @ 13% (rate includes all pre-meetings and preparation for training session).	10 participants	per person introductory rate	\$142.87
Thank you for your business		Total	
		Payments/Credits	
		Balance	

GST/HST No. [REDACTED]

I had my first paid gig! Yes! After many months of struggling, I saw my first positive amount in my bank account.

Today I’m charging almost five times what I charged for my first session. But this was a great lesson for me to just start and keep moving forward. The amount was almost irrelevant—what mattered was that I had clinched a paid session!

Again, it is so important to stick with things and build our persistence muscles. In “Unreasonable Hospitality” by Will Guidara, he quotes Calvin Coolidge, who said:

“Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men (people) with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.”

**Reader Exercise:**

Think about what the equivalent positive step would be for you.

Could it be asking for a new role or more responsibility in your current role?  
Could it be getting an interview for a new gig?  
Could it be scheduling your first networking call?  
Could it be sending out 5 new LinkedIn requests?

Remember, starting small and making forward progress is what starts creating momentum. Still feels too daunting? A positive step you can take is to simply ask for help! Who's someone you can ask to brainstorm with?

### **The Snowball Effect—Sort Of**

The next win came pretty soon after. Through another connection, I managed to sign the next session. I literally had to pinch myself. Was this really happening?

At this point in my journey, I realized I didn't even know how to accept a credit card! But, just like everything else in business, you have to figure it out. After a few calls to the bank, I could now officially accept credit cards as a form of payment. Another win!

I was in business, baby! I felt ready for the world to come knocking at my door. I posted excerpts of my sessions on LinkedIn and expected a flood of emails and messages. Again, I had this sense of confidence and felt like business was all up from here!

But I could not have been more wrong. It felt like nobody was responding to my emails, and business dried up. After speaking to Wayne, I realized a critical part of my business was sorely lacking: sales. I had no idea how to sell. That was a problem! This was the third plank of my bridge.

**Reader Exercise:**

Think of a significant roadblock that is currently getting in your way.

What is it?

Why is it stopping you from achieving your goals?

What will you do to stay on the path and keep building your bridge?

## **Persist & Be Patient**

*"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something—your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life." - Steve Jobs*

*"Nana korobi, ya oki" or "Fall down seven times, stand up eight." - Japanese proverb*

Pursuing what you love won't be easy. Knowing this ahead of time is really important. There will be many twists in the roads and many ups and downs, and you'll have to simply keep going.

As I explained earlier, when I first started my business, I didn't appreciate or know the first thing about sales. I thought I would put my training programs out into the universe and people would flock to me. Then I got some great advice about patience and persistence.

"The Go-Giver Sells More" by Bob Burg teaches that the cardinal sin in sales is doing most of the talking. Instead, I needed to focus on listening and asking questions to help solve my client's problems and challenges.

At the start of a sales call with a CFO, instead of jumping into my pitch, I asked him a couple of questions. I could see his impatience growing and imagined his cursor hovering over the 'leave meeting' button. At that point, I remembered that the book said to ask personal questions as well. I saw a trophy over this gentleman's shoulder and asked him about it.

Fifteen minutes later he was still telling me about his trophy. We then naturally transitioned to what I do and, at this point, I had his genuine interest. But based on our conversation, I truly felt like he did not need my training programs. I told him this candidly and said if anything changed that he could get in touch at any point.

This is when something really unexpected happened. He looked at me and said: “Ron, I can definitely use you. You can reinforce the message that I have been sharing with the team. I will be in touch with a couple of dates for training sessions.” I politely thanked him, ended the call, and jumped for joy. Was this the beginning of the end of my struggle to sell?! I shared the good news with everyone I came across that night.

Over the next couple of weeks, I watched my email closely with great anticipation. Monday came and went, then Tuesday, and then Wednesday. I was stunned. I asked my friend Dave Iacobelli for advice. He told me not to panic. “Just follow up with him once every few weeks, “ he recommended, reminding me that CFOs had a lot on their plate. He also shared that there’s a rule in sales that it takes on average seven touches to make a sale.

Despite my disappointment, I followed his advice and kept sending positive notes every two or three weeks. Pretty soon, though, I had lost all hope that I would get any business with him.

Months later, an email came through! I was shocked when the CFO replied to one of my emails and confirmed the two dates.

If this isn't a story of patience and persistence, I don't know what is!

Here's one more for good measure:

I always dreamed of teaching in Hawaii at some point in my life. In a moment of inspiration, I found a list of all the business professors at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and emailed all of them saying that I would like to do a free lecture for students. I was greeted with what, at this point, was the familiar sound of crickets. The old Ron who had not read and learned about the power of persistence would have given up but the new and current Ron did not give up without a fight.

A couple of weeks later, I sent a polite follow-up asking if any of the professors would be interested. No response. Zilch.

I love dispelling the phrase 'You can't teach an old dog new tricks.' In one of my speeches, I coined the phrase 'You CAN teach an old RON new tricks.'

So, I sent my third email, trying to paint a picture of how the students would benefit. This time I saw one unread email in my inbox. I opened the message to a one-word response: "RETIRED".

This was yet another opportunity for me to throw in the towel. Instead, I responded by congratulating him on his retirement and asking him if he was available for a quick chat. He agreed to it.

After a great chat where I spent my time learning about him, he offered to send a note to the faculty and recommend that they bring me in.

Within a day, I had two emails in my inbox from professors who were interested in bringing in a guest speaker. As a result, I had the honor of giving a virtual lecture for the Shidler School of Business, University of Hawaii at Manoa! Again, patience and persistence in action!

On that particular day, I had a lecture at the University of Toronto at noon and another lecture at the University of Hawaii at midnight. The timing didn't bother me because both opportunities aligned perfectly with my purpose. I was happy to do the midnight lecture!

**Reader Exercise:**

What is something that you gave up on that you can possibly resurrect?

If presented with that same situation today, how could you react differently?



Can you take that specific action today?

One day, I got a call from McCain looking for Excel training. There was absolutely no way I had the ability to teach Microsoft Excel. I was an intermediate user at best but as an entrepreneur who didn't have any alternative sources of income, I wasn't about to say no.

This is when I started working closely with Paul Barnhurst (who I work with almost every day now). I asked him if he would be interested in building an Excel course and he said yes. Over the next few weeks, we met several times and planned every single detail. We invested hours into building the course and when it was time to deliver the course Paul absolutely killed it. The McCain students loved it and the survey results were off the charts. This felt like a dream come true for both of us. I now had an amazing partner and had another course that I could try and sell to my clients.

The snowball started to build, and my confidence continued to grow. The business was starting to gain some serious momentum. McCain asked me to do the storytelling session across the North American Finance team. That was a huge boost to my business. Most of my time was now spent

delivering sessions and I wasn't spending much time selling.

I learned an important lesson in entrepreneurship. You have to keep selling—always. It is so clear in hindsight that if you are not constantly filling the pipeline you will eventually hit a dry spell. Today, I try to devote time to meeting with clients and often have weeks mixed with delivery and sales meetings.

Regardless of whether you're a budding entrepreneur or not, this rule still applies. Ensuring you schedule regular time for networking is crucial, regardless of your career goals. You never know how a single conversation or connection can help you in the future.

Another useful sales tool for me has been LinkedIn. I try to consistently post about my training sessions. Now, folks who once saw me as a Finance professional are seeing me in a new light as a trainer and speaker.

On a recent flight to Chicago, I was about to turn my phone to airplane mode but made a spur-of-the-moment decision to do a quick post. I took a quick selfie and wrote up a post about how grateful I was to be traveling across North America facilitating training. The post resulted in two leaders reaching out confirming they want me to do speaking engagements for their team!

### **Reader Exercise:**

Think about how you can ensure you maintain momentum in your quest to Love Mondays.

What is one thing you can commit to?

For example, if your goal is to increase your networking, make a list of 5 people you want to meet and send them a message asking if they are willing to have a coffee chat. Add this practice to your weekly to-do list.

- 1
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## **Build Your Bridge By Giving More Than Taking**

### **Give, Give, & Give Some More**

*"The more you give away, the more you get." – Wayne Dyer*

*"The surest way to bring goodness to yourself is to make it your intention to do good for somebody else." – Oprah Winfrey*

Two of my heroes, Wayne Dyer and Oprah Winfrey, talk a lot about the power of giving or being of service to others.

Both of these individuals put service at the center of their approaches. When they devoted their lives to others, it came back to them in many forms. Fulfillment, happiness, and even material prosperity.

So how can we get better at giving?

### **Be a Fred!**

A few years ago, I did a high-pressure facilitation for a global law firm in San Francisco. This was one of those victory moments for me. Partners from this firm flew in from all over the world. The session went well and I was thrilled and wanted to find a great restaurant to treat myself.

I went to the front desk of my hotel with a big smile on my face and asked the attendant if he could recommend a restaurant. He basically threw a menu across the desk and said “NEXT”. That gesture was so deflating to me.

The next morning I came out of my hotel and was planning to tour San Francisco. I was greeted warmly by a gentleman named Michael Jawitz who, with a big smile on his face, asked, “How can I help you?” He ended up spending 15 minutes offering some phenomenal recommendations and directions. He was a Fred!

Fred? But his name was Michael! I know, I know. Hear me out.

“The Fred Factor” tells the story of mail carrier Fred Shea who went above and beyond in his role. While he was in a profession that many people snicker at, he took tremendous pride in his job. Mark Sanborn, the author of the book, knew Fred personally and was so inspired by his kindness and generosity that he wrote an entire book on it.

I shared the Fred story at a recent training, and one of the participants shot up her hand. “Yes?” I asked her. She

shared a beautiful story about how her grandmother always said to bloom where you are planted.

When I worked for Kraft, I took a job in Corporate Finance doing one of the least sexy Finance jobs there is—overhead costs. My manager Alain poured his energy into his job. His enthusiasm and motivation were completely contagious. I followed his lead, and as a result, I was promoted into one of the most coveted Finance jobs as my next role. Whatever your role is, do it with gusto. You'll bloom into a better version of yourself, and people will start to notice. By giving, you will actually end up receiving,

### **Reader Exercise:**

Who's a Fred in your life?

When were you last a Fred?

### **Don't Make It About You**

True success comes when we are in service to others. A friend of mine was job hunting and asked me if I could introduce him to anyone at McCain Foods. I had a friend Shawn who at the time I hadn't talked to in several years. I

asked Shawn if he'd be willing to share Ryan's resume with the hiring manager. After reconnecting with Shawn, we jumped on a call where I shared more about my business. As a result, McCain Foods became my second client. If I hadn't helped Ryan from a place of service, I wouldn't have landed this opportunity.

**Reader Exercise:**

Think of a time when helping someone else ultimately helped you.

What did you do?

How did you feel?

What came as a result?

Now, think of something you can do for someone else today. Don't think about what you might get in return, just help out for the sake of it. The rest will come in time.

## **Build Your Bridge By Being Grateful**

*“Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.” – Eckart Tolle*

In my days as a Beancounter, I would frequently spend a lot of time complaining. Complaining about the amount of work we had to do. Complaining about leadership. Complaining about Marketing or Sales who had the ‘cool jobs’. The list goes on. All that did was put me in a negative mindset where I was definitely not my best self.

As my career progressed, I started learning about the power of gratitude and how it impacts my mindset. Instead of wasting endless time complaining about things, I started consciously looking for things to be grateful for. I chose to be grateful that I had a job at a great company and was getting paid every two weeks rather than complaining. I would be grateful that my leaders generally cared. What resulted was me having a positive mindset and a can-do attitude.

This mindset change led to so many positive results for me. Many people who are higher on the happiness spectrum have some form of gratitude practice in their days. As a result, I now try to start and end my days with gratitude. Some days the gratitude practice slips, but I try to live this 80% of the time, putting me way ahead of my former self.

Five ways to work on your gratitude:

1. Keep a journal
2. Avoid comparing yourself to others
3. Take a “news fast”
4. Meditate

5. Spend time in nature

**Keep a Journal**

My wife Farah has a high-octane morning routine and has filled many gratitude journals. Her routine starts with a gratitude exercise before she even opens her eyes. She thinks of things she is grateful for. She then has a freezing cold shower followed by journaling, meditation, and reading. I have seen a tremendous change in her overall energy and zest for life!

A simple gratitude journal involves writing down three things you are grateful for every day. It could be as simple as 'I woke up today', 'I'm grateful for family, friends, and food... it doesn't always have to be grandiose!

**Reader Exercise:**

What are three things you are grateful for? Note that it could be as simple as having a steaming cup of coffee today.

1.

2.

3.

**Avoid Comparing Yourself to Others**

*"Comparison is the thief of joy." – Mark Twain*



I decided to start an Instagram page and got myself hooked on social media. I would post something and see how many people like my post. I would compare my likes to other friends of mine. I would see pictures of my friends at beautiful locations around the world and would feel pangs of jealousy. I started realizing that this comparison was making me unhappy. I realized that I was much happier before I clicked on the Instagram icon than when I closed it. It was very clear to me that any time I compared myself to others, it was not serving me.

I am now much more intentional about when I use Instagram and have learned to be genuinely happy for others.

In her book “The High Five Habit”, Mel Robbins talks about turning envy into inspiration. When I feel myself comparing myself to others and feeling envy or even jealousy, I remind myself to try and find inspiration from that person. It is so powerful to have a simple reframe like that.

### **Reader Exercise:**

Think of one person who you envy. It’s okay, we all have those people in our lives.

Why are you envious of them? What do they have that you don’t?

Instead of being jealous, what is one thing you can do to get closer to attaining what they have? Can you ask them to mentor you or let them know that you admire them?

There you go, from envy to inspiration.

When I first started my business many of my friends who were on the same Finance track as me started getting huge promotions to positions like CFO or CEO. I initially felt some pangs of jealousy and wondered what would have happened if I stayed on the Finance path.

I have now learned that my path is unique and things will unfold in my own way. I am now so genuinely happy when my friends get promoted or have success in their careers. If I start feeling any envy, I try to shift to inspiration. If I start comparing, I start thinking about how to compliment the person. It takes a lot of daily practice!

## **Take on a News Fast**

Our society is filled with negative news. Murders, stabbings, plane crashes, horrific accidents... Just reading or watching the news in the morning can lead to a negative start to your day.

Try a news fast.

What is a news fast? A news fast is a conscious decision not to spend time watching the news. In fact, for me, if I see the news on TV or in a waiting room that I'm in, I put on my headphones and avoid it at all costs.

I have done this almost to the point that I often don't know what is going on in the world. I may have swung my pendulum too far. My point here is to stay away from the depressing day-to-day news that does not impact your world.

Instead of filling your mind with the negative, spend that time listening to uplifting podcasts or reading inspiring books. You want to surround yourself with the messages and mentality you need to succeed.

Similarly, we live in a tremendous world where technology can be a blessing or a curse—the algorithm can work for or against you. If you open my YouTube app you will see Oprah, Robin Sharma, Ed Mylett, Tom Bilyeu, Mel Robbins, Les Brown, and even personal development and spiritual gurus like Wayne Dyer, Louise Hayes, Bob Proctor, and Jim Rohn. Listening to one of these folks at least once a day always gives me hope and inspiration. Make the algorithm work in your favor!

### **Reader Exercise:**

How often do you read or watch the news?

Next time, take note of how you feel afterward.

Consider what kind of media you can add to your life that helps you focus on the good.

### **Get Quiet**

Until recently, I just didn't understand meditation and thought it was kind of kooky. What the heck are these folks doing closing their eyes and not thinking about anything?

Whenever I tried meditating, I would invariably get more frustrated and less peaceful because I could not control my thoughts. They were racing even faster than before I was meditating.

My turning point was when I read "Stress Less, Accomplish More" by Emily Fletcher. Her approach to meditation was very forgiving. She started by saying that our brains are

always running, so doing our best is perfectly good enough. Whatever my version of meditation is, that is good enough.

As a result, some of my meditation sessions become what Tom Bilyeu calls ‘thinkitating sessions’ where the ideas are flowing. Others are more traditional where I try to focus on deep breathing and emptying my mind. I now feel so peaceful and refreshed after a 10-minute quiet meditation. It is a little break for me. Do it your way!

I also realize how powerful a habit it is. It has so many benefits including better health and a clear mind. Imagine how much information is entering our minds at any given time. Instagram, LinkedIn, Emails, Tweets, Facebook, TikTok, Texts, Snapchat streaks....the list goes on. Even a 5 or 10-minute quiet meditation gives our mind a break from this barrage of often useless information.

Despite knowing that this was a winning habit, I still had trouble building it into my daily routine. This is where I found a winning hack called “habit stacking” from James Clear’s brilliant book “Atomic Habits”. This is where you couple a habit you want to build in with a reward.

My simple trick was—no morning coffee unless I did a 10-minute meditation. Meditation is now a locked-in habit for me. Having said that, if I miss a day then I just try and get back on the horse without beating myself up.

### **Reader Exercise:**

Think about a healthy habit that you want to build into your day that you are struggling with. It could be meditation, taking a walk, doing 20 push-ups a day, anything.

Now think of something you love. It may be a cup of coffee like me or another kind of treat.

Make a rule for yourself for the next 30 days:

My example:

If I meditate first thing in the morning, then I can have my morning cup of coffee.

Your turn:

If I \_\_\_\_\_, then I can have/do/enjoy  
\_\_\_\_\_.

This habit-stacking trick has worked wonders for me! I hope it serves you, too.

### **Move Your Body!**

*"Try and get out into nature for even 30 minutes each day to clear your head, think, walk, and breathe." – Robin Sharma*

Many of us spend most of our days living an extremely sedentary lifestyle. We have drive-through restaurants,

Uber Eats, Amazon delivery, and so many ways to avoid using our legs and stay active.

Building a movement practice can be life-changing. I never used to like walking, but now, one of my favorite activities is walking with our dog and Farah on the trail behind our house. We have a 20-minute route that crosses a couple of streams, where we often see wildlife grazing. It's such a treat to have this practically in our backyard. The path is usually quiet, frequented by other dog walkers and a few people exercising. Meanwhile, imagine how many people are sitting at home, watching TV, or scrolling endlessly on Facebook or Instagram.

Blessings in disguise often come from challenges. At first, walking our dog three times a day felt like a chore—especially in winter, with horizontal snow and biting winds at minus 20 degrees. Those conditions are never fun, but a sunny winter day is something I look forward to. I'll often put on headphones, listen to a podcast, or crank up my Spotify playlist, and find myself energized, sometimes coming up with my best ideas.

One day, after a walk with Bella, I called my awesome partner, Paul Barnhurst. "Hey, Paolo—I have an idea." I can just picture him shaking his head and rolling his eyes because he hears this a lot from me, often after my nature walks. "I'm going to ask bestselling authors Bob Burg (who wrote "The Go-Giver") and Mark Sanborn (who wrote "The Fred Factor") to do a podcast with us." With that, I quickly sent them notes on LinkedIn, and they agreed. Another idea was to ask Howard Behar, the ex-president of Starbucks, to be on my podcast. That, too, came to fruition, sending me on a path to interview so many amazing people.

In addition to sparking creativity, the physical benefits of walking and movement are tremendous. We live in such a sedentary society, and building this habit can be a game-changer. Like me, you may start out seeing it as a chore, but it could end up being something you love to do.

**Reader Exercise:**

What is one way you can carve out some time in your week to be more active?

**Conclusion**

Congratulations! You've started building your bridge.

This isn't just about getting from Point A to Point B—it's about taking the bold, necessary steps toward loving your Mondays and every other day of the week.

Think about what you've done so far: you've faced your fears, taken real action, and, more importantly, stuck with it. Every step you've taken—whether it's reaching out to a mentor, making that first awkward pitch, or showing up for yourself day after day—has laid the foundation for something bigger.



But here's the thing: building the bridge is just the start.

You've put in the work to build winning habits, to get out of your comfort zone, and to start seeing what's possible for you. Every plank you've laid in that bridge is a choice—a choice to step away from the familiar and toward something way more fulfilling. So take a minute to appreciate that.

Now, let's talk about what's next. The next step is no small thing. It's where you go ALL-IN. It's the moment you commit 100%, no safety net, no looking back. Yes, it's scary, but let me tell you—when you burn the boats and leave yourself no option but to move forward, you'll tap into a level of determination you never knew you had.

You've built the bridge, and now it's time to cross it. Are you ready? This is where the magic really happens. You've got the tools, you've got the mindset, and you've already proven to yourself that you're capable of more than you thought. Now, it's time to go all the way.

**Let's do this!**



## **Burn Your Boats**

### **There is No Plan B**

Step One was all about finding your purpose and giving you clear direction.

Step Two aimed to build your confidence by testing out your new approach to loving Mondays.

Step Three is about having the confidence and belief and going ALL-IN. There is no going back in this step.

The expression “burn the boats” originates from situations where military leaders literally burned their boats upon arrival into enemy territory as they arrived on land to fight a battle. It was a way to motivate their troops and also show them that they were fully committed and that there was no retreat. There was no turning back!

For individuals who want to start loving their Mondays more, it is the time to fully commit! Fully commit to finding a new job, fully commit to your new business, fully commit to your new reality! There is no turning back!

In this chapter, you'll learn how to burn your boats by:

- Leaving your comfort zone
- Finding your people

- Ditching the naysayers

## **Burn Your Boats By Leaving Your Comfort Zone**

My 'burn the boats' and go for it moment came abruptly. Early on in my business venture, when it was still just a side hustle I had some initial success with my training sessions at McCain Foods and Bayer. This gave me a false sense of confidence, and I was convinced my side hustle was going to be successful.

I was so chuffed with my progress that I decided to share it with the HR department at my work. I wanted them to know that I had a side hustle going on. I thought this was the responsible thing to do, and didn't anticipate there being any issues.

Boy, was I wrong!

HR told me in no uncertain terms that I was way too senior to have a side hustle. They told me I needed to make a decision: stay at the company and give up my side hustle, or leave.

You can imagine the anxiety I was feeling. I had worked at big companies for 20 years and always had a pay cheque coming in every two weeks. My mind was racing with so many questions. How can I possibly start a business? Am I too old to do this now? Am I cut out for entrepreneurship? Would we lose our home if I went for it and my business failed?

The conservative part of my brain was starting to convince me to abandon ship and get back to the comfort of the

familiar. But my instinct was telling me to go for it. Something inside of me said it was the right time.

I spoke to Farah who said she would support me with whatever decision I made. She was leaning toward me resigning and going for it. I didn't take that lightly—up until this point, my job had given our family everything. If I gave it up, what might they have to sacrifice? The amazing roles that I had helped us travel to different parts of the world. They helped us afford the ability for both of our kids to pursue their passions. For my daughter Jasmine, it was horseback riding. For my son Samuel, it was ice hockey... Taking chance on a new business venture could potentially keep my kids from being able to do the things they loved.

Eventually, I made a decision.

I decided to go ALL-IN. The week after the conversation with HR, I resigned from my role. It was a big decision and my gut said to go for it! There is something to be said about trusting your gut. As I thought about my *ikigai*, I was convinced that this was the right move for me. It felt like the right time to burn my boats!

I never used to understand what people meant by "trusting your gut." Now, I've developed my own way of doing it. When I'm faced with a big decision, I start by collecting all the facts and weighing the pros and cons. For major choices—like deciding between two jobs—I'll even write down the key factors and score each out of 10. Then, I step away from the decision, often sleeping on it. When I come back, I focus on how each option feels. In this case, I did the same: I weighed the pros and cons, then the next day, I imagined myself either staying in my current role or

starting my new business. The answer was crystal clear—I was ready to go for it. I trusted my gut.

**Reader Exercise:**

Think about an upcoming decision that you are facing.

Write down the pros and cons of each decision and score each factor out of 10.

	Pros	Cons
Total		

Tally up the total.

Is there a clear winner?
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Now, take some time away from the decision and see if you have a strong feeling one way or another.

Here's an example from my past. In 2016, I had two job offers: one from a large company with a huge finance team (Hudson's Bay), and the other from a smaller, private beverage manufacturer that few had heard of (YaYA Foods). On the surface, you'd think the larger company, with its higher chance of security and stability, would be the obvious choice.

I spoke to my mentor, Chris D'Souza, and he gave me an approach that helped. He asked me to list five factors that were important to me and rate each one out of ten. After tallying the scores, I could see what the logical part of me thought.

Take a look for yourself:

	Hudson's Bay Company	YaYA foods
Job Content	5	9
Pay	8	6
Commute	8	8
Work Life Balance	5	7
Advancement potential	8	7
<b>Total</b>	34	37
Gut the next day:		YaYA foods

After I had created this chart, Chris suggested that I sleep on it and check how each decision felt the next day.

After going through this process, it became clear that YaYA was the right move. I was ready for a new challenge in unfamiliar territory. Having always worked at large multinational companies, this turned out to be a great choice for me.

## **Once The Fire Is Out**

I spent the next few weeks transitioning out of my role and soon found myself with the title of full-time entrepreneur. Reality set in. The pay cheque stopped rolling in every two weeks. All at once, the challenges of running my own business became painfully obvious.

I remember sitting in my home office putting all the bills that were due on a spreadsheet and trying to calculate how much revenue I would need to bring in just to offset the bills. I remember wondering whether I made a mistake. I started questioning whether I had what it took to make this a success. I remember a feeling of helplessness and irrelevance. Here I was sitting in my office, while the rest of the world was moving forward!

People can smell desperation from a mile away. It's a recipe for failure. I sold almost nothing over the next few months and started to see the bills continue to roll in and our bank account dwindle. Soon I had to start withdrawing from our savings to pay the bills. This was the first time as a parent that I worried about money. I didn't see a path to making our financial equation work. It was a tough time for me and was somewhat unexpected after the euphoria of making a

life-changing decision. I didn't realize how soon the challenges would emerge!

Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately), I had burned my boats. There was no going back.

**Reader Exercise:**

Think about some of the challenges that will emerge when you 'burn the boats'. This could mean starting a new job, changing careers, or starting your own business.

Write down those challenges here:

Can you take that specific action today?



How will you be able to deal with these challenges?

Who will you turn to in order to buoy your confidence?

## **Burn Your Boats By Finding Your People—And Ditching the Naysayers**

### **Finding Your People**

What stopped me from falling into the pit of despair? My people. This is where my support network kicked in, yet again. Farah was super supportive and encouraging. My coach Wayne was a force for good and kept encouraging me. My current partner Paul was starting to go through the same journey and encouraged me every step of the way. My mentor Chris D'Souza was someone I turned to for help. We'd sit for hours over dinner, with him offering me a tremendous source of inspiration.

One of the best parts of starting a new journey is building a team around you. Whether it's a job change, career shift, or starting a business, your network is crucial. I've always tried to be kind and helpful to everyone I encounter (something I learned from my parents), and it was amazing to see friends go out of their way to help me in so many ways.

A few years earlier, I had taught a course at Humber College in Toronto, and one of my students (Phu Le) emailed me to thank me for teaching. At the bottom of his email, there was a link to his website, and I was impressed by how professional and artistic it was. I reached out to Phu, asking if I could hire him to build my website. To my surprise, he insisted on doing it for free, refusing any payment. I did my best to give him small amounts, but he was incredibly generous and did a fantastic job with my site.

Similarly, at one of the companies I worked for, there was a young woman on my team who worked part-time. I quickly noticed her incredible eye for design; she created stunning presentations and reports. Knowing that presentations weren't my strong suit, I asked her to help polish some of mine. She transformed my mediocre presentations into works of art, and clients started commenting on how impressive they looked. Natasha also wouldn't accept payment, so I would take her out to dinner or send her Uber Eats gift cards. I'm proud to say she now teaches PowerPoint with me and does freelance work in this area.

My partner, Paul Barnhurst, has truly been a godsend. We met while speaking at a webinar, and I had an instinct to connect with him. We had a great networking call and decided to stay in touch. We now have conversations

almost daily. More to come on how we've developed a fantastic partnership.

**Reader Exercise:**

Think about the people you respect in the industry you want to be in (for example).

Write down their names and what stands out about them.

Then, write them a note sharing that with them!

Build relationships heart-first.

A few years ago, a friend of mine, Jenn Salter, reached out and said she thought I would be a good fit for a company called Clear Concept Inc. They train people in leadership skills & productivity all around the world. At the time, I was a Finance person who had zero facilitation experience. I

went with my gut and met with Ann Gomez who is the Founder and President of Clear Concept. I also met with Susan Pons who is the Executive Director and Partner. They liked me, took a chance on me, and I have been facilitating for Clear Concept ever since. Ann, Susan, and the rest of the team have been such a positive influence on me. I've traveled all over North America for Clear Concept and will always appreciate them taking a leap of faith on me.

### **Ditch the Naysayers!**

There's a saying that we are the average of the five people we spend the most time with. When anyone makes a major change in their life, this often means that they need to carefully assess who they are spending time with.

Unfortunately, there are many people who just don't understand when someone tries to change. I had many people who were close to me question my decision and ask me what the f\*%\$ I was doing.

"You will never get major companies to sign up for your training sessions."

"How can you leave a steady job and start your own business?" They asked.

Our brains naturally try to avoid discomfort and keep us safe. This traces back to the days when humans or their ancestors would be chased by saber-toothed tigers —this was an important skill to stay alive!

The reality is, though, that I'm not facing any wild beasts any time soon. While I did appreciate that most of my

people were trying to keep me safe, I realized that I needed to be very intentional with who I listened to when considering significant changes in my life.

My approach became to thank the naysayers very politely and then move on. I needed to add folks to my circle who would encourage me to go for it! So, that's what I did.

It is so important to take an honest inventory of people and make a conscious choice in terms of who you want to spend more time with and who you want to ditch or reduce the time spent with them. One of my tests is to be aware of the energy I feel around them. I have consciously created some distance in my life from people who are 'energy suckers'.

**Reader Exercise:**

Who fills your cup?

Who drains it?

Make a list of the people you spend the most time with and put them in either of the categories.

The Energy Multipliers	The Energy Suckers

## Conclusion

*“Everything you’ve wanted is on the other side of fear.”*  
– George Addair

Even now, when I look back at the moment I decided to quit my steady job—giving up that comforting, dependable paycheck that showed up every two weeks—I still get the shivers. I mean, seriously, I was 47 years old at the time! It wasn’t exactly the textbook age to leap into the unknown and start fresh. But here’s the thing: based on where I was in my life and what I had already experienced, I knew I was ready.

For you, reading this, your timing might be different. Maybe you’re younger, and you’re just now starting to feel those

first flickers of dissatisfaction with the path you're on. Or maybe you're older, and the idea of walking away from the comfort of what you know feels even more terrifying. But guess what? The timing doesn't matter as much as the decision itself. It's about recognizing that moment when you've hit a crossroads and understanding that the only way to move forward is to commit fully.

Burning your boats means there's no Plan B. There's no safety net. It's the moment you decide that there's no turning back, and you're all-in on your new path. That's when things get real. And yes, it's scary. It's uncomfortable. You'll probably have moments (lots of them) when you wonder, "What the hell did I just do?"

But let me tell you: that fear is part of the process. It's the price you pay for real transformation. When you burn the boats, you discover a new level of determination you didn't even know you had. You push harder. You get more creative. You find solutions where you used to see dead ends. And you grow in ways you never thought possible.

So, here's the bottom line: this step isn't about playing it safe. It's about stepping outside of your comfort zone and fully committing to what fills your cup. And if you're still unsure about when to take the plunge, don't stress—it's not a race. The key is to follow the steps we discussed: find your purpose, build your bridge, and then burn those boats when you're ready. When you know what lights you up and you're willing to put everything on the line for it, you'll know it's time.

Once you've made that decision, everything changes. You'll find that life opens up in ways you never imagined because

when there's no turning back, the only option left is to succeed.

Are you ready to burn your boats? Because you do, there's no looking back!





# Flex Your Muscle

## Introduction

Life is always changing. How do we remain agile and keep up? The only way is to have a mindset of continual improvement.

We need to learn that it's okay not to know what to do right away. We need to learn how to adapt and adjust so that we can thrive in whatever conditions present themselves. This can be a beautiful journey if you are open and excited about what you don't know yet.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to embrace change and flex your muscle through:

- Cultivating a growth mindset
- Continuous learning
- Iteration

## Flex Your Muscle By Cultivating a Growth Mindset

### The Power of YET

My favorite personal development concept of all time is that of having a growth mindset. Stanford professor Carol Dweck coined this phrase after coming out with her

brilliant book on the subject. It is a way of thinking that helps us believe that we can do almost anything if we put our mind to it.

About 10 years ago, my friend Jay from Kraft Foods casually came up to me and said, “Ron, I just signed us up for a half marathon”. “What the f&%\*?” were the next words out of my mouth. I told him I had never run more than five kilometers and I couldn’t do it. My mistake was that I didn’t say that I couldn’t do it YET.

There’s huge power in the word *yet*, as it signals to your brain that something is possible if you put in the effort. I started training and eventually believed I could do it. The pain of training in the dark, in winter, and going on long runs despite being exhausted was a blessing in the long run—it solidified my belief and toughened my mindset. I remember one session in particular when my shins were hurting, and it was so cold that my water bottles froze by the time I finished. Committing to a big goal like a half marathon teaches you that the pain is temporary, but the feeling of completing a long run lasts forever.

Since then, I’ve completed three half marathons!

In Carol’s book, she talked about a school that gave students a grade of ‘not yet’ as opposed to an F or failing grade. Students responded so well and with this growth mindset, they even chose to do harder tasks as there was no fear of being painted as a failure.

As you think about your journey to loving Mondays, allow the phrase ‘not yet’ to be motivating rather than scary.

## **You Either Win or Learn**

*"Every failure, every heartbreak, carries with it the seed of an equal or greater benefit." – Napoleon Hill*

A few years ago, a great friend of mine, Thomas Dreher, was promoted to the CEO of the company he was working for. He called me and asked me if I was interested in being the CFO of his company. It seemed like the perfect situation: working with a great friend and phenomenal businessman. Naturally an optimist, I felt like I would get the role. I jumped into the interviews with tremendous gusto and aced the first few interviews.

Thomas called me and said that I was one of two final candidates who would be progressing to the final interview.

Somehow, I arrived a few minutes late for the interview. I misjudged the timing and then ran into a traffic jam. I still don't understand how that happened, and now I leave very early and am almost never late for any event. I learned a good lesson that day.

I was able to calm myself down and had a great interview with the owner of the company Dan, so I still felt like I had a good shot. I was already envisioning myself working with Thomas and changing the world!

A few days later, I was driving, and I got a call from Thomas. I was buzzing with excitement and answered with anticipation. "Thomas!" I said, answering the call.

His response was muted, and I immediately knew that this was not the news that I wanted to get. "Hi Ron, thank you

for taking the time to meet with me and my team. We have decided to go in a different direction...." I literally felt my heart sink and quickly thanked him and got off the phone. That stretch of road on Creditview Road, north of Britannia, reminded me of that moment for many months! I was terribly disappointed.

I later found out that another good friend of mine got the job. I now definitively know that Jamie was the best person for the job. He is still at the company and thriving many years later. And, it actually turned out to be great for me in the long run—if I got the job, who knows if I would have started my own business doing what I love to do?!

Now when I don't get what I want or things don't happen as I have anticipated or expected I try to look for that equivalent seed of opportunity. If I don't get a gig with a client, I keep my eyes on the big picture. I always try to take the high road and the long view, rather than stew in the feelings of frustration.

### **Reader Exercise:**

Think about a time when you were disappointed by the outcome of a situation, either personal or professional.

As you reflect on that situation, what did it end up teaching you about yourself?

## **Flex Your Muscle By Learning Continuously**

### **Read Voraciously**

About 10 years ago, I made a commitment to reading. I was in my late thirties at the time and realized that reading is one of the best investments of time. Before that, I didn't have the patience to sit down with a book. Now, it's one of my favorite activities.

The beauty of reading is that you can absorb lifetimes of wisdom in just 100 to 300 pages. I've now read hundreds of books, and what I love most is how they make me think. They help me evaluate how I'm living, teach me new strategies, and offer fresh approaches to life. Plus, the best ones are also a great form of entertainment!

Warren Buffett famously reads several hundred pages a day, and Bill Gates even takes reading vacations.

As for me, I'm currently diving into podcasts and books on marketing as I work to take my business to the next level.

### **There's No End to Learning**

When you're making a change in your life to help you love Mondays more, the learning never stops.

It might involve asking for a new role at your current company that aligns more with your interests, moving to a different company, or even changing careers. For me, it was starting my own business. When you have your own business, you face challenges every day that need solving.

Sales was a huge hurdle for me, but it was absolutely critical for success. I set out to learn everything I could about sales.

My first step was diving into books and videos. Two game-changing resources were "The Go-Giver Sells More" by Bob Burg and several videos by Brian Tracy, who has written many best-selling books.

Bob Burg's book was transformative. It taught me to shift the focus from myself to my potential clients. The message was clear: you're rewarded based on how well you serve your clients. This meant listening carefully and asking the right questions. My 30-minute calls shifted from me doing most of the talking to mostly listening. I spent the first 15-20 minutes asking questions, listening closely, and taking notes. My goal was to truly understand my potential client's pain points and who they were as people. This approach was a game changer. It also helped me relax and take the pressure off myself. From there, I would craft thoughtful proposals based on their needs. If I didn't think I could help, I'd refer them to someone else who could. Clients loved this authenticity, and it completely transformed my business.

Brian Tracy's videos taught me, and continue to teach me, a lot about Sales. His message was similar: listen, then serve. One of the biggest takeaways was preparing a solid Sales presentation. Instead of just telling clients that I offer "Storytelling for Finance" or "High-Performance teamwork" training, I SHOWED them with a crisp, professional presentation. This approach helped clients clearly understand my methods and decide whether it would benefit them or their teams. Moving from telling to showing was a major breakthrough.

Both Bob Burg and Brian Tracy use tried-and-true methods, but in today's social media-driven world, you have to keep learning. I now listen to people like Alex Hormozi to learn how to use social media to grow my business. I've become quite active on LinkedIn. In both business and life, I believe that constant learning and evolving are essential. That insatiable thirst for improvement is what has helped my business grow every year.

Maybe you're considering switching departments within your company. Perhaps you want to move from Finance to Marketing. This is where the mindset of 'constant learning' can help you get there. You could start reading marketing books, listening to podcasts, and reaching out to people in marketing for advice or mentorship. You could ask to sit in on marketing meetings. All these steps help you flex your learning muscles and bring you closer to loving your Mondays.

### **Respond, Don't React – A Lesson Learned**

Many years ago, I was in a business meeting with my good friend, Rocco Crocco. We were the two most junior people in the room—just a couple of Finance Managers meeting with a Vice President and two Directors. We still call this the "hit by the bus" meeting. Anyone who's worked in a political business environment will recognize what I mean.

The meeting started off cordially enough, but suddenly, the three leaders began attacking us, claiming we were way behind on our project and weren't cutting it. It was clearly a setup to put Finance down, and my blood began to boil. I was close to exploding, but Rocco gave me a look that said,

“Chill.” By that point, we’d worked together long enough to read each other.

I left the meeting visibly upset but managed to keep from firing back (even though I desperately wanted to). After the meeting, I called Rocco from my car and said, “What the f\$%# was that? I can’t believe they said those things—I’m going to send them a note and copy my boss as soon as I get home.”

In typical Rocco fashion, he advised me not to send the note. “Go home, drink a Heineken, and come back tomorrow. They’ll apologize.” He was right, and it was a great lesson for me. When someone’s in the wrong, sometimes, it’s best to just let it go. We can only control our own reactions, so that’s where our focus should be.

Jack Canfield has a brilliant equation in one of his books:  $E \text{ (event)} + R \text{ (reaction/response)} = O \text{ (outcome)}$ . The only part we can control is our response, and that has a significant impact on the outcome. Learning to respond rather than react is a powerful life strategy.

The “24-hour rule” is also a great tool for parents in the ice hockey world. Most teams don’t allow parents to approach the coach until 24 hours after a game, giving everyone time to calm down.

When my son Samuel was seven, he had a very passionate, aggressive coach. This coach was more concerned with winning than with spreading ice time evenly. During one game, Samuel barely got any time on the ice, and when the coach finally put him on the ice, he pulled him off after only ten seconds. I was livid—how could he do that to my son?



I went into the locker room to untie Samuel's skates and found myself right next to the coach, who was untying his own child's skates. If it hadn't been for the 24-hour rule, I probably would have erupted. He was bigger than me, so I likely would have ended up on the losing end of that battle. Thanks to the rule, I held my tongue and called a friend that night to vent.

The next day, I spoke to the coach calmly and composed. The 24-hour rule is something I now use in both business and personal life. When I'm overly emotional, I usually say nothing and let it marinate until I'm in a better state of mind.

## **Flex Your Muscle By Iterating**

### **Iterate & Iterate Again**

As I mentioned, I used to offer guest lectures at Humber College and the University of Toronto, which eventually led to me teaching a summer course on logistics to supply chain students. This was by no means my area of expertise—I was learning as I taught. Carving out new paths often requires doing things outside your comfort zone, as these are important stepping stones, or sometimes more like mud puddles.

The course went relatively well, and the students seemed to appreciate my approach. But on the night of the final exam, the tension in the room was palpable. Many of the students had full-time jobs and were taking the course at night, relying on this degree to help them climb the corporate ladder and ease their financial pressures.

I could see the stress on their faces. Toward the end, I gave them a time warning and eventually asked everyone to put their pens down. One student, clearly overwhelmed, lost it—swearing at me and accusing professors of being out to get her. I calmly listened as she vented and stormed out, leaving her classmates in shock, mouths wide open.

That night, I realized this wasn't exactly what I was looking for. I loved the teaching part, but I didn't enjoy the grading or the administrative tasks. While it's a fantastic career, it wasn't the right fit for me at this stage of my life.

It was time to iterate and consider other ways to channel my passion for teaching. Had I not gone through that experience, I wouldn't have known that college or university teaching wasn't the right path for me at that moment. Iterating and trying new things brings us closer to what truly fills our cup.

I then decided to try personal coaching. I started coaching anyone and everyone interested—many for free. I enjoyed the process and learned that true coaching involves asking great questions, listening deeply, and helping clients find their own solutions. While I loved aspects of coaching, I realized I missed the teaching component. Plus, to make the kind of living I wanted, I'd need a lot more clients and significantly higher rates.

So, I changed course again and pursued corporate training opportunities. This became my sweet spot, and it's where I now spend most of my time. I had a few advantages like my deep experience working in companies and my love for teaching, which had grown through years of facilitation. I

also added coaching as a service for some corporate clients, creating another revenue stream.

The moral of the story is simple: start, and iterate as you go.

While I'm definitely not comparing myself to any of these folks, look at how these businesses evolved:

Jeff Bezos started Amazon by selling exclusively books. Today it sells over \$600 billion dollars worth of products and basically sells everything.

Jay Shetty who was a consultant started teaching meditation at his company. He is now a massive influencer in this space.

Oprah Winfrey was a news anchor before accidentally falling into talk show hosting and finding her calling.

What is something you love to do? Start doing more and more of it. Learn, refine, adjust, and persist is my motto!

## **Conclusion**

Flexing your muscle isn't just a one-time thing—it's a way of life. It's about staying open, pushing through discomfort, and constantly growing. Yes, that can be tough, but here's the thing: the more you practice, the stronger you get. Life is going to keep changing, and if you keep flexing this muscle—whether it's learning something new, adapting to challenges, or just sticking with something when it gets hard—you'll keep thriving.

We've talked about the importance of having a growth mindset and being willing to keep learning, no matter what. The truth is, none of us have all the answers, and we never will. But when you're open to learning continuously, you'll figure things out as you go. It's not about perfection—it's about making progress and being willing to iterate again and again until you get it right.

One thing's for sure: if you've made it this far, you've already proven that you're willing to put in the work! You've found your purpose, built your bridge, and burned your boats. Now, it's about staying in the game, staying curious, and being ready to adapt when life throws you a curveball. Keep flexing that muscle—it'll take you places you didn't even know were possible.

So, where to next? Keep growing, keep adapting, and trust that with every step, you're getting closer to a life where you love your Mondays—and every other day of the week too.

# Conclusion to Part One

## **The 4 Steps to Loving Your Mondays**

Throughout this journey, we've explored the foundational steps to transforming your workweek and, ultimately, your life. Each of these steps has been designed to help you realign with your passions, build a sustainable plan, and take meaningful action toward loving your Mondays. Let's recap the key lessons from Part One and how each step contributes to a lasting transformation!

### **Step 1: Find Your Purpose**

The first step is about understanding what truly lights you up. Finding your purpose isn't always straightforward, but by reflecting on your values, talents, and what the world needs, you can discover that unique intersection where your passions meet meaningful work. We've discussed methods like clearing the noise, using the concept of Ikigai, and letting go of outcomes to better identify your purpose. This step helps lay the foundation for every decision you'll make moving forward, guiding you through both challenges and opportunities.

### **Step 2: Build Your Bridge**

Once you've identified your purpose, the next step is to start building your bridge to your new reality. This is where

action meets intention. You've learned that talking about change is easy, but real transformation comes from putting in the work. By finding mentors and/or a coach, taking incremental steps, and pushing through the initial discomfort, you begin to create momentum. We also discussed the importance of persistence—how even small victories can snowball into bigger successes if you remain committed. Building your bridge is about starting before you're ready, taking action despite fear, and steadily moving toward your goals.

### **Step 3: Burn Your Boats**

This is the stage where you fully commit. The concept of “burning your boats” comes from military history, where leaders would eliminate any option of retreat, forcing their troops to give everything they had to succeed. In your journey to love your Mondays, this means leaving behind safety nets that prevent you from going all-in. Whether it's leaving a job that no longer fulfills you or deciding to dive headfirst into a new venture, this step is about removing the option of retreat. It's a scary leap but also incredibly liberating. The moment you fully commit is the moment you unlock new levels of resilience and determination.

### **Step 4: Flex Your Muscle**

The final step is all about staying adaptable and continuously improving. In a world that's constantly changing, you need to cultivate a growth mindset, embrace lifelong learning, and iterate on your approach. This step reminds us that challenges aren't something to avoid but opportunities to grow. By viewing setbacks as learning experiences and keeping a mindset of curiosity, you can

thrive in any environment. Whether it's through reading, learning new skills, or adjusting your approach, the key is to keep moving forward, even when you don't have all the answers.

### **Tying It All Together**

Loving your Mondays isn't a one-time achievement—it's a continuous process of self-discovery, action, and growth. It's about finding work that aligns with your purpose, committing fully to that path, and constantly evolving as you learn more about yourself and the world around you.

The 4-step process—**Find Your Purpose**, **Build Your Bridge**, **Burn Your Boats**, and **Flex Your Muscle**—is designed to guide you through this transformation. Each step builds on the last, helping you make steady progress toward a more fulfilling and joyful work life. By following this process, you'll not only learn to love Mondays but every other day of the week as well.

Now that you've mastered the steps to your personal transformation, it's time to focus on how you can help others in your circle—whether colleagues, employees, or loved ones—find the same sense of purpose and fulfillment. In the next part of this book, we'll explore how to lead and inspire others to embrace this journey toward loving their Mondays.







Part Two

**The Leader's Guide To  
Helping Your Team Love  
Their Mondays**



# Introduction

You've already embarked on your personal journey toward loving Mondays. Now, the next challenge is leading others to experience the same excitement and fulfillment in their work.

As leaders, we have the power to shape environments where our team members don't just clock in and out but actually look forward to the work they do.

This section of the book is all about helping you become that leader—the one who fosters a culture where people love Mondays just as much as Fridays, where they feel inspired, valued, and connected to something bigger than themselves.

Why is this important? Because highly engaged teams perform better. Gallup research shows that organizations with high levels of employee engagement experience greater productivity, better retention, and higher profitability.

The reality is stark—70% of employees report feeling disengaged at work. Why? Three main recurring issues: 1) lack of job clarity 2) minimal connection to business purpose or mission and 3) lack of feelings of care or concern for their wellbeing.

This is not just an HR issue; it's a massive opportunity for leaders who are willing to step up and make a change. Leaders have the ability to create an environment where their team members love their Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

## **What You Can Expect From This Section**

In Part Two, we will explore the seven ingredients you can add to create a “Love Mondays” culture for your team. From building trust and setting ambitious goals to crafting job roles that truly align with your team members' passions, these strategies are designed to unlock potential, drive engagement, and create an environment where every team member is excited to contribute.

We'll also take a hard look at what happens when things go wrong—when team members feel disconnected or when leaders fail to live the vision they've created. But more importantly, I'll show you how to course-correct and keep moving forward.

## **The Goal of Part Two is to:**

1. Identify what makes an exceptional workplace by reflecting on my experience and those of other employees.
2. Introduce a rating system to determine what is working on your team and where there may be room for improvement.
3. Share examples of leaders who've built exceptional workplace environments for their teams.

4. Offer 7 ingredients to help your teams love their Mondays, complete with exercises and suggested activities.

Whether you're managing a small group or leading a large organization, these strategies will help you build a culture where people can thrive, grow, and genuinely love what they do.

If you do not manage a team directly, this section can still be helpful for you. Leadership happens at all levels of an organization, and everyone can take initiative and have a positive ripple effect within their respective teams. As a leader, I always appreciated team members who were more junior than me bringing forward ideas that will help our team take it to the next level and ultimately love Mondays and every other day.

When I think back to my 15 years at Kraft—where I stayed longer than any other job I've had—these principles were front and center. In contrast, at every other company, I stayed only three years or less. There's something to be learned from that!

## **My Story & Job Ratings**

### **My Journey: Learning to Love Mondays**

As I reflect on my career, I've come to realize just how much the environment and culture of a workplace shape whether you love Mondays or dread them. Over the years, I've had roles where I couldn't wait to get started on a Monday, where the energy and excitement fueled me through the week. But I've also had roles where the Sunday night dread

would creep in, and the thought of another week would weigh me down.

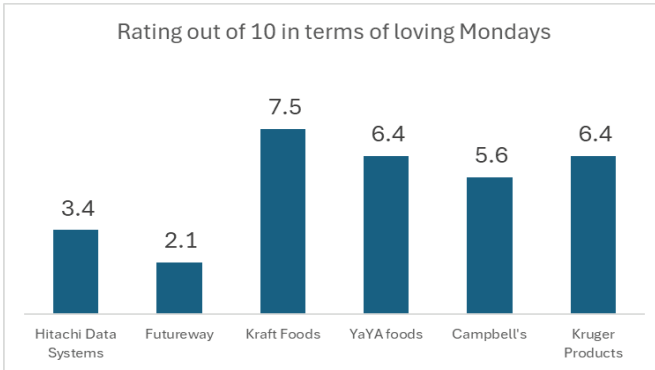
Recently, I had two reunion dinners with my former colleagues from Kraft—where I spent 15 years working!—and those gatherings brought back powerful memories. Some of them were more senior to me, others were my peers or junior colleagues but the connection we all share to this day is a testament to the kind of culture we had at Kraft. There was a sense of community, pride, and engagement that was infectious.

I was so in love with this culture that I would immediately check people's fridges when I visited them. Did they have Kraft Cheese in their fridge? If not, I would start convincing them to get rid of the competition's stuff and buy Kraft. That was me, a Finance person trying to convince friends to buy Kraft! How did I become so invested in this culture? It wasn't just a job—it was a place where we felt invested, where we worked hard, played hard, and genuinely enjoyed being part of something bigger.

That feeling, though, isn't something I experienced everywhere. In fact, in many roles, the lack of leadership or clear direction caused my engagement to fade. I started asking myself: what separates the jobs that make you excited to go to work from the ones that drain you?

Here, I've broken down my experiences across various workplaces in order to analyze what works and what doesn't when it comes to building high-performance teams.

You will notice a series of ratings for each company that I worked for. Here is a high-level overview of my personal ratings of each company I've worked for:



Note that within many of these companies, I held various positions. For example, you will notice that my average rating for Hitachi is 3.4 but the low was 2.4 and the high was 4.4. If you are not a numbers person, don't worry about the rating. For those who have a Finance background like me, you may find it interesting.

## Hitachi: The Struggles of Starting Out

**Rating out of 10:** Average: 3.4. Low: 2.4. High: 4.4

My career began at Hitachi Data Systems, my first professional role after struggling to secure a job after graduation. More than anything, I was relieved to have a paycheck in hand and to finally start making payments on my \$30K student loan. I even bought my first car—a VW Jetta with sleek blue interior lights that I was absolutely in love with.

At that point in my life, "Loving Mondays" wasn't exactly a priority. I needed experience, money, and a car! But it didn't take long for the cracks to show.

My manager Helen and I weren't exactly getting along. Six months into the job, she pulled me into a meeting and delivered some tough feedback: I wasn't meeting expectations, and if I didn't improve, we'd be having another conversation, one that might not end with me keeping my job.

That conversation hit hard. I remember walking out of the meeting with tears in my eyes. At first, I blamed her—thinking it was all on her lack of support and guidance. But as I sat with it, I realized I needed to take responsibility.

I started coming in on weekends and developed a new system to check for errors in my spreadsheet to ensure the debits and credits were balanced. This simple process eliminated most of my errors and I also improved my attitude. I also worked to improve my relationship with my manager and the rest of the team.

We even started having Friday lunches together as a department. This made a huge difference as we started to get to know each other as people, not just employees.

Gradually, things improved, and by the time I left Hitachi, I was performing at a much higher level.

Many Gallup surveys ask if you have a friend or best friend at work. I used to find this question somewhat odd but as I reflect on my career, I know how important it is to have friends at work that you can trust and be yourself with. At



Hitachi, I started at the same time as my colleague Alfred. He was a long-haired guitar-playing accountant. We'd have lunch together every day and get through the grind together. The small things—like grabbing a roti at Tony's Roti across the street were what made those days bearable. Eventually our duo grew into a trio. Eddie joined us and we had so much fun together.

Over time, my frustrations began to grow. I had my month-end and regular duties , but that was about it. The sales folks used to walk around and ask how the 'Bean counters' were doing while they collected their fat bonus cheques. Also, we didn't have a big goal we were working towards as a team and there were no promotion opportunities available. My manager was not going anywhere and most of my colleagues were "lifers".

I couldn't picture myself in the role forever, so I left. Alfred did too, by the way.

### **Futureway: Not Part of My Future For Long!**

**Rating out of 10:** Average: 2.1. Low: 2.1. High: 2.1

My next move to Futureway was short-lived but memorable—for all the wrong reasons!

A recruiter sold me on a \$10,000 raise and the promise that the company was on the brink of greatness. I fell for it, hook, line, and sinker.

It was chaos from day one. The office was cramped, the leadership was invisible, and it felt like we were barely

staying afloat. There were rumors we might not even make payroll.

The one bright spot? Two colleagues, Ian and Christine, who became my complaining buddies. We spent our lunches venting about the state of things and looking for new jobs. I hated Mondays at Futureway, and as soon as I found something better, I was out the door.

The lesson here was clear – No matter how much you're offered financially, if the culture is broken and the leadership is absent, no amount of money can make up for that. I've seen this play out time and again—culture and leadership trump salary every single time.

### **Kraft: The Magic Years**

**Rating out of 10:** Average: 7.5. Low: 6.6. High: 8.4

Then came Kraft—a place that truly set the bar for what a high-performing culture looks like.

I remember my final interview with Brendan Flynn—the intimidating director of the department. I was sweating and stiff as a board through the interview. I felt like I needed a chiropractor when it was over.

Brendan told me that I was not qualified for the job. “But,” he added, “I see something in you and will take a leap of faith in you.” This moment was the start of a 15-year journey! I started my Kraft journey as a shy accountant and emerged over a decade later as a confident business leader.

During my time at Kraft, I truly loved my Mondays. What was the secret sauce? A combination of leadership, growth opportunities, and a sense of community that kept me engaged and excited.

From day one, it was clear that Kraft invested in its people. The onboarding process alone was unlike anything I'd experienced. It wasn't just a quick orientation and then off to a cubicle. We had a three-day program where we visited plants, heard from leaders across all functions, and really got to understand the business from every angle. That kind of investment in new employees was huge—it made you feel valued right from the start.

The development culture was also top-notch. We had regular one-on-one development conversations with our managers, and I'll never forget one conversation where I was told I lacked "leadership presence." Rather than seeing that as a negative, my manager paired me with a coach to help me work on it. Over time, I went from being terrified to speak in meetings to leading company-wide presentations. They pushed me outside my comfort zone in the right way, giving me the support I needed to grow.

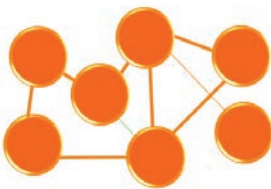
Kraft was also a place that set big, hairy, audacious goals—BHAGs, as we called them. Every department had targets, and we were all striving to be the best in the industry. I remember one year when we were behind on our targets, and leadership rallied the troops by promising a trip to Marco Island if we hit our numbers. Guess what? We obliterated that target! Leaders who are thoughtful about rewards for achieving great things get rewarded with great results, engagement, and loyalty! Not all companies can

afford these types of rewards, but you can get creative as a leader.

Another reason I stayed at Kraft was the amazing community we had. I developed friends that I will have for life. Every Friday, a group of us, led by my good friend Craig, would head to The Keg (a popular Canadian restaurant chain) for drinks after work. I was also part of the Kraft soccer team, which gave me a chance to bond with colleagues outside of the office. These relationships made the work feel less like work and more like being part of a great group of friends.

In one of the training sessions I facilitate for Clear Concept Inc. (a global training and coaching company), we use this image that shows how a high-performing team has strong bonds across the entire team, not just those you work most naturally with. The image on the right was what we had at Kraft.

Low Performing Team



High Performing Team



At Kraft, I had seven jobs in 15 years and was promoted five times. I remember sending so many promotion memos to my mom to share the good news! It was a company that truly walked the walk and found a way to keep us engaged, challenged, and rewarded.

Former President Dino Bianco used to say, “We want to help you build the resume you never have to use.” I actually never even considered moving from Kraft for 15 years, something that these days is practically unheard of!

I’m not going to pretend that things at Kraft were always perfect.

Toward the end of my time there, after the company was acquired, the focus shifted. It became all about hitting financial targets, and the sense of community and development started to fade. Suddenly, it was less about teamwork and culture and more about profits. When the leadership started slashing training budgets and canceling offsite meetings, it became clear that the culture I loved was gone. Many of us, even the highest performers, left.

The company's stock price eventually plummeted. Thankfully, I am happy that the culture is currently being rebuilt. It takes decades to build a culture and weeks or months to obliterate it. Leaders, beware! The little things we all do matter!

## **YaYA Foods: Tasty, Yet Fleeting**

**Rating out of 10:** Average: 6.4 Low: 5.4 High: 7.4

After working at large public companies like Hitachi and Kraft with long hours and lots of process and bureaucracy, I was ready for a change. One of my soccer friends Mustafa introduced me to a beverage manufacturing company called YaYA Foods. I signed on as the VP of Finance and was excited to help them improve their finances and build their culture.

For the first few months, I was like a kid in a candy store. I would share my ideas with the general manager and owner, who practically gave me full reign to bring my ideas to life.

We implemented many of my ideas including putting TVs in the plant and lunchroom to help all the 200+ team members understand their performance. It was so cool to see folks starting to rally towards the targets. Every day I was excited to see the daily performance of each production line and share it with the entire organization.

I started posting weekly inventory accuracy results in the warehouse. One of the forklift drivers drove by the chart and asked me what we were measuring. I explained it and soon saw him checking the results every week.

Before that, all he talked about was getting a two-four (24 beers) after work. Now, he started to genuinely care about how he and his team were doing. As Peter Drucker says, "What gets measured gets managed."

After a while, though, management became less keen to implement my ideas, as our philosophies did not align. My motivation started to dip. It's hard to stay engaged when leadership doesn't share your vision for growth. While I was very people-focused, the focus at the time was more on capital investments and technology.

Eventually, I left. As I reflect on some of my experiences, I see that it is at the 6–12 month mark or so that the motivation level started to wane. Once the job becomes rote, I begin to check out. I believe leaders need to create challenges and focus on motivating team members at the 6–

12 month mark when the initial excitement usually plateaus.

### **Campbells: No Soup for Me!**

**Rating out of 10:** Average: 5.6 Low: 5.0 High: 6.1

This position started out with promise. I was slated to be the next VP of Finance for the Canadian division and I felt like I was making progress. But when they announced the closure of the Toronto plant, the mood shifted. I remember gathering in the warehouse where the announcement was made. It was overwhelmingly emotional, watching people sobbing as their livelihoods took a massive left turn.

After the announcement, the leadership direction was unclear to me. We had three Presidents in one year, and any and all sense of direction vanished. My enthusiasm dwindled, and I decided it was time to move on.

Having said that, I will always appreciate how professional Campbell's was. The class they demonstrated during a challenging factory closure was admirable.

### **Kruger Products: The Start of the End of My Finance Career**

**Rating out of 10:** Average: 6.4. Low: 5.9. High: 6.9

My next adventure started with me trying to prepare for a lecture at the University of Toronto for 1200 first-year students. I was extremely nervous and wanted to prepare as much as possible.

I sent a message to one of the best leaders I knew. Dino Bianco was the former President of Kraft Canada and was now the CEO of Kruger products. I wanted to learn about his leadership approach.

We had an amazing conversation about leadership and our journeys. He said he wanted to bring in a finance leader like me to help shape the Finance culture at Kruger. They created a new role for me as the Senior Director of FP&A (Financial Planning and Analysis). I was also in charge of learning and development for 70 Finance and Accounting professionals!

I jumped into the role with energy and enthusiasm. I was creating my role every day and was making a big impact. It was awesome. I was loving Mondays!

When the pandemic hit, working for a company that manufactured and sold tissue and toilet paper made a whole lot of business sense. But it was such a challenging time for all of us employees. We started asking deeper questions about our careers and how we were spending our lives.

I began recommending some bigger changes that required more leadership investment and change management. I wanted to cannonball into new processes and procedures, but my manager and many of my peers who I have great respect for preferred to just dip their toes in the pool of change. The timing wasn't quite right for me.

My Mondays became less fun, my engagement level started to drop, and I realized that my next change was coming.



This was my last corporate role before I started my current entrepreneurial adventure.

## **What I Learned About The Role of Leadership in Loving Mondays**

What I've realized through all these experiences is that leadership and culture are everything. When leaders invest in their people, set big goals, and create a sense of community, that's when the magic happens. When they don't, it's nearly impossible to stay motivated. Additionally, in my case, my excitement and energy started to drop when my role stagnated or when leaders were not open to big changes or were stuck in their ways.

At Kraft, though, I saw firsthand what happens when a company does things right. I was fully engaged and fully invested, and I loved almost every minute of it. But I've also seen how quickly things can fall apart when leadership shifts focus or when they fail to nurture the culture that makes a place special.

Now, as I run my own business and work with leaders across industries, I keep coming back to these lessons. I've learned that it's not just about what you do—it's about how you lead and how you engage your team that makes the difference between loving Mondays and dreading them.

One of my favorite examples of a team that truly loved what they did is the 2019 Toronto Raptors! If you ask most people why the Raptors won the NBA championship, especially if they follow basketball, they'll probably say "Kawhi." Kawhi Leonard was a standout that season, no

doubt—an absolute superstar. Along with Kyle Lowry, he was the team's key player.

But if you take a closer look at that Raptors team, you'll see it wasn't just about having one or two superstars. The entire lineup—from veterans to rookies like Pascal Siakam and Fred Van Vleet—were fully engaged and having fun while putting in the hard work. They played with the focus and determination of a championship team but did it with a sense of joy. It was this combination of intensity and fun that helped them reach the top.

The Raptors' journey to the championship didn't start with Kawhi; it began years earlier when Tim Leiweke set a bold vision for the team. He brought in Masai Ujiri as general manager, a leader with a similar drive for excellence and winning culture. The coaching changes over the years helped elevate the team, culminating in Nick Nurse, a 'player's coach' who encouraged both high-performance and camaraderie. The result? A culture that blended high expectations with appreciation for every player, not just the stars. They respected the contributions of veterans, rookies, and newcomers alike—and used the strength of the whole team to win the championship. It was pure magic.

Research backs up this approach. A study from UC Berkeley showed that NBA teams with the most high-fives, chest bumps, fist bumps, and huddles tended to be the most successful!

Take Steve Nash, the legendary Canadian basketball player. He averaged an incredible 239 touches per game—high-fives, fist bumps, and gestures that weren't just about the ball but about supporting and encouraging his teammates.

As leaders, we may not be doing chest bumps in the workplace, but we can replicate that same spirit of connection. It's about finding ways to regularly recognize and connect with our team members, just like Nash did with his. And those small moments of recognition can build a culture of trust and teamwork that leads to success. More on this later!

### **Case Study: The Impact of Leadership on Employee Engagement – Megan's Story**

Before we dive into the specific steps you can take to help your team love their Mondays, let's look at a real-life example of how leadership and workplace culture can drastically affect an employee's experience. Sometimes, it helps to know what an environment feels like where people downright hate their Mondays.

Megan (whose name is disguised), an old colleague of mine and a good friend shared some of her workplace experiences with me, demonstrating just how different a similar role can be depending on the work environment.

Megan's story is a powerful reminder of how much influence leadership has on shaping the culture—and, ultimately, whether employees are excited to get to work or dreading their next shift.

In this case study, I want to take you through Megan's journey across three different workplace environments: **The Ugly, The Bad, and The Good.**

## **The Ugly – Megan's rating was a 1/10**

Megan's first job out of school was nothing short of a disaster, and it's a classic example of what happens when leadership is absent or ineffective. Here's what made it so ugly:

- **Lack of strong leadership:** From the CEO level down to her direct manager, there was a vacuum of guidance, leaving Megan to navigate her role without support.
- **No career growth or training opportunities:** She felt stuck, with no clear path to develop her skills or advance.
- **Lack of recognition:** Megan was rarely acknowledged or rewarded for her contributions.
- **Unhealthy work environment:** There was a clear divide between employees who were "in the family" and those who weren't, which led to hard work going unnoticed and unrewarded.
- **No feedback mechanisms:** Not only did she not receive constructive feedback from her manager, but her own suggestions were also ignored.
- **No team-building activities or social events:** There were no efforts to bring the team closer together socially or professionally.

On paper, it seems staggeringly obvious that this workplace didn't have Megan's best interests in mind. But all too often, without even meaning to, company leaders lose sight of the

needs of their employees, turning a potentially exceptional workplace into one that's just plain ugly. Employees get disillusioned, engagement plummets, and, in Megan's case, Mondays become something to dread.

### **The Bad – Megan's rating was a 4/10**

Fast forward to when Megan and I worked together. Her manager at the time asked me to give Megan some additional tasks. I saw her potential right away—she was sharp, had a great attitude, and was eager to contribute. I thought this was an opportunity to turn things around for her and to some extent, we did. Here's what changed, according to Megan:

- **Leadership that encouraged growth:** Megan now had a manager who saw her potential and gave her tasks that were challenging but achievable.
- **More support and empathy:** She felt like she had someone in her corner, someone who cared about her success.
- **Clearer company mission and values:** Thanks to her new manager, the company's mission started to feel more tangible.

With these improvements, Megan's experience went from "ugly" to "bad," which was a step in the right direction. But the company culture as a whole still had a long way to go.

Despite the efforts of a few leaders, there were systemic issues—like poor communication, lack of recognition across the board, and an overall negative atmosphere—

that continued to drag the company down. While I was able to help Megan's motivation levels, the company culture was still sorely lacking. No matter how much effort I put into leading the team, it was like a black cloud followed us around.

### **The Good – Megan's rating was an 8/10**

Eventually, Megan took matters into her own hands and left the company. She found a new role that drastically improved her experience, and this time, she loved her Mondays. Here's what changed in her new company:

- **Positive culture:** The environment was collaborative, supportive, and inclusive, giving employees a true sense of belonging.
- **Regular recognition:** Employees were frequently acknowledged for their hard work, making them feel valued.
- **Clear mission and vision:** The company's mission wasn't just talked about; it was visible in everything they did—even plastered across the office lobby.
- **Team-building events:** There were regular social activities that brought everyone together, from the CEO down to new hires.
- **Non-hierarchical structure:** Employees felt they could talk to anyone, including the CEO, and this openness created a culture of trust and camaraderie.

Even this “good” experience wasn’t perfect. While the culture was vastly improved, Megan found that the work itself didn’t completely align with her passions, and her manager wasn’t actively helping her push for career growth. But the stark difference between this environment and the “ugly” one from her first job was like night and day.

### **Lessons from Megan’s Experiences**

Megan’s story sheds light on the critical nature of leadership and culture in the workplace. The same person had three extraordinarily different experiences, proving that leadership can make or break an employee’s engagement and motivation.

In her ugly experience, poor leadership created an environment where she felt invisible, unappreciated, and unsupported. In her bad experience, small improvements in leadership had a positive impact, but company-wide cultural issues still held her back. Finally, in her good experience, strong leadership and a positive culture transformed her work life, even though there was still room for growth.

Megan’s journey is a powerful reminder that leaders hold the keys to creating environments where employees either love their Mondays or count down the minutes until Friday. It’s incredible that the same role, with the same person, can feel entirely different based on how well leadership supports, challenges, and recognizes their team members!

A similar story that I often share comes from one of Simon Sinek’s talks. Noah, a barista at The Four Seasons in Las Vegas, gave Sinek absolutely exceptional service.

When Sinek asked Noah if he loved his job, he said yes with zero hesitation. Why? His managers offer support and assistance. Interestingly, Noah held a very similar position at another hotel, where instead of support and encouragement, his managers were always correcting him and pointing out his mistakes. At that hotel, Noah just put his head down and did the work. This is a fascinating case study of the same person who has a completely different demeanor in two similar work environments, all because of management.

See the resource section for the full story!

As we move into the next section, I'll introduce a practical framework for helping your team love their Mondays—just like Megan did when she finally found the right culture and leadership.

Let's explore the seven ingredients that I believe can take your workplace from inedible to utterly delectable!

### **Seven Ingredients to Creating & Sustaining Your Team's "Love Mondays" Culture**

After experiencing twenty years of corporate life, speaking with, and observing countless professionals across industries, I've distilled seven key ingredients that leaders can zoom in on to build a "Love Mondays" culture—not just for themselves but for their teams too.

This isn't about quick fixes or surface-level changes; it's about creating a deeply engaged, motivated, and thriving team. Imagine walking into work where everyone is



genuinely excited to be there—now *that* is a team that performs at its best.

Along with each ingredient, I'll share examples, practical exercises, and tips on how to get started. We'll also touch on a few things to avoid—common pitfalls that can derail your efforts to build a high-performance culture.

Here's a sneak peek at your ingredients for a happy and healthy team:

1. Build Trust
2. Create and Live Your Team Vision
3. Build Your BHAGS
4. Put Folks On the Right Seat of the Bus
5. Make it Fun!
6. Foster Friendships at Work
7. Be Conscious of Your Leadership Energy

Think of each of these strategies like a piece of a combination lock: when you find the right mix, you unlock your team's full potential—and when that happens, they'll not only love their Mondays but every other day of the week too!

### **Leader Exercise:**

Before we dive into the details of each strategy, take a few minutes to reflect on how your team is doing right now. It could be a great exercise to have your team members complete anonymously.

Use the scale below to rate your team on each of these seven key factors.

This exercise will help you see where your team is excelling and where there's room for improvement.

	Key Factors	Questions	Rating out of 10
1.	Build Trust	What is the level of trust on your team?	
2.	Create and Live Your Team Vision	Do you have a clear team vision that team members get excited about?	
3.	Build Your BHAGS	Do you have short to medium term BIG Goals	
4.	Put Folks On the Right Seat of the Bus	Do most of your team members love what they do?	
5.	Make It Fun!	How much fun does your team have at work?	
6.	Foster Friendships at Work	Does your team have deep relationships? Are they friends?	
7.	Be Conscious of Your Leadership Energy	What kind of energy do you project over?	

How did your team score?  
Are there areas that surprised you?

This is your chance to really see where your focus needs to be. Don't worry if some ratings are low—that's why you're here. Remember, it's about progress, not perfection.

As we dive into each of these strategies, you'll have the opportunity to reflect and take actionable steps to improve.



## **Build Trust from Day One**

Trust is the cornerstone of any successful team. Without it, even the best ideas and sharpest strategies will fall flat. And trust doesn't just happen overnight—it's something you build, nurture, and grow over time. But how can you achieve this?

The first step is pretty simple – get to know your people. Not just their job titles or where they sit in the office. Ask them about their interests, listen actively, and remember what you learn. This may seem basic, but many leaders neglect this, resulting in relationships that feel transactional rather than genuine.

I experienced this firsthand at Futureway, where my introduction to the company was brief and impersonal. There was no effort to welcome me or make me feel like I belonged. An employee's first day at work is a huge trust-building opportunity and this was squandered. I didn't feel trusted, and I sure didn't trust them. It was no wonder I was out the door pretty quickly.

Contrast that with the companies where I've seen trust built up from day one. It's like night and day. At its core, building trust is about showing you care.

## **Building Relationships = High ROI (return on investment)**

Building strong relationships is a high ROI (return on investment) activity. As Jim Alling, former President of Starbucks and COO of T-Mobile said, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” That line gets thrown around a lot, but it’s true!

I had the privilege of interviewing Jim for one of my podcasts. He shared an amazing story about Howard Behar, a Starbucks executive who many considered to be the soul of the company. During a one-on-one meeting between Jim and Behar, Howard Schultz, then CEO of Starbucks, barged in to speak with Behar about something that was very important. Mr. Behar calmly looked at Mr. Schultz and said: “I’m having my one-on-one with Jim. Can I see you after we’re done?”

Despite the urgency, Behar chose to finish his meeting with Jim first, demonstrating his commitment to authentic leadership and trust. This act of prioritizing his team members over the CEO underscored Behar’s genuine care and respect, reinforcing the importance of connecting with team members on a personal level.

Now, you might be thinking, “That’s great, but I’ve got a million things to do—do I really have time for this?” The answer is yes because investing in relationships gives you one of the highest returns on investment you’ll ever see as a leader.

When people know you care, they’ll go the extra mile for you. Trust me on this. When a new employee joins the team,

I love asking about their passions outside of work. I use this in many of my training sessions and it is amazing to see folks who have worked together for months and in some cases, years finally start to really know each other. And it all starts with a simple question.

One of the most successful leaders in the history of soccer is Sir Alex Ferguson, the former Manager of Manchester United. This soccer team is worth over \$6 billion dollars and a big part of it is due to the high-performance culture that Ferguson spearheaded.

He invested in building trust so much that many of the players (such as Cristiano Ronaldo) considered him a father figure. Ferguson famously knew the names of everyone at the club including the folks serving him tea.

The level of trust was so high that it afforded him the ability to be tough on the players. They knew he had their best interests at heart, so he could effectively push his players individually and collectively toward being world-class.

During his tenure, his players were arguably the best professional sports team in the world in terms of championships and financial results.

Since he left, the club has not been the same. The bar that he set was so high that none of the managers since have come close. I'm an Arsenal fan, so I'm not too upset!

### **The Power of Recognition: It's in the Little Things**

Let's talk about recognition. It doesn't have to be some big, grand gesture—sometimes, the smallest acknowledgments

make the biggest impact. Unfortunately, in the world of Finance and Accounting where I spent two decades, recognition was about as rare as a unicorn. The unspoken rule was, “If I’m not saying anything, you must be doing fine.” Sound familiar? But here’s the thing—people need to hear when they’re doing well and they need to hear it often.

One of the best ways to build trust is by practicing the “praise in public, coach in private” rule. Everyone loves to be recognized, but no one wants to be called out in front of their peers when they make a mistake. We need to conduct constructive conversations supportively, aiming to help team members grow rather than merely criticize. From these private conversations, your team members will appreciate you for addressing challenges constructively and respectfully, all in the spirit of getting better and trying to help them grow.

In some of my training sessions, I ask participants what they think the ideal ratio of positive to constructive feedback should be. Most people say something like one-to-one, or if they’re feeling generous, maybe two-to-one. A study by Losada and Heaphy uncovered that the real magic happens at six-to-one\*. That’s right—for every piece of constructive feedback, you should be offering six pieces of recognition. While this might be slightly aspirational, it highlights the importance of frequent and genuine recognition. My colleagues and I at Clear Concept emphasize this ratio when we teach our High Performance Teams and Fearless Feedback programs.

This is from a High Performance Teamwork program that I teach for Clear Concept Inc.

For example, during the pandemic, I led a virtual training session with a small group. One participant was actively engaged with her camera on, while the others were just black screens staring back at me. After the session, I took a moment to acknowledge her participation. Her gratitude and satisfaction from the recognition underscored the value of authentic praise. And, seeing her reaction, I changed my mentality from only recognizing folks for huge accomplishments to recognizing them whenever I got the chance. Sometimes, we think people only care about the big wins but even the little moments of effort deserve acknowledgment.

Another example that sticks with me is from my time at Kruger Products. We were in the thick of the budgeting process, working late nights and weekends, and morale was low. So, I asked our CEO, Dino Bianco, to jump into one of our meetings and say a few words to the team. He spent five minutes authentically thanking everyone for their hard work, and you wouldn't believe the boost in energy it gave the team. One of my colleagues said that it was the first time they had ever been recognized by the CEO during a budget cycle! That little moment of recognition gave us the jolt we needed to finish strong.

Recognition doesn't always have to come from the top either. Just acknowledging each other's efforts at every level builds trust, engagement, and loyalty.

## **What Happens When Recognition and Trust Are Missing**

I'll give you an example of what happens when there's no recognition or trust. I once had a stellar performance



year—beat all the targets, led a major organizational project, and was riding high going into my review. I was excited. But then, instead of spending time celebrating the wins, my manager focused on a negative meeting we participated in the day before. I was upset, hurt, and completely disengaged after my review. Needless to say, I was not looking forward to my next Monday.

This was an opportunity for my manager to build trust with me and spend time congratulating me on the great year that we had. Instead, she squandered it and left me feeling deflated.

As a leader, you have the ability to make or break someone's day with a few simple words. Don't underestimate the power of showing your appreciation, even for the little things. Building trust takes time and effort, but the payoff? It's huge.

### **Leader Exercise:**

Take a moment to think about your current recognition habits.

How often do you acknowledge your team for their hard work—big or small?

If your feedback ratio is sitting at one-to-one, aim for two-to-one. If you're already killing it at four-to-one, stretch for five-to-one.

Put it on your daily checklist and watch the magic happen. Remember to be specific and authentic with your recognition.

Trust isn't just a nice-to-have—it's your secret weapon for building a high-performing, engaged team.



## Create and Live Your Team Vision

A compelling vision is one of the driving forces behind a motivated and engaged team. Crafting and living a shared vision helps team members see the bigger picture and understand their role in achieving something that matters. Here's how to create and sustain a vision that inspires and energizes your team.

One of my mentors, Ann Gomez, tells a beautiful story about two bricklayers. When asked about their work, one replied, "I lay brick by brick in the scorching sun from 9 am to 5 pm and then I go home for the day. I look forward to Friday."

The other bricklayer said, "I'm helping build the most beautiful cathedral in the world."

The difference in their outlook is stark. While the first bricklayer sees only the daily grind, the second finds meaning and pride in their contribution to a grand, enduring project.

There's a famous story of J.F. Kennedy walking through the halls of NASA in the 1960s. He saw a caretaker who was changing a light bulb and asked him about his role. The caretaker proudly responded, "I'm helping put a man on the

moon.” Just think about how powerful it would be for everyone on your team to feel that way on Monday morning!

I recently led training sessions at Walmart. Their visitor badges say: “I’m here to save people money so they can live better.” While I don’t know what it’s like to work at Walmart, I do know that their purpose is very clear.

We can’t all be bricklayers at La Sagrada la Familia, work at NASA, Walmart, or Starbucks. So, what can we do to create a culture and environment that people get excited about on a Monday morning?

Whenever I drove into downtown Toronto, I’d always see a sign over a factory that read “Happy people making great soap”. I never went into that soap factory, but I felt the power of that statement. Something as simple as making soap can be turned into something meaningful.

So, think about how you can create a purpose that is compelling, motivating, and fun.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Howard Behar, former President of Starbucks. In his book, “It’s Not About the Coffee”, Howard emphasizes that by focusing on people, their well-being, and the customer experience, the company’s success naturally follows.

### **Leader Exercise:**

Write a purpose statement for your team that connects to your organization’s vision and incorporates fun.

Then, schedule in time to co-create a team vision with your team members.

My partner Paul Barnhurst and I facilitated a session like this for Michael Keays who is now the CFO of Kruger Products. It was amazing to see how engaged his team members were. We led breakouts and brainstorming sessions and eventually produced one magical sentence that described their team vision.

There's an old saying that goes, "If you don't have a clear vision or destination, any road will get you there." A powerful and motivating vision that rallies the team towards a common goal is a powerful step in helping your team love Mondays!



## **Build Your BHAGs—Big Hairy Audacious Goals**

Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAGs) are more than just ambitious targets. They can be the driving force behind extraordinary achievements and high levels of team motivation.

Wait. What is a BHAG?

Unlike long-term visions, BHAGs are short-to-medium term goals that provide a concrete and inspiring challenge for your team.

One of the most famous examples of a BHAG is Sir Roger Bannister's quest to break the four-minute mile. For years, the prevailing belief was that running a mile in under four minutes was impossible and dangerous. Bannister, however, believed otherwise. On May 6, 1954, he shattered this barrier with a time of 3:59:4. The amazing thing is that after he achieved this feat, several others broke the four-minute mile. Was it because their physical capabilities changed? No. It was all psychological - they believed they could, and did the work to get there!

In a story that is a little closer to home, Tim Berman, VP of Sales at Kraft Canada, always set big goals for his team. Tim had an amazing track record and process for motivating over 600 salespeople at Kraft Canada, even during a period when the processed food industry was in decline. He and his team consistently surpassed their targets and achieved industry-leading results for many years in a row. He often referred to it as the Kraft Canada Sales dynasty!

Tim always spoke of “confidence before victory.”

His approach included setting challenging goals and pairing them with motivating rewards. For example, when setting a growth target, he would promise an all-expenses-paid trip to Florida, if the team met the target. The prospect of escaping the harsh Canadian winter and enjoying a few days of camaraderie and fun served as a powerful motivator.

The result? Almost always, the team obliterated the target. I had the privilege of attending these meetings in Florida and was mesmerized by what investing in your people can do. Tim also demanded excellence from his team so it was not all rainbows and unicorns. It included tough conversations and a commitment to delivering world class results.

I realize we can't all fly our teams to exotic locations, but we can be creative as we think about rewards for achieving big goals. Brendan Flynn, the ex-VP of Finance for Kraft Foods, used to take us out to fancy restaurants as a token of thanks. Andy Hull, who I will mention a few times in this book, hosts barbecues at his home.

Thomas Dreher, now a seasoned executive, shared another illustrative example with me from his finance days. He joined a company and noted that the month-end close process was taking 20+ days, hindering timely reporting. Dreher set a BHAG to reduce this process to 3-5 days. His team initially laughed at this goal, deeming it impossible. That was all he needed to hear. People like Thomas do not believe in the 'impossible', and this fueled his motivation! This was an Accounting BHAG!

He went through all the processes and came up with joint solutions with his team to find ways to close the books in 3-5 days. Thomas and his team achieved this result because he believed they could, and took action to get it done. Again, creating big goals like this can have a dramatic impact on motivating your team and helping them to love Mondays. Thomas was promoted into the CEO role in part due to his commitment to setting and achieving BHAGs.

**Leader Exercise:**

Reflect on your team's current challenges and opportunities. What is a bold, ambitious goal that could drive significant progress and inspire your team?



Engage your leadership team in brainstorming and defining a BHAG. Involvement in setting the goal will increase buy-in and commitment.

Think creatively about how to reward your team for achieving the BHAG. While grand gestures are impactful, even smaller, thoughtful rewards can be highly motivating.

By setting and pursuing BHAGs, you not only push your team towards extraordinary accomplishments but also foster a culture of high engagement and enthusiasm.

Embrace the challenge, believe in the impossible, and watch your team rise to the occasion!



## **Put Folks on The Right Seat of the Bus**

Creating jobs that align with your people's interests and passions transforms mundane tasks into fulfilling roles. This alignment also goes a long way in enhancing your team's motivation, engagement, and satisfaction.

One of my past colleagues used to show little enthusiasm for her role, particularly on Mondays. When she was assigned to my group part-time due to a lack of work in her existing role, I discovered her hidden talents in design and creativity. I asked her to update the factory's TVs, which displayed daily performance metrics and other engaging content. What I saw astounded me. Natasha infused her role with creativity, adding weather updates, news, and even fun Instagram recipe videos. Her new responsibilities aligned with her interests, and her work became a source of inspiration for over 200 colleagues. This alignment was a step toward making her role more engaging and fulfilling.

Another great example is Andy Hull, one of my good friends and one of the best leaders I've ever worked with. Andy, who is a Finance executive in Toronto, is a master at ensuring that his people are in the right seats on the bus. He does this in several ways that truly inspire his team.

## **Andy's Approach to Putting People in the Right Seats and building a world class team**

### **1. Setting BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals)**

In one of his roles as the Operations Finance Director, Andy set a target of \$100 million in cost savings with his VP. This became a rallying cry for the entire department, encouraging everyone to work harder and together. And by the way, they delivered the target!

### **2. Building a Fun and Winning Culture**

Andy consistently hosts social events like BBQs at his house, trivia nights, and offsite gatherings. This builds strong relationships across the team and helps them get to know each other outside of the office. His team members know that Andy cares deeply about each one of them, which helps create a culture of engagement and excitement.

### **3. Creating Advancement Opportunities**

Andy has a knack for helping individuals thrive in their current roles so they can be considered for promotions. If his team members excel, Andy advocates for their advancement and tries to ensure they are in roles that align with their interests and competencies.

### **4. Prioritizing Communication**

Andy prioritizes regular touchpoints with his team. He uses a combination of email, in-person meetings, and 1-on-1 sessions to ensure that he connects with all of his team members. He even goes so far as to ask each of his team

members what they value most. Andy has them complete an Excel sheet that ranks categories like 'job content,' 'recognition,' 'pay,' and 'career advancement,' which helps him tailor his approach to each person.

Andy manages to incorporate most (if not all) of the ingredients that I think a leader needs to build a team that loves their Mondays.

### **Ensuring Team Members Are in the Right Role**

In his seminal book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins talks about getting the right people on the bus and ensuring they are in the right seats. This means not only hiring the right individuals but also positioning them in roles that match their skills and passions.

For example, does your accountant love numbers? Is your marketing person deeply interested in promoting products? Do your salespeople eagerly engage with customers? Matching team members to roles that resonate with their passions can transform their work experience and foster greater enthusiasm.

So how do we take it one step further? How do we ensure that the folks who should be on the bus are on the right seat of the bus?

One tool that I like to use is called The Predictive Index, a personality assessment designed to match individuals with roles suited to their strengths and preferences.

**Note:** While I focus on the Predictive Index, there are other tools like Myers-Briggs, Kolbe A, and DISC which can also

be used to understand your team members and their natural styles and preferences.

Dave Lahey, President of Predictive Index, shared an insightful example from a municipality struggling with high turnover among sanitation workers. By using the Predictive Index, they matched candidates' personalities with the job's demands—early starts, physical labor, and attention to detail—leading to a significant decrease in resignation and absenteeism rates. What a win!

Individual contributors often don't feel like they have a choice in terms of what they focus on in their jobs. It can be game-changing when leaders encourage folks to find ways to contribute beyond their core responsibilities.

For example, when I was in a Finance Director role, I was given the opportunity to lead a training course. While I didn't have experience in training, it turned out to be one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. Despite having tremendous anxiety about putting this course together, it stands out as one of the most meaningful career experiences to date. In fact, this experience was the original seed that led to my current life where I am loving my Mondays: facilitating training courses and doing keynote speeches for companies around the world.

## **Leader Exercise 1:**

### **Matching Roles with Passions**

1. In your next one-on-one meetings, discuss your team members' passions and explore ways to integrate these into their job responsibilities.

2. Identify opportunities for them to take on additional responsibilities or projects that align with their interests.
3. Consider incorporating tools like the Predictive Index to ensure job roles align with individuals' strengths and preferences.

Similarly, while working at another company, I encouraged team members to participate in a competitive analysis project. Only two out of twenty-five or so volunteers put up their hands, and within a month, Andrew and Sanjeev were in front of the CEO presenting their findings. This demonstrates how initiative and additional responsibilities can lead to significant professional growth and recognition. There is so much power in taking initiative and giving team members opportunities beyond their day job.

## **Creating Advancement Opportunities**

As I reflect on my time at Kraft for 15 years, a big part of why I stayed was the advancement opportunities and the projects I was given. I always had the motivation to work hard and knew the rewards would come. Kraft had a brilliant rotational culture where each employee had an ICP (Individual Career Plan) that was reviewed with managers often. This plan outlined the next three desired roles, and when job openings came up, leadership assessed all candidates based on these plans. It was very clear that we needed to perform at a high level to be considered for the next role or promotion. This led to healthy competition and ambition among the team.

Whenever anyone received a promotion, a weekly email would go out, congratulating them. I remember my director even printing out new business cards for me after I got promoted. After 10 years at Kraft, I reached the Director level, which qualified me for a company car—a brand-new Jeep Grand Cherokee! This was a huge accomplishment for me and gave me a strong sense of achievement.

Of course, in smaller companies or roles where a rotational program might not be feasible, leaders can still think creatively about providing growth opportunities. For example, moving a finance person into a sales role or a salesperson into marketing as a developmental assignment can offer individuals something new to shoot for. These lateral moves keep the work fresh, preventing stagnation, while offering new challenges and learning experiences without necessarily moving up the corporate ladder.

When I tried to introduce a rotational program at a different company, I faced significant resistance. My peers and manager were hesitant, preferring a slower pace. The workplace environment was made up of analysts and managers who were not as engaged as they could have been. In my opinion, creating a robust rotational program where everyone had something to strive for would have turned things around completely.

Another fantastic lever that leaders can pull is to create special projects. For example, my involvement in competitive analysis projects always led to massive growth and engagement for me.

Encouraging team members to take initiative and volunteer for special projects will lead to increased enthusiasm and

satisfaction among your team. These will become the folks who love their Mondays!

What if your team is already strapped for time... should you create these opportunities? The answer is YES! I saw this during my time at Kraft. These volunteer opportunities created tremendous engagement.

## **Leader Exercise 2:**

### **Creating Advancement Opportunities**

1. If feasible, implement a rotational program that allows team members to experience different roles and build diverse skill sets. For smaller teams, consider cross-functional assignments to broaden experience. This is not easy and takes time but has a massive payoff if done right.
2. Identify and develop special projects that align with team members' interests and skills. Encourage initiative and offer opportunities for employees to lead or participate in these projects.
3. Regularly review engagement levels and career progression. Anonymous surveys can be a great way to assess this. Address any signs of stagnation by introducing new challenges and opportunities for growth.
4. Celebrate promotions and accomplishments through formal announcements and personal recognition, such as congratulatory emails or symbolic rewards.



By ensuring that team members are not only in the right roles but also actively engaged with their work, you can foster a more dynamic, enthusiastic, and productive team that truly loves their Mondays! And by creating advancement opportunities, you will keep them engaged, motivated, and striving to reach their full potential within your organization.



## Make it Fun

*"If you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life." – Marc Anthony*

I've always had a problem with the word "work."

It usually stirs up an image of someone with a very serious look on their face, plowing away at something they don't necessarily like to do. In my opinion, the last thing we want to be at work is miserable or too serious.

Of course, there is a serious component to work. It is about getting things done in a quality manner and helping companies make money. But, imagine a world where fun and work intersect. I wish we could invent another word along the lines of 'finding a calling.'

I remember this one colleague of mine. He was conscientious, hard-working, got things done, and had a good reputation as a manager. That being said, he worked like clockwork and did not seem to have any fun. For him, work was work. Every day he would come in early and leave late, eating the same sad sandwich day in and day out. It was all business for him. Imagine doing this for a 40-year career and suppressing fun the entire time.

I eventually found out that he actually loved music concerts and was a fun-loving guy. In my opinion, it was a shame that

he went to such lengths to separate his personal identity from his professional one. Imagine if he had let the fun side of his personality out at work, if he had brought his enthusiasm and fun side into the workplace, it could have significantly boosted his team's morale and sense of fun. Having fun is one way to help your team members look forward to Mondays instead of having the Sunday Scaries!

When I think about work and fun intersecting, I think about Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group. It is amazing to see a leader who has changed the world and incorporated so much fun into his approach. Working at the Virgin companies is known for being both innovative and entertaining, and it really seems like a ton of fun!

Fun isn't just for visionary leaders like Branson, though. Fun and enthusiasm can also come from team members, and that's where Aqeel comes in.

## **Bringing Energy and Fun to the Team**

One morning, the founder and owner of the company that I worked for walked into my office with unexpected news. "I have a new Finance team member for you," he said. "By the way, you'll need to let someone go to make room for Aqeel." I was stunned—what the f\*%?

After thinking it over, I realized that two of my current team members were essentially coasting. They were doing the bare minimum, and frankly, their performance reminded me of sloths (I do love sloths, just not at work!) So, I made the tough decision to let them both go.

When Aqeel arrived, he was a breath of fresh air. Every day, he would come into my office with a huge smile on his face and ask, “Ron, what’s the goal for today?” It was amazing to see someone so full of energy and enthusiasm. We accomplished so much together and had a lot of fun in the process. Looking back, Aqeel’s excitement and drive transformed our team, all because he started every day with that simple question and a big smile on his face: “What are we going to achieve today?”

Aqeel’s raw, unbridled energy stood in stark contrast to the sloth-like behavior of his predecessors. Sure, he made a few mistakes early on, but I much preferred that over the slow, disengaged approach of the former team members. From my office window, I used to watch them slowly pack up their things, ready to bolt the second the clock hit 4:58 pm. Aqeel, on the other hand, was proactive, and his “can-do” attitude completely shifted the energy in the office. I absolutely loved working with him.

One example that stands out was when he volunteered to help reorganize the warehouse. He stayed all night working alongside the forklift drivers to move pallets into their new positions. Aqeel’s infectious energy demonstrated just how important it is to bring fun and enthusiasm into the workplace. When employees genuinely enjoy what they do, that energy spreads, creating a more positive, dynamic, and engaged environment.

### **Keeping Your Team Engaged with Fun and Learning**

Another way to keep your team engaged is by ensuring that learning is a priority. At Kraft, we had a culture of continuous development. Each year, we were encouraged

to take at least one course to enhance our skills. I remember being a part of a “Problem Solving and Decision Making” course led by Lou Quinto. His storytelling and facilitation skills captivated me. I was enthralled by what he was doing, but at the time had no idea that this experience would inspire my own career as a facilitator 20 years later!

The training courses helped me develop my technical skills (like Excel) and my soft skills (like building my presentation skill toolbox or my managerial style). These opportunities play a big role in keeping team members engaged and can help them love and look forward to their Mondays.

### **Leader Exercise:**

#### **Make Work Fun**

- Does your team currently engage in fun and productive activities?
- If so, how?
- If not, consider the following ideas to implement at work:
  - Encourage employees to bring their passions into the workplace by organizing “TED Talk Tuesdays,” where team members share and discuss inspiring talks.
  - Form a book club to help build stronger relationships and improve overall team morale.

- Plan team-building activities that incorporate fun. These could be casual get-togethers, themed parties, or creative workshops.
- Can you start a company sports team or club? Joining the Kraft soccer team was a fantastic way for me to build relationships and friendships.

Creating a culture where work feels less like a chore and more like a fulfilling and fun experience will help your team look forward to Mondays and stay motivated throughout the week!



## **Foster Friendship at Work**

Does having a best friend or good friends at work lead to us loving our Mondays? To me, the answer is a resounding YES.

Strong workplace friendships are not just enjoyable—they're crucial for fostering engagement and satisfaction. I remember two folks in Kraft's Finance department—May Chan and Karen Ing—who were always together. They would go for walks together, have lunch together, and spend the majority of their working hours in the same room. Their friendship was such a huge part of them being engaged and happy.

Reflecting on my career, I've felt the impact of having amazing friends at work. In fact, These relationships made the workplace feel more like a community, like a place where I belonged. But, as I became more senior, the manager/subordinate relationship didn't always allow for these close friendships in the same way. It's no exaggeration to say that it's lonely at the top.

One specific example of friendship that comes to mind is between myself and Rocco Crocco. Together, we led a team of nine people, and, while planning goals and setting KPIs, we'd always make sure to have fun. We had each other's

backs. We'd laugh together (sometimes at the other's expense), and in doing so, we turned what could have been a stressful relationship into a true friendship that endured beyond our time together at the firm.

We actually still talk on the phone sometimes when we have the time. We usually start with "What up diggidy", and then we both start cracking up. Despite not having worked together since 2010 (15 years ago), we still feel comfortable sharing our personal challenges and having fun together.

We went through a period of about 4 years where we didn't see each other. The next time we saw each it was as if no time had passed. We naturally fell back into the groove , a mark of a deep friendship. Having friends at work that we can trust is a huge part of creating belonging and a magnetic pull to help people love coming into the office and being part of a team.

Andy Hull, who is a fantastic leader and appears frequently in this book, actively builds friendships with his team members regardless of how junior or senior they are. He has a tremendous track record of retaining employees and I believe a big part of this is because of the friendships that he builds.

He truly cares about all his team members. He goes against conventional wisdom that the manager-subordinate relationship should not cross the friendship line. While controversial, this line of thinking proves fruitful for him.

Leaders can take a proactive approach to creating space for friendships to emerge by booking "Gtky" meetings (get to



know you) meetings where folks can share their whole selves with the team. This is how strong bonds start to form.

### **Leader Exercise:**

So, what can leaders do to create these types of strong bonds where folks love what they do, are engaged, have advancement opportunities, and have friends at work?

1. Create regular opportunities for team members to interact outside of work.
2. Encourage team members to share their personal interests and hobbies.
3. Show genuine interest by asking about personal events, such as weekend activities, family events, or hobbies, and genuinely engage in those conversations.
4. Let your team see who you are outside of your professional role.

Building strong workplace friendships can significantly enhance job satisfaction and make Mondays something your employees love.



## Be Conscious of Your Leadership Energy

The last ingredient you need to help your team love Mondays is being conscious of the energy that you have and taking advantage of its ripple effect. Energy is contagious, and as a leader, it's essential to be intentional about creating a positive, "Love Mondays" vibe that ripples throughout your team.

A few years ago, I attended a transformative training course led by my coach, Wayne. About 10-minutes into the session, he asked us all to stand up. He immediately sensed that the energy was off, and he was right. Our group was still dealing with the fact that the 87-year-old plant at Campbell's Canada was closing. He knew that he had to find a way to deal with this and shift the energy. His ability to recognize this is part of what makes him an outstanding leader.

One of my favorite examples of amazing energy is Michael "Pinball" Clemons, former Toronto Argonauts player and now their general manager. I remember an offsite meeting many years ago where Pinball delivered a keynote speech very early in the morning. He walked in, and in typical "Pinball" fashion said, "I need three volunteers." Three people put up their hands, not knowing what was coming.

He then proceeded to challenge them to drop and give him fifty push-ups right there on stage! I can only describe the look on the faces of those three volunteers as complete and utter terror and regret. I remember one of them claiming that they couldn't even do 10 push-ups! But despite their initial apprehension, all three volunteers, along with Pinball, executed the challenge. Pinball's dynamism could have helped them do another 50 with ease.

Amy Cuddy is an authority on body language and talks about the power of nonverbal cues, like body language and facial expressions. For example, smiles are contagious and can improve the mood of any room, be it in-person or virtual. Even on the phone, Amy explains, the person on the other end of the line can unconsciously detect if you are smiling.

So, think about the energy you bring into your team meetings. We can't all be Pinball, but we can bring our best energy to the table. The ripple effect that we have as leaders is massive. If we are intentional and conscious of the energy that we project, the ripple effect that we can have on our team is immeasurable in helping folks love their Mondays. And it doesn't have to be the leader. I shared how in one of my experiences the most junior team member (Aqeel) shifted the energy of our entire team!

I am in no way suggesting that we fake a smile or hide our true feelings. There are times when it is important to show as a leader that you are upset or not having your best day. Vulnerability has its own ripple effects that are just as crucial.

So, how can we get better at being authentic while also projecting our best energy?

Dino Bianco, one of my mentors who I've mentioned earlier, has mastered the skill of bringing the right energy to his team. As CEO, he has to play the dual role of holding senior folks accountable to deliver their results while also motivating junior members of the team.

I remember a tough business meeting where Dino addressed the team with a stern, serious demeanor, clearly communicating the need for improved performance. We all clearly got the message.

What was so impressive was that in the very next meeting with a different group of employees, he shifted his tone to one of warmth and care. This is what is frequently referred to as the "doorknob technique". Dino managed to adjust his energy based on the situation to maintain his effectiveness and positivity.

As leaders, we can all develop systems like the "doorknob" method to help us re-center ourselves and bring optimal energy to a particular meeting or group.

This method uses a physical cue like turning a doorknob when entering a room to re-center ourselves. In our virtual world, you can think of clicking on a virtual meeting link as being a useful proxy.

Another useful question that I ask myself is whether my 87 year self will care. This usually helps me decide whether to react or just chill.

### **Leader Exercise:**

Think about how you currently react when things upset you at work. Do you react or respond?

What is one thing you can try in order to ensure you can return to your authentic energy faster than you currently do?

Here are a few options:

1. Deep breathing. It could be box breathing or a technique like a 4-7-8. This technique involves inhaling for a count of 4, holding for a count of 7, and exhaling for a count of 8.
2. Taking a walk to recenter yourself.
3. Calling a friend who makes you feel great.
4. Try the “doorknob” method by focusing on something that inspires or grounds you before each meeting

# Conclusion

## **Building a Team That Loves Mondays**

Creating a culture where your team loves Mondays is about more than just checking boxes on leadership principles—it's about fostering an environment where people feel valued, challenged, and inspired. The steps we've explored in this section are all tools in your leadership toolkit, designed to unlock your team's potential and transform the way they approach each week. Remember that even if you are not the leader from a seniority standpoint, you can have a massive impact on the team if you follow these steps. Let's recap the key takeaways:

Building Trust is the foundation. Without trust, none of the other strategies will succeed. By investing in authentic relationships from day one, you set the stage for a team that feels secure and empowered. When people know that their leader has their back and genuinely cares about their well-being, they show up differently—they show up with enthusiasm and dedication.

Creating and Living Your Vision gives your team something to rally around. A compelling vision is what transforms daily tasks into something bigger than the sum of its parts. When your team sees their work as contributing to a shared mission, they find meaning and purpose in even the most routine tasks. Whether it's a small team in an office or a

large organization, everyone wants to know that what they do matters.

Setting BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals) taps into that hunger for greatness. People are more motivated when they have clear, ambitious goals to strive for. BHAGs are about pushing boundaries and making the impossible possible. They give your team something to stretch towards, and when paired with motivating rewards, the results can be extraordinary.

Creating Exciting Job Content and Advancement Opportunities is where you ensure your team members are not just working, but thriving. Job crafting, as we've seen, can make a huge difference—when people are in roles that align with their skills and passions, they bring more energy and creativity to their work. And when you pair that with opportunities for growth and advancement, you build a culture of continuous learning and achievement. Your people want to feel like they're growing, not stagnating. Providing new challenges and recognizing achievements ensures that your team stays motivated for the long haul.

Learning, Having Fun, and Fostering Friendships are essential ingredients in keeping your team engaged and making the workplace an enjoyable, fulfilling experience. Work doesn't have to feel like a grind. When you create a culture that values learning and fun—whether through team-building activities, social events, or continuous development—you turn the workplace into a space where people genuinely want to be. The friendships that form in this environment are what make Mondays something to look forward to rather than dread.

Finally, Managing Your Energy as a Leader is critical. Your energy has a ripple effect on your team. When you bring positivity, enthusiasm, and authenticity to the table, it spreads. Being conscious of how you show up—whether it’s leading with a smile, sharing vulnerability, or setting the right tone for each meeting—makes all the difference. Your team feeds off your energy, so it’s crucial to show up as the leader they need you to be.

## **A Final Word to Leaders**

Remember, creating a “Love Mondays” culture doesn’t happen overnight, and it’s not a one-size-fits-all approach. It requires consistent effort, a deep understanding of your team, and a willingness to adapt and grow alongside them. By following the strategies outlined in this section, you have a blueprint to build a high-performing team that not only loves Mondays but thrives every day of the week.

So, take these lessons, make them your own, add your own unique ingredients, and start building a culture where people love coming to work, feel empowered to do their best, and are excited about the future. When you do, you’ll not only see the results in productivity and performance but also in the smiles, camaraderie, and fulfillment that radiates from your team.

Now that you’ve mastered these steps, it’s time to apply them and see the transformation unfold.

**Let’s create a world where everyone loves their Mondays!**





Part Three

# **Monday Mavericks**



# Introduction

## Monday Mavericks

For many people, Mondays are a drag. But what if that wasn't the case? What if Mondays could be the best day of the week? That's exactly what the people in this section, the "Monday Mavericks" have discovered.

These individuals come from diverse backgrounds—CEOs, entrepreneurs, educators, authors, coaches, a Buddhist monk, and leaders—but they all have one thing in common: they've found ways to love what they do. They don't just tolerate Mondays; they embrace them with enthusiasm, joy, and purpose. Each "Monday Maverick" has tapped into a deep understanding of their passions and strengths, allowing them to craft careers and lives that bring fulfillment every single day!

The purpose of sharing these profiles is simple: to show you what's possible. These stories aren't meant to be unattainable ideals—they're real-life examples of people who've made intentional choices to build careers and lives that energize them. They've faced challenges, made pivots, and found their way to a place where Mondays are something to look forward to.

So, dive into these stories, learn from their experiences, and start thinking about what changes you can make—big or small—to start loving your Mondays, too.

There are many common elements that cut across this group, but the following three stand out for me:

1. We all have a CHOICE to love Mondays. It is up to us to make the decision.
2. Find something you are passionate about and go after it with gusto!
3. Get organized and invest time preparing for a great Monday and week.

## Andy Hull

Andy Hull is a finance executive for whom I have tremendous respect. He has led large, high-performing teams at companies like Kraft Foods and Nestlé.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Excitement for Mondays!**



Andy is one of those rare people who actually gets excited on Sundays. He's always looked forward to Mondays, and unlike most people, is energized by the start of the workweek. Other than one factory job he had early in his career where he was constantly clock-watching, Andy has loved all of his roles, primarily because of

the projects, the people, and the cultures he's worked in. His advice to anyone who finds themselves clock-watching? Leave immediately and find something you love.

### **A Two-Pronged Formula**

Andy credits his excitement for work to two key elements:

1. **Love for the Food Industry:** He finds fulfillment in seeing the results of his work on the shelves of grocery stores. It provides a tangible sense of accomplishment.
2. **Passion for Math and Solving Puzzles:** As someone who's always loved math, finance was the perfect career where he could apply this passion and tackle complex problems.

At Kraft, Andy became famous for his “whiteboard” meetings, where he worked with his team to solve big challenges or plan their strategy to obliterate targets. He encourages others to follow this same two-pronged formula– “Love what you do and enjoy solving problems.”

### **Habits That Drive Success**

Andy has developed several habits that help him get excited about Mondays and perform at a high level:

1. **Organization Equals Freedom:** Andy is highly organized, which helps his team clearly understand their deliverables for the day and week. He spends an hour each weekend preparing for the week ahead. He also has a morning ritual of swimming laps, during which he mentally reviews his to-do list for the day. While most people would struggle just to stay afloat, Andy is planning his day while swimming laps—talk about a powerful morning routine!
2. **Build Friendships at Work:** Andy believes in building personal friendships with his team members, a concept that goes against the traditional “keep a distance” approach. He's famous for hosting BBQs for his team in

his backyard, fostering bonds that help his team not only trust him but also love coming to work. One of the stats he's most proud of is that no one who has ever reported directly to him has resigned. He believes that his commitment to building friendships with his team is a driving force behind this loyalty.

3. **Create Fun in Every Meeting:** Andy is known for starting meetings with an element of fun and creativity, whether it's a puzzle or trivia. This energizes the team and gets their creative juices flowing before transitioning to business matters.
4. **Set BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals):** Andy is famous for setting huge, ambitious goals for his team—and even more famous for beating them. He has a knack for getting team members rallied around these big goals, inspiring them to aim higher.
5. **Develop Career Paths:** Andy is committed to his team's long-term success. He helps his team members see their potential and supports them in planning their long-term career growth.

Andy Hull has mastered the art of making Mondays exciting—for both himself and his team.

## Ann Gomez



Ann Gomez is a USA Today bestselling author, speaker, and founder of Clear Concept Inc (a global training company). She's passionate about empowering people to thrive at work, and her enthusiasm for helping others perform at their best is contagious. About four years ago, a former colleague, Jennifer Salter, reached out to me and asked if I had ever considered leading training workshops. At the time, I was firmly planted in Finance, but I decided to be open to new opportunities and met with Ann. That meeting, on a winter day at a coffee shop in Toronto, changed my trajectory. I was instantly drawn to Ann's warmth and drive to make an impact.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Love What You Do—But Accept That Not Every Monday is Perfect**

When I asked Ann if she loved Mondays, she smiled and said, "I love what I do!" She's deeply passionate about helping people thrive, and it shows in her work. But, like many of the Monday Mavericks, she acknowledged that not every Monday is perfect. Ann explained that life is full of ups



and downs, and the goal is to have more good Mondays than bad ones, making progress each day.

### **Culture Matters**

Ann shared her experience working on a wide range of teams before founding Clear Concept. Some teams were grounded in a "thrive culture," where she was supported and encouraged to grow, and others were fear-based cultures. The difference in those environments showed her how critical workplace culture is to whether or not you love your Mondays. That lesson has shaped how she and Susan Pons (the Executive Director and Ann's partner at Clear Concept Inc) have created a safe, supportive, and high-expectation culture that fosters excellence.

### **Trace Your Entrepreneurial Spirit Back to Childhood**

Ann told me about her uncle, who was an entrepreneur, and how she admired the freedom and joy he found in his work. That early exposure sparked her own entrepreneurial bug. Despite the challenges and the many steps she hadn't anticipated, Ann shared that she would do it all again, with a smile on her face.

### **Find Your Flow**

Ann gave me some great advice: notice when time flies by or when you're in "flow." That's a significant clue that you're doing something you love. Once you identify those moments, you can start incorporating more of that into your job. For Ann, this led her to create a business that allowed her to combine her passion for teaching with her love of learning.

## **Shift Your Mindset**

One of the biggest lessons I've learned from Ann is the power of shifting your mindset. She reframed simple things for me, like turning "I have a busy day" into "I have a full day" or "I have to" into "I get to." This shift in language changed how I approached my work and life, helping me focus on opportunities rather than obligations.

## **Use Affirmations and Manifesting**

Ann shared how she keeps a list of affirmations on her computer monitor. One of her favorites: "Today will flow effortlessly." She visualizes her goals with vivid detail, a practice that has helped her achieve some of her biggest dreams, including becoming a prolific speaker.

## **Embrace a Growth Mindset and Fail Forward**

Ann uses the WWW/EBI feedback model—"What Worked Well" and "Even Better If"—to help her team celebrate successes and improve. This method reframes failure as a learning opportunity, encouraging vulnerability and growth. She also talks about the power of "yet", and Carol Dweck's research about the power of a growth mindset, reminding people that just because you haven't conquered something yet, you're always capable of learning and growing.

Ann's journey is a beautiful blend of teaching, learning, and growth. She has created a life where she loves most of her Mondays, and her mindset shifts have been a powerful influence on my own journey!

## Asif Masani



Asif Masani is an entrepreneur based in India, a LinkedIn influencer with over 143,000 followers, a two-time author, and a man on a mission to help 1 million finance professionals. Asif has become a good friend, and we connect every month or two to support and encourage each other in our

entrepreneurial journeys. I owe him a special debt of gratitude for inspiring me to write this book—his encouragement was exactly what I needed to make this leap.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Every Day Feels Like Monday (In a Good Way)**

Asif is someone who rarely knows what day of the week it is. Why? Because he loves Mondays, Tuesdays, and every other day of the week equally. His passion and commitment to his mission keep him energized every day. With a clear sense of purpose and a deep love for what he's doing, Asif has found that every day can be fulfilling when you're focused on making an impact.

## **How It All Started**

Asif's inspiring journey began during the COVID-19 pandemic when he started posting regularly on LinkedIn. His posts quickly gained traction, and before long, a group reached out asking if he could deliver a free webinar. Asif agreed. That webinar, posted on YouTube, began with a few views but eventually soared to 100,000 views. From there, Asif's influence grew, and he realized he could take the content from his posts and compile it into a book. It's remarkable to think that his journey toward thought leadership and global training started with a simple LinkedIn post and a willingness to say yes to an opportunity.

## **Habits for Success**

So, what habits have helped Asif achieve the level of impact he has today? Planning is key to his success. Every Sunday, Asif plans out his week, and as each day progresses, he carefully plans the next one to stay laser-focused on his priorities. This habit of consistent planning ensures that he's always working on what matters most.

When it comes to loving Mondays, Asif offers some straightforward advice– “Ask yourself why. Why don't you love Mondays? Is it the company? The role? Your manager? Or perhaps a combination of factors?” His message is clear: Don't stay in a situation that doesn't bring you joy or fulfillment. Instead, push hard toward finding joy in your work and creating an impact in your world.

Keep going, Asif!

## Bhante Saranapala



Bhante Saranapala, is an author and is widely known as the "Urban Buddhist Monk," is one of the happiest people I know. His joy and gratitude radiate through everything he does, from spreading "kindfulness" to leading weekly meditation sessions. Despite his simple life as a Buddhist monk, Bhante's energy is contagious, and his wisdom on living with joy has had a profound influence on me.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Choose Gratitude**

Bhante intentionally chooses to love Mondays—and every other day—by practicing gratitude. He told me about a time when he drove 10 hours (five each way) to Ottawa just to give a 10-minute talk. Instead of complaining about the long journey, Bhante made the trip with a smile, focusing on the opportunity to make a positive impact. His positivity from that experience led to an invitation to speak in Vancouver.

#### **Find Your Passion and Pour Your Heart Into It**

Bhante knew he wanted to be a monk from the age of 10. His passion for helping people find happiness and peace has

fueled his joy throughout his life. He told me that doing what you love is key to finding happiness, and his own life is a testament to that.

### **Be Patient—Like the Bamboo Plant**

Bhante shared a powerful story about the bamboo plant, which takes years to develop an intricate root system before it grows quickly. He likened this to his own journey, where he held weekly meditation sessions for over 20 years with little attention. In 2006, one session with the police force finally shone a light on his work. Bhante's patience and consistency helped him become the respected teacher and speaker he is today.

### **Just Breathe**

One of Bhante's most powerful teachings is his SSMK method of breathing:

Slowly  
Silently  
Mindfully  
Kindfully

This simple yet profound practice helps bring calm and clarity during stressful moments.

### **Practice Daily Kindness**

Bhante also believes in the power of small, daily acts of kindness. Whether it's smiling at someone, holding a door open, or paying for the person behind you in line, these simple gestures create a ripple effect of joy and positivity in the world.

Bhante's practices of gratitude, patience, and kindness offer a roadmap for finding joy in life, and his teachings have deeply influenced my own approach to making Mondays—and every day—a day of joy!

## Brian Kerr



Brian Kerr's story is a testament to resilience and the power of staying connected to what you love. At the age of 11, Brian took a job at Kawartha Dairy, an iconic Canadian dairy company known for its fresh and delicious ice cream. His decision to work so young stemmed from a need to support his family, as they were going through some challenges. Living close to the factory in the small town of Bobcaygeon, Ontario, Brian quickly fell in love with the work. Though his shift was supposed to end at noon, he often stayed late, absorbed in the factory's rhythm. It didn't take long for the Crowe family, who owned the company, to notice his passion, and they saw this job as a way to support the Kerr family.

The Crowe family convinced Brian to go away to university and he became a Chartered Public Accountant on Bay Street (Toronto's financial district), embarking on a long corporate career in Toronto. He spent 18 years at Kraft Foods, rising through the ranks in finance, sales, strategy and marketing with his final position being the Chief Marketing Officer. Despite his success, Brian found himself not loving Mondays—a rare feeling for him—signaling it was time for a change.



In a beautiful full-circle moment, Brian attended a local beerfest in Bobcaygeon while contemplating his next move. He ran into one of the Crowe family members, and they offered him the role of CEO at Kawartha Dairy. He accepted the position on the spot, feeling an overwhelming sense of certainty. Years later, the boy who once worked in the factory was now running the company he had always admired.

### **Making Monday Magic:**

#### **Get to Know Yourself and What You Love to Do**

Brian refers to himself as an "achievement junkie" who relishes Mondays because they offer a fresh opportunity to make an impact. He credits a coach for helping him realize that achievement drives his happiness. For anyone struggling to find joy on Mondays, Brian recommends the "5 Whys" technique, commonly used in manufacturing. By repeatedly asking why you don't love Mondays, you can dig deeper and uncover the root cause of your dissatisfaction.

#### **Get in the Driver's Seat & Take the Wheel**

Brian's advice is simple: take control of your career and life. No one else will do it for you. He emphasizes the importance of understanding what makes you leap out of bed on a Monday and actively pursuing it. If you don't love Mondays, he says, it's up to you to change them.

#### **Focus on the Things That Matter**

Brian dedicates himself to two things: family and work. He takes pride in not having a lot of friends outside of these spheres, as this focus allows him to channel his energy into

what truly matters. By prioritizing family and work with laser focus, he finds fulfillment and purpose in his life, which fuels his love for Mondays.

Brian's journey is a powerful reminder that staying connected to your roots and knowing what drives you can make all the difference. His story of returning to his first job as the company's CEO exemplifies the rewards of pursuing what you truly love, and his advice challenges us all to take control and make Mondays something to look forward to.

## Christine Cruz-Clarke



Christine Cruz-Clarke is a Global Marketing executive at Kraft Heinz. She is the former CEO of Balzac's Coffee in Toronto, and she's one of the most dynamic leaders I know. Her career includes roles at Deloitte, Hershey, Mars, and TerraCycle, and she's worked across the U.S., the U.K., and Canada. What impresses me most about

Christine is her ability to embrace change with open arms. Whether it's in her professional life or her personal journey, she sees change as a gift, and her approach to Mondays reflects that.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Embrace Change as a Gift**

Christine loves Mondays because each one brings new challenges. She shared with me that she doesn't see change as something to fear—rather, it's an opportunity for growth. Over the years, she's developed what she calls a "change toolbox" that includes skills like sitting with tough feedback, processing it, and figuring out how to improve.

## **Take Ownership and Initiative**

Christine believes that no matter your role, you can always take ownership of your work and make a positive impact. She's always impressed when junior team members bring forward ideas to improve their roles or processes. For Christine, it's about creating a culture where everyone feels empowered to contribute.

## **Focus on what matters most—Don't Sweat the Small Stuff**

Christine has learned the importance of stepping back and gaining perspective. When something feels overwhelming, she takes a moment to "zoom out" and ask herself what truly matters. This shift in perspective has been a game changer for her and has helped her navigate challenging situations with grace.

## **Be Your Own Biggest Cheerleader**

Christine's self-talk is one of the most important tools in her success. She told me how careful she is with the words she uses when talking to herself, reminding me that "how you talk to yourself matters." Christine chooses to be her biggest cheerleader, doubling down on her strengths.

## **Mentorship is Key—You Can't Be What You Can't See**

Throughout her career, Christine has had mentors, coaches, and sponsors who've helped her see beyond what she thought was possible. Now, she pays it forward by mentoring others and amplifying her message to help those around her. She's passionate about showing others what's possible and helping them break through barriers.

Christine's ability to embrace change, take initiative, and lift others has allowed her to build a career she loves. Her Mondays are filled with new challenges and opportunities, and she tackles them with energy, positivity, and a commitment to making a difference!

## David Lahey



Dave Lahey's story is nothing short of remarkable. He was given just four weeks to live after a throat cancer diagnosis, but Dave said **'NO'** to that prognosis. Instead, he chose faith over fear, and four years later, Dave is thriving and making an impact in the world. As the founder of Predictive Success Corporation,

Dave is dedicated to helping leaders build high-performance teams, and his passion for helping others love their Mondays is inspiring.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Choose Faith Over Fear**

Dave's diagnosis was a life-changing moment. After being sent to the 19th floor of Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto—a floor known for palliative care—Dave refused to accept the grim outlook from his original medical team. He demanded a change, assembling a new team led by Dr. Lillian Siu, who took a completely different approach by introducing immunotherapy. Her assertiveness, tenacity, and positivity were exactly what Dave needed, and her care saved his life.

## **Refuse to Give Up**

Few people make it off the 19th floor, but Dave did. His resolve and conviction to fight for his life not only brought him through cancer but also gave him a new appreciation for how precious life is. He is living proof of what happens when you refuse to give up, even in the face of extreme odds.

## **Build High-Performance Teams—including Medical Teams**

In addition to running his company, Predictive Success Corporation, Dave now uses his experience to give back to hospitals. He noticed during his treatment that communication between doctors and nurses wasn't as effective as it could be. Drawing on his expertise, Dave began working with medical teams to improve their communication and performance thus ensuring better care for patients.

## **Live Every Day with Purpose**

Dave 2.0, as he calls himself after surviving cancer, lives with three daily goals:

1. Make a positive difference.
2. Have safe fun with his family and team.
3. Find something to look forward to.

Dave's story is a testament to the power of faith, resilience, and living with intention. He's helping others love their Mondays by building better bosses and better teams while living his own life with gratitude and purpose. Dave is also a champion for immunotherapy which he believes saved his life and can save many more lives.

## Dino Bianco



Dino Bianco is one of the best leaders I know. He is currently the CEO of Kruger Products and the former President of Kraft Canada. With an impressive career spanning multiple roles and industries, what sets Dino apart is his genuine care for his team.

He's a leader who truly loves Mondays and brings that enthusiasm into everything he does.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Choose to Love Mondays**

Dino has always loved Mondays. Raised by financially poor but incredibly optimistic parents, Dino learned early on in life the value of a positive mindset. He believes that we all have a choice: "To either love Mondays and approach them with a glass-half-full attitude, or to see them as something to dread." Dino's choice? To love Mondays, just like he loves every other day.

#### **Start the Week Like a Sports Game**

A passionate hockey fan, Dino approaches Monday like the start of a big ice hockey game. He believes in coming out strong, just like jumping over the boards onto the ice and



going on offense. Dino uses Mondays as a chance to set the tone for the week with boundless energy, helping his team take an early lead.

### **Prepare for Success**

Dino's preparation for Monday starts on Friday. He scans his calendar and visualizes what is coming up, whether it's a tough customer meeting or a board presentation. By mentally preparing for the week ahead, Dino enters Monday with a winning mindset, fully ready to tackle any challenge. He also surrounds himself with positive people to maintain his own energy and avoid any negative influence.

### **Ripple Effect of Leadership Energy**

Dino knows that as a leader, his energy has a massive ripple effect on his team. This is why he's so intentional about projecting positivity and optimism. He chooses to bring his best energy because he's seen firsthand how a negative leader can poison the work environment. Dino also uses music and physical exercise to keep his mindset sharp and his energy high.

### **Inspire Through Transparency**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dino's leadership was truly tested as he guided his organization through uncertainty. Despite the challenges, he remained calm and transparent with his team, promising to keep them informed every step of the way. His honesty and steadiness during such a difficult time helped make Mondays easier for everyone around him.

At the end of the day, Dino's philosophy boils down to one powerful truth– We all choose whether or not to love our Mondays. His intentional focus on mindset, preparation, and surrounding himself with positivity are what set him apart as a leader who makes Mondays something to look forward to.

## Dr. Nancy MacKay



Dr. Nancy MacKay is a force of nature. She jumps out of bed at 4 AM every day, ready to make an impact in the world. Except, of course, after a Vancouver Canucks ice hockey game! Nancy's relentless drive and passion for leadership have inspired her to build MacKay CEO Forums, a peer support network for CEOs and Executives. I remember meeting Nancy and feeling her dynamic energy—she truly loves her Mondays, and it shows.

### **Making Monday Magic**

### **Rediscover Childhood Passions**

When Nancy was six years old, all she wanted for Christmas was a chalkboard. While other kids were asking for the latest toys, Nancy was imagining herself as a teacher, spending hours in the basement pretending to teach her imaginary students. Her love for teaching has stayed with her throughout her life, and she's now found a way to merge that passion with her business.

### **Take Bold Risks**

Nancy's big decisions are often fueled by "two bottles of wine dinners." The first bold decision came during a date

night with her husband and business partner, Rob. Both were exhausted from long hours at their jobs, raising two young kids. After some wine, Nancy declared that they were going to quit their jobs and start a business. The very next day, they made it happen, starting a successful consulting business. Later, another "two-bottles-of-wine" decision led them to launch MacKay CEO Forums—a company that's now approaching 20 years of helping leaders across Canada.

### **It's Lonely at the Top—Find Your Peer Support**

Nancy created MacKay CEO Forums because she understood that leadership can be lonely. By surrounding executives with trusted peers, she helps them navigate both personal and professional challenges. This peer support has been transformative for so many leaders.

### **Overcome Fear and Panic**

Despite her incredible drive, Nancy is open about the panic attacks she experienced after launching her business. For the first 90 days, she dealt with near-daily panic attacks, thinking they were heart attacks. Her doctor helped her develop strategies to manage the anxiety, and her ability to ask for help and work through the fear is a testament to her courage.

### **Surround Yourself with Game Changers**

Nancy often talks about the importance of surrounding yourself with "Game Changers"—people who can help you make a massive impact. She counts Rick Hansen, a Canadian hero, among her influences. Despite facing physical

challenges, Hansen has made an incredible difference in the world, and Nancy strives to do the same.

Nancy MacKay is a game changer in her own right. Her passion for helping leaders reach their full potential has made her Mondays (and every day) something to look forward to. Her story is a reminder to take bold risks, seek support, and never stop pushing the boundaries of what's possible!

## Geetika Saigal



Geetika Saigal turns "stories into books" and "people into brands", and you can see the excitement in her eyes when she talks about her work. Geetika lives in Goa, and she shared with me how she's built a life and career around following her heart and loving her Mondays. One of the most inspiring things about her is her unwavering belief that it's essential to love what you

do. I felt deeply connected to her story because of the bold moves she made to follow her passions.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Pay Attention to Whether You're Loving What You Do**

Geetika believes that when you're not loving your work, it's a signal that you need to reflect and possibly make a change. She shared with me how, at different stages of her life, she's hit periods where she felt she was plateauing. If the excitement and energy weren't there, she took it as a cue that a shift was needed, whether big or small.

### **Stress as a Signal for Change**

For Geetika, stress is a clear indicator that something isn't right. During times when stress built up in her life, she

would hit pause, reflect, and often reset. Sometimes the solution was a minor tweak, and other times it required a more drastic shift in her work or lifestyle.

### **Appreciate Life's Stages**

Before making the leap to build her own brand, Geetika enjoyed a successful corporate career, traveling the world. But after two years of living out of a suitcase, she realized that the lifestyle no longer fulfilled her. It was time to pause, breathe, and start thinking more deeply about what she truly wanted. She's proud of those early achievements, but she knew when it was the time to pivot.

### **Build Confidence and Dream Big**

What I admired most about Geetika was her unwavering self-confidence. When she made the bold move to leave her corporate career, many questioned her decision, but she stayed true to her vision. She explained how people often thought she was going through a mid-life crisis, but her ability to dream big and remain optimistic fueled her journey.

### **Trace Your Passion Back to Childhood**

Geetika shared a beautiful story about how, as a young girl in India, she fell in love with reading. Her parents took her to the library to keep her busy during the hot summers, and she called it her "heaven." That early passion for devouring fiction laid the foundation for her current work, and I was struck by how we can often trace our true passions back to childhood.

### **Look for a Daily Hero**

Every day, Geetika seeks out someone who inspires her, calling them “Today’s Hero.” While she looks for daily sources of inspiration, her lifelong heroes are her parents, who always supported her dreams. This practice keeps her energized and motivated.

### **Prepare for Tomorrow Today**

Before going to bed, Geetika plans out her next day in meticulous detail. She says this practice helps her wake up with clarity and intention. If she skips this step, she feels restless and unprepared.

Geetika’s approach to loving Mondays is rooted in being deeply in tune with her passions, knowing when to make changes, and always looking for inspiration. Her journey is a reminder that it’s possible to build a life you love, one that is in line with your true self!



## Howard Behar



Howard Behar is the former President of Starbucks, often referred to as the soul of the company. His brilliant book *"It's Not About the Coffee"* highlights his unwavering commitment to people during his tenure, a period when Starbucks grew from 28 stores to over 15,000. What's remarkable is how Howard maintained his focus on people

amidst such explosive growth.

Even at the age of 80, Howard remains laser-focused on his mission: "To inspire the human spirit—myself first and then others." Whether it's something small like picking up trash or something like being my first podcast guest or joining me as a speaker at the University of Toronto, Howard's mission drives him to make a meaningful impact every day.

### **Making Monday Magic**

### **Learning Life's Most Important Lessons**

Howard attributes his mission-driven approach to two pivotal experiences in his life:

- His parents ran a small grocery store, and one day his father added a couple of packages of strawberries to a customer's bag without charging for them. That quiet act of generosity showed Howard that life isn't all about money; it's about doing what's right.
- In his early 20s, Howard worked at a furniture company where his manager, Sid, would walk around the parking lot picking up trash. Despite Howard offering to do it, Sid continued doing it, teaching him the valuable lesson encapsulated in the saying, *"If not me, who? If not now, when?"* This became a guiding principle for Howard and later, one of Starbucks' core values. Howard would famously reject executives who wouldn't instinctively pick up trash when touring stores, reinforcing the importance of humility and ownership.

### **Sustaining Energy and Positivity in Retirement**

Even in retirement, Howard continues to love Mondays. However, he acknowledges that he has faced bouts of depression. What's inspiring is how he's worked through these challenges by building habits that support his mental health:

- **Goal setting:** Howard regularly updates his goals with his wife and revisits them often.
- **Affirmations:** He uses daily affirmations like, "I love myself unconditionally," and "I am enough, I have enough, I do enough."

- **Asking for help:** He's not afraid to seek support when he needs it, knowing that vulnerability is a strength.

### **Advice for Loving Mondays**

Howard's advice for those struggling to love Mondays is both practical and profound:

1. **Start with self-love:** Learning to love yourself is the first step. Pay attention to your self-talk and ensure it's positive and constructive.
2. **Evaluate your situation:** If you find yourself unhappy, ask whether it's the job or the company. If you're genuinely unfulfilled, it might be time for a change.
3. **Reframe your mindset:** Howard suggests shifting your thinking from "I have to go to work" to "I get to go to work."

I've had the privilege of interviewing Howard several times, and his generosity, spirit, and commitment to lifting others continue to inspire me. He played a significant role in supporting me early in my entrepreneurial journey, and for that, I am forever grateful.

## Jim Alling



Jim Alling is a retired businessman whose impressive career includes being the CEO of TOMS Shoes, COO of T-Mobile, and President of Starbucks. What stands out about Jim isn't just his career success but his humility and

kindness. From our first Zoom call, I felt Jim's magnetic energy and genuine enthusiasm. He was 100% present, deeply curious about my background, and remarkably grounded for someone who's achieved so much.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Pay Attention to How You Feel on Sunday**

Jim told me that if he ever felt any malaise or anxiety on Sunday, it was a signal that he needed to prepare mentally for the week ahead. This mental preparation helped him avoid the dreaded Monday morning slump and bring a positive mindset into his work, setting the tone for a successful week.

#### **Be 100% Present with People**

Jim shared how, during his Starbucks store visits, he was always fully present with staff. He intentionally stayed off

his phone and made it a point to engage with those around him. Being completely focused on the person in front of him, whether it was a barista or a senior colleague, created a deeper connection and showed respect for their time.

### **Gratitude and Service**

Gratitude is a core practice for Jim, one that was introduced by his wife. Each night, their family would share three things they were grateful for, which Jim found incredibly important. This attitude carried over into his work, where he prioritized acknowledging and appreciating his team. Rather than focusing on what was wrong in “beat down” meetings, he made time to build his team up and recognize their contributions.

### **Surround Yourself with People Who Energize You**

Jim emphasized the importance of surrounding yourself with people who appreciate you and bring positive energy. He even mentioned how his dog always greeted him with enthusiasm after a long day—an uplifting reminder of the power of positivity.

### **Find Roles That Align with Your Strengths**

Jim discovered that when he worked in areas that didn’t align with his strengths, such as finance, he struggled. But in marketing, he thrived because it felt natural to him. His advice– “Find a job where you can flourish, where the work feels like something you’ve always been good at.”

## **Recall Your Superpower**

Jim shared how his interpersonal skills have been his lifelong superpower. From his childhood report cards to his corporate feedback, it was clear that he had a gift for connecting with people and building teams. This strength allowed him to succeed in leadership roles, where he could use his ability to rally people around a vision.

## **Turn Negatives Into Positives**

One of Jim's favorite stories was about how he took on the Coffee Mate brand at Nestlé, which was considered one of the least desirable assignments at the time. Through teamwork and determination, he and his team turned it into a billion-dollar success. Jim's story is a testament to how the right mindset can transform challenges into incredible opportunities.

Jim's humility, focus on gratitude, and ability to turn obstacles into opportunities are the reasons why he not only loved his Mondays but also thrived in his career. He is a true example of what it means to embrace every day with enthusiasm and purpose!

## Lisa Richardson



My first memory of Lisa Richardson is of her captivating a room full of leaders. She was telling a story about being on a flight with a baby who wouldn't stop crying. Everyone was at their wit's end, but Lisa—being the natural caregiver she is—stepped in, carrying the baby up and down the aisle to calm it.

That's Lisa in a nutshell: always ready to lend a hand, comfort those around her, and provide much-needed humor in tense moments. As the CEO of Canterbury Coffee, Lisa's warmth and authenticity come through every single day, including Mondays.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Know Yourself and Lean Into Your Superpowers**

Lisa has always known that she's an extrovert and a people person. Growing up, her family moved around frequently because of her father's job, so she quickly learned how to adapt to new environments and connect with people. Even now, Lisa strikes up conversations with strangers in grocery stores, because it's who she is. She's leaned into her strength as a connector, and it's fueled her success.

### **Start Your Day with "Me Time"**

Lisa is a big believer in carving out time for yourself, and her mornings are sacred. She calls it her "hour of power." With a cup of coffee in hand, she organizes her day, making lists and setting priorities. This routine allows her to be her best self throughout the day. By evening, though, she's ready to relax and avoids making big decisions.

### **Build Relationships and Take Care of Others**

Lisa thrives on building relationships. She goes into every Monday refreshed because she's surrounded by her people. Her authentic energy and caring nature are what make her such a great leader. But she's also real about the fact that sometimes she's burned out and needs a break.

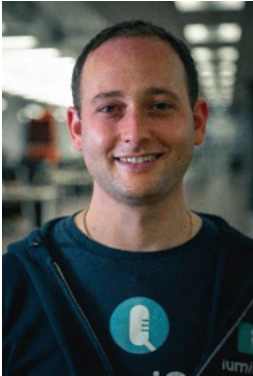
### **Take on Challenges and Jump Out of Your Comfort Zone**

Lisa isn't afraid to take on big challenges. She spent 25 years at Kraft Foods, moving into new roles every couple of years. She loved the challenge of learning something new and building relationships with new teams. A few years ago, she took on the opportunity to lead a coffee company, a challenge that many might have passed on—but Lisa jumped in, and she's doing an incredible job.

Lisa brightens every room she walks into, creating a ripple effect of positivity. Her story shows that by knowing yourself, taking on new challenges, and building meaningful relationships, you can make Monday magic and spread that energy to others!



## Michael Kravshik



Michael Kravshik is the co-founder and CEO of LumiQ, a company that's revolutionizing accounting education through podcasts. I first met Michael when I was a guest on one of his podcasts, and I was immediately struck by how much joy he found in the work he was doing. Over time, we developed a partnership, and I learned more about his journey and how he came to love his Mondays. His story is one of persistence, exploration, and the courage to walk away from things that don't align with your purpose.

Michael also shared that loving Mondays doesn't mean loving ALL Mondays. Life isn't perfect and to him it is about loving most of your Mondays and dealing with the inevitable Mondays that are hard.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Seek to Make a Meaningful Impact**

For Michael, one of the most important aspects of loving Mondays is knowing that he's having an impact. He feels great when he is having a positive impact on the almost 100 team members at LumiQ. While entrepreneurship can be

tough, the meaningful impact he's having through LumiQ makes the challenges worthwhile.

### **Explore and Try Different Career Paths**

Michael's career didn't follow a straight line. He started out in sales, moved into external auditing at EY, took on a consultant role at Protiviti, worked as a teaching assistant at Carleton University, and even did a stint as a security analyst at Scotiabank. He also pursued a master's degree in counter-terrorism. Each of these experiences taught him something valuable, but none of them truly ignited his passion. It was only through trying these various roles that he eventually landed on something that felt right.

### **Sometimes Saying No Opens New Doors**

I admired Michael's honesty when he said his current path was found "by accident." He wasn't actively chasing it; instead, he was running away from jobs that didn't fit. For example, while he understood the value of auditing, it didn't fulfill him, so he moved on. By saying no to jobs that didn't align with his passions, new and more fulfilling opportunities came his way.

### **Be Curious and a Lifelong Learner**

Michael's superpower is his curiosity. He describes himself as a "nerd at heart" and loves learning about new topics. This love of learning has served him well, helping him navigate different career paths until he found something that truly resonated with him.

## **Learn Skills That Align with Your Passion and Aptitude**

Michael advised me to avoid the “shiny object syndrome” of chasing money or titles. Instead, he emphasized the importance of focusing on building skills that are aligned with your passions. When you pursue what you love, success will follow.

Michael’s story speaks to the power of curiosity, the willingness to explore different paths, and the importance of making a meaningful impact. He has created a career where Mondays—and every other day—bring excitement and fulfillment!

## Michelle Coutinho



Michelle Coutinho is currently a DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) consultant. A former teacher who rose to become a principal, Michelle eventually took on the role of Principal of Equity and Diversity at a local school board—a position she built from scratch and one that holds deep meaning for her.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Loving Mondays Through Purpose**

Michelle loves her Mondays! She found a compelling purpose in her work, focusing on creating positive change and advancing equity and diversity within her community. As the Principal of Equity and Diversity, Michelle saw progress that was extremely meaningful, particularly from a student perspective. While there's still much work to be done, witnessing the tangible impact of her efforts drives her love for what she does.

#### **Aligning with Purpose**

For Michelle, purpose is about being part of significant, positive change. This mission energizes her, helping her love Mondays—and every other day—even during the

tough moments. She believes that reflecting on wins and learning from challenges is crucial for sustaining that sense of purpose.

### **Overcoming Initial Doubts**

Interestingly, Michelle didn't always recognize her leadership potential. When offered the principal role, her initial reaction was to say no. When she eventually accepted, her first experience wasn't what she had expected. Trying to fit into preconceived notions of how a principal should act left her unfulfilled. It was her husband Alvin's advice to "be yourself" that turned everything around, giving her the confidence to lead authentically.

### **Key Habits for Success**

Michelle's success comes from some powerful habits she's developed over time:

- **Find Your People:** Surround yourself with family, friends, and mentors who can uplift and energize you.
- **Respond, Don't React:** Michelle developed the ability to engage in conversations with those who resisted change without becoming defensive. She played the long game and learned how to stay resilient.
- **Find Joy in Every Moment:** She practices daily gratitude by reflecting on two things she's thankful for each day and seeks out joy in both big and small moments.

Michelle's advice to those who don't love their Mondays is to take small, meaningful steps toward what matters to them. She encourages taking action toward a purposeful life

and celebrating both small and big wins along the way. Michelle's journey toward finding her purpose has enabled her to embrace and enjoy every day!

## Mike Farley



Mike Farley's career began in a conventional way. He worked in a marketing role, and from an outsider's perspective, he seemed happy. But inside, he was deeply unsettled, grappling with big questions about the world. Why are people hurting the planet? Harming animals? Why aren't people treating each other right?

Mike chose to enter the business world to better understand it—and, ultimately, to change it. His mission was to help people move from fear to joy, from striving to thriving, and to make a meaningful impact in the world.

In a strange twist of fate, three people suggested Mike connect with Wayne Stark, my coach, while others encouraged Wayne to meet Mike. They finally connected, and together, they have been changing lives ever since. The two developed programs that help individuals find their innate purpose and begin thriving. I attended their course, and it changed my life for the better—I went from enduring Mondays to loving them!

## **Making Monday Magic**

Mike chooses to love every Monday and every moment. Here are some of the things he does to maintain this positive mindset:

### **Movement Sparks Creativity**

Mike knows that he is "kinetic". Moving his body frees his mind to be creative, so when he feels stuck, he takes a walk. This simple act gets his mental wheels turning and helps him shift into a thriving mindset. One of his rituals involves walking to a nearby cemetery and touching a large tree. Mike taps into the wisdom of this deeply rooted tree to ground himself.

### **Breathing to Relax**

Mike emphasizes the importance of taking deep breaths. When we focus on our breathing, it helps relax both our mind and body, providing clarity and calmness.

### **Surround Yourself with Support**

Mike talks about how vital it is to have a supportive partner and to surround yourself with people who fill your cup. He encourages reducing time with those who drain your energy and instead spending time with those who uplift you.

**Ask for Help** Mike understands the power of asking for help when he needs it. He encourages others to do the same, reminding us that we don't need to have all the answers on our own.



## **Advice for Overcoming the "Sunday Scaries"**

Mike encourages people to find that initial spark of inspiration—something that gives you energy and excitement. That little spark can grow into a fire that will help you approach Mondays with joy instead of dread.

He advises pausing and stepping off the "super highway of life" to explore what you genuinely love to do. As he says, "Reflect deeply on what made you feel alive as a child, and don't let the speed and pressures of life bury those passions."

## **Unlocking Your Passions**

According to Mike, a simple question can help unlock your passion: *Does it feel right?*

He continues to be a person I lean on when I need someone to listen. In fact, he's hands down the best listener I've ever met. I even recommended him to my wife, Farah, and through her sessions with Mike, she gained significant clarity. Since then, I've referred several executives and friends who were at crossroads in their lives to Mike, and he's helped them rediscover their joy and find new paths forward.

Mike Farley's ability to guide others from surviving to thriving is truly inspiring. He encourages us all to pause, reflect, and reignite our passions to bring that spark of joy into every Monday.

## Natasha Rathee



Natasha Rathee is the SVP, Global Head of Finance of Bluerock Therapeutics, and has held senior roles at top companies like Bayer, Kraft Foods, and PepsiCo. I've known Natasha for many years, and what has always struck me is her unshakable positivity and determination. When Natasha worked on my team, she took on one of the toughest roles in the company—a job most people avoided—with a smile on her face. Now, as a leader, she continues to make a massive impact and loves her Mondays.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Know What You Love and Pursue It**

Natasha is crystal clear about what she loves: solving problems and being around people. She's been passionate about math since childhood, and her father would guide her through problem-solving by asking key questions like "What's missing?" and "What do you know?" That problem-solving mentality has shaped her career and continues to fuel her work today.

## **Prepare for Success**

Natasha's weekends are often filled with "Ubering" her teenage kids to their activities, but she always makes time on Sunday nights to mentally prepare for her week. She reviews her schedule, sets priorities, and gets herself ready for Monday. This preparation helps her lead her team with clarity and focus, and she's found that when she skips this ritual, her week isn't as productive or enjoyable.

## **Build Winning Habits and Be Your Biggest Cheerleader**

Natasha starts each day with an affirmation: "Today is going to be a great day, no matter what happens." This simple practice, along with daily walks and podcasts, helps her keep a positive mindset. She also uses meditation apps at night to wind down, making sure to prioritize her mental well-being.

## **Inspire Your Team**

Natasha believes that how she starts her Monday sets the tone for her entire team. Her mental preparation on Sunday night ensures that she can be fully present and productive during their Monday morning meetings. When she shows up energized and ready to go, it has a ripple effect on her team, inspiring them to do the same.

Natasha's success is built on clarity, preparation, and self-care. Her positive attitude and love for solving problems help her approach Mondays with enthusiasm and energy, and her leadership style has a powerful impact on those around her!

## Nick Evans



Nick Evans is living his dream as a coach, helping people find their joy—just as he helped me find mine. While working at the Campbell Soup Company, Nick realized that while he was good at marketing, he wasn't *great* at it. Many people might settle for "good," but Nick wanted more. He loved leadership and coaching, and he had the foresight and courage to pursue his passion.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Take Small Steps Toward Your Passion**

While still working full-time in marketing, Nick began hosting lunch-and-learn sessions to explore his interest in coaching. It was a small step, but it ignited a passion in him, and over time, he transitioned from a full-time marketing role to part-time work as he built his coaching business. Eventually, Nick went all-in on coaching, and it was a decision that changed his life.

#### **Design Your Dream Life—Literally**

Nick and his wife, Sue, once sat down for dinner and designed their dream life on the back of a napkin. Every year since, they've continued this tradition, writing down

their goals and dreams on a napkin during dinner. They now have a drawer full of napkins from the last 25 years, each one a snapshot of their journey toward building the life they wanted.

### **Trust That the Money Will Follow**

One of the most powerful things Nick shared with me was his belief that when you go for your passion, the money will take care of itself. Despite not knowing how the financials would work out, Nick took the leap into coaching—and the money followed.

### **Find Joy in Helping Others**

Nick's love for coaching is palpable. I remember a coaching session where he had a sparkle in his eye—he truly loves what he does. His joy comes from helping others succeed, and that's what makes him so effective as a coach.

Nick's journey is a testament to the power of following your passion, taking small steps toward your goals, and having faith that everything will fall into place. He's created a life where Mondays are something to look forward to, not dread!

## Paul Barnhurst



Paul Barnhurst and I first connected during a webinar while we were both working full-time finance jobs. Something told me I should reach out to Paul, so we set up a Zoom call—and as they say, the rest is history. We now talk almost every day and co-lead training sessions for companies all around the world.

### **Making Monday Magic**

### **Following His Passion**

Paul is a podcast host, trainer, and influencer with a LinkedIn following of over 97,000. His journey began as a procurement analyst before transitioning to a finance career at companies like American Express and Solera. Now, as a business owner, Paul is truly following his passion.

### **A Numbers Person Through and Through**

Paul has always been drawn to numbers and is now considered one of the world's leaders in FP&A (financial planning and analysis). He loves Mondays because he gets to work on exciting projects that help others grow, whether he's leading training courses or interviewing global experts

on his podcasts, Paul finds tremendous joy in helping people within his community.

## **Turning Points and Habits for Success**

### **The LinkedIn Journey**

One of the most significant turning points in Paul's career was his LinkedIn journey, where he posted content for 500 straight days. Never did Paul expect to become an influencer, but he trusted the process and posted with the intent to help others. This consistency paid off – Software companies started reaching out to him with job offers and consulting opportunities, which ultimately gave him the confidence to start his own business.

### **Advice for Loving Mondays**

Paul's advice to those who don't love Mondays is to take a step back and assess the situation. Ask yourself why you're feeling this way. Is it the company? The role? A relationship that's affecting your work? Once you identify the root cause, you can start addressing the factors that are holding you back.

### **Positive Mindset and Self-Care**

Paul also talks about the importance of cultivating a positive mindset. He's at his best when he gets a good night's sleep, exercises regularly, and journals. He admits to having a tendency to work all the time, but he's actively working to make more time for himself and say no to things that don't bring him joy.

Paul's journey from corporate finance to business ownership is proof that when you follow your passion and remain consistent in your efforts, you can create a fulfilling life.



## Robin Sharma



Robin Sharma, the author of *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*, has been a massive influence in my life. He is the only Monday Maverick who I have not met YET! His book came to me at the perfect time, just as I was contemplating a career change. As an accountant on a stable but unfulfilling career path, *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*

provided the inspiration I needed to take the leap into something new—coaching and training. Robin's teachings about living a life of purpose and meaning have stayed with me ever since.

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **Create a Powerful Morning Routine**

One of the most important lessons I've learned from Robin is the power of a morning routine. Robin's "5 AM Club" philosophy has helped me start my days with intention, setting the tone for a productive and fulfilling day. He emphasizes the importance of nurturing the four pillars of happiness—mindset, heartset, healthset, and soulset.

## **Take Pride in Your Work**

Robin teaches that true happiness comes from doing work that you love and take pride in, whether you're a gardener tending to plants or a teacher shaping young minds. It's about finding joy in the everyday moments and giving your all to whatever you do.

## **Live a Simple Life**

One of the recurring themes in Robin's work is simplicity. He reminds us to appreciate the little things in life, to practice gratitude, and to be kind. By focusing on what truly matters, we can live more fulfilled, and purposeful lives.

## **Dedicate Yourself to Mastery**

Robin is a big believer in mastering your craft. He teaches that we should all strive to be the best in the world at what we do, whether that's writing, speaking, or any other skill. This dedication to excellence is what sets high performers apart from the rest.

## **Be a Beacon of Hope**

Robin's work is about more than just personal success—it's about inspiring others to reach their full potential. His books and teachings have been a guiding light for me, showing me what's possible when you live a life aligned with your values and purpose.

Robin's philosophy has helped me love my Mondays, and his lessons continue to inspire me to live fully, take risks, and embrace a life of meaning and purpose!

## Wayne Stark



Wayne Stark was a business executive who chose to carve out his own path by starting a consulting and training practice that helps individuals and teams find more joy and unleash their creativity.

Attending one of his courses was a turning point in my life, ultimately leading me to start *my* own business. Today, I am fortunate to call Wayne my coach and guru. His energy is absolutely off the charts and incredibly infectious!

### **Making Monday Magic**

#### **A Resounding "Hell Ya!"**

When I asked Wayne if he loves Mondays, his answer was a resounding, "Hell Ya!" He explained, "I have an incredible feeling of gratitude, joy, and a sense of unbelievable abundance." This mindset gets him excited about the "precious" day ahead of him.

#### **The Joy of Creation**

Wayne is very clear about what brings him joy: Creating. Whether he's designing a training session or tending to his

beautiful garden in Vancouver Island, British Columbia, this feeling of creative joy is what fuels his love for Mondays.

### **The Power of Abundance**

Wayne believes that joy and abundance are contagious. When we get ourselves into this kind of positive state, we attract people and opportunities that align with that energy. Conversely, when we're in a state of fear, we tend to attract more fear and connect with others who are stuck in that same mindset.

### **Get in Touch with Your Feelings**

Wayne believes that many of us are numbed by the world and often operate on autopilot. He encourages everyone to get in touch with their feelings. If you're feeling joy and abundance, fully embrace it. If you're feeling fear, explore it and determine if it's real or just imagined. And if you're angry, dig deeper—anger can often reveal what we truly care about and want to pursue.

### **Advice for Loving Mondays**

Wayne talks about the little and big things we can do to shift our energy toward joy and abundance, helping us love what we do not just on Mondays but every day of the week.

Here are some of Wayne's key recommendations:

- **Lean Into Joy:** Pay attention to what brings you joy, and do more of it. The more you lean into joy, the more it expands.

- **Curiosity Breeds Excitement:** Reflect on what you're curious about—this often provides a clue as to what will bring you more joy.
- **Surround Yourself with Positive Energy:** Spend time with people whose energy you admire and who make you feel great. Minimize time with energy suckers. Trust your feelings when it comes to the company you keep.
- **Live Your Own Life:** Wayne encourages everyone to “live your own life, not someone else’s.” Staying true to yourself is key to experiencing joy and fulfillment.

Wayne’s approach to life and work is all about embracing abundance, curiosity, and creativity. His unwavering enthusiasm for Mondays is a testament to the power of aligning your energy with what brings you joy.

Keep loving your Mondays, Wayne!

# Gratitude

Thank you to you, my new friend and reader! I appreciate you reading this book and being open to taking action to help you and your team Love Mondays! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Please share this book with anyone who you feel will benefit from it.

My gratitude extends to my huge village of people who have impacted and continue to impact my life.

My siblings Manuel, Tania and Ken and my cousin Timmy. My in-laws Anthony, Bev and Sharon. My amazing nieces and nephews who are like siblings to my kids. Julia, Natalie, Milena, Mariah, Hannah, Miranda and Andre!

My mother-in-law who is affectionately known as Nani who shows us how to quietly love unconditionally.

To my Monday Mavericks who inspire me every day.

To my editor Adina who is phenomenal at what she does! She turned a lot of words that I wrote into a coherent and easy to read story. I owe so much to the amazing work that she did and the passion that she has for editing.

To my soccer and golf groups. Being part of teams like Loutolim FC, Camilla soccer, Burlington FC, Tuesday ball

hockey and our annual golf group has been a huge part and continues to be a source of joy for me.

To my friend Neil Pinto who passed away a couple of years ago. He was a Monday Maverick!

To my current team, Paul, everyone at Clear Concept and at MacKay CEO forums. It is truly a joy to work with all of you.

To Geetika, Saakshi, Aditi, Shristy and the Beeja team. It has been a pleasure working with you. You all gave me so much confidence as the book writing process unfolded.

I'll end with a quote that I love:

*"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life which have imagined." – Henry David Thoreau*

# Resources

## **My Recommendations for Further Reading**

"12 Pillars" by Jim Rohn and Chris Widener

"Atomic Habits" by James Clear

"The Aladdin Factor" by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hanson

"The 5 AM Club" by Robin Sharma

"The E-Myth Revisited" by Michael E. Gerber

"The Fred Factor" by Mark Sanborn

"The Go-Giver Sells More" by Bob Burg and John David Mann

"Go for No" by Andrea Waltz and Richard Fenton

"Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't" by Jim Collins

"The Great Work of Your Life: A Guide for the Journey to Your True Calling" by Stephen Cope

"The High Five Habit" by Mel Robbins



"How to Start Living and Stop Worrying" by Dale Carnegie

"How to Win Friends and Influence People" by Dale Carnegie

"The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life" by Francesc Miralles and Hector Garcia

"Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl

"The Magic of Thinking Big" by David J. Schwartz

"The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari" by Robin Sharma

"The One Minute Millionaire" by Mark Victor Hansen and Robert G Allen

"The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren

"The Richest Man in Babylon" by George Samuel Clason

"Stress Less, Accomplish More" by Emily Fletcher

"Success Principles" by Jack Canfield

"Unreasonable Hospitality" by Will Guidara

### **Links to Studies & Other Media**

- **Gallup Study:**  
<https://www.gallup.com/workplace/647564/employee-engagement-inches-slightly-year-low.aspx>
- **Simon Sinek Video:** Simon Sinek Noah

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## Author Bio



**Ron Monteiro, CPA, CMA** is a speaker, trainer, and author with a passion for transforming workplaces and helping people love what they do. Born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya, Ron moved to Toronto, Canada, where he now resides. Despite facing challenges with social skills and a severe fear of public speaking, Ron excelled as a finance professional and rose through the corporate ranks at Kraft. There, he found not only a career path but also the support he needed to overcome his anxieties and build lasting confidence.

In 2021, Ron launched his own company with a mission to inspire individuals and teams to embrace every day of the week with enthusiasm. His keynote speeches and training sessions have reached organizations such as Walmart, Kraft Heinz, BlueRock Therapeutics (a division of Bayer), and The Four Seasons Hotels. Through his work, Ron continues to empower professionals to find fulfillment and create meaningful impact in their careers.

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