

# SUCCESS PATH

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A Deep Voyage of Self-Discovery with Success  
Strategies for Self- Improvement and Mastery

**Nour-eddine Aboudihaj**









# Chapter 1

## Leadership Factors

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**T**he beauty of this life is that when you decide on what you want, act to reach your goals, and accept 100 percent responsibility for your actions, you have then taken control of your future and have become a leader in your own life.

My dear mother once told me, “The fisherman who saved you from drowning when you were two years old as you fell in the river of Mazagan wouldn’t accept any rewards from us and said, ‘I rescued him so he can help many other people in the future.’”

It has been my mission to be of service to people and help them reach their full potential for the last thirty years. I have done just so in different spheres of work in teaching and training, community development, engagement, coaching and mentoring. Since The Grenfell Tower Fire happened on 14 June 2017 and for the last 6 years, my sole focus has been to provide a lifeline support and build the resilience

of the bereaved, survivors, community leaders, volunteers, businesses, and wider stakeholders. We have been providing health and wellbeing retreats both in North Kensington and outside London through Journey of Hope and Grenfell Tower Trust – Grenfell Tower Trust is winner of the Most Dedicated Grenfell Awareness Charity 2023-London-UK by Acquisitions International.

Before we embark on the story of my life, with its intricate and collaborative details, I invite you to delve into your childhood and Explore your own life and discover all the treasures you seek and that have eluded you until now. I am certain that by the end of the book, you will agree with me as you become aware that what we seek and need are already within us. My destination for this voyage of self-discovery and spiritual well-being is for us to travel together to the source of our happiness and greatness.

Beware that you might have to face in the dark corners of your inner life and treacherous landscape some of your demons. You may need to chase away many deadly real or imaginary beasts in your jungle. You will have to overcome traumas that have hindered your progress and stopped you from reaching your full potential. In so doing, you will develop resilience and conquer the fears and anxieties that have pulled you down. Consequently, you will develop new paradigms, owning the cure for the worries that may have held you back.

As I immerse myself in my world, I invite you to do likewise. Use the tools I provide to travel to the deepest corners of your soul, to the oceans and waters that have lay dormant for years, to find those acres of precious, untouched pearls waiting in their shells for you. You must make the boldest dives to remove the sand that has covered the pearls and remove the dust that has stopped you from shining to the world by finding your own path, voice, calling, and life purpose.

Let's be clear. By the end of this book, you will have the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to enable you to be happy with who you are, enhance your life skills, and be as great as you were born to be.

Flexibility, patience, tolerance, and discipline are some of the traits we explore in order to keep us operating at our optimum in delivering the kind of life we love to have and which has, so far, seemed out of our reach. Now we are engaged in a labour of love to make it our new reality through the process of understanding how the conscious and subconscious parts of our minds work.

We explore all components of our personalities. We deconstruct our own values and beliefs to design the most up-to-date and efficient programme that will ultimately make us happy and great. Most of us use our limiting beliefs and fears as our paradigms. They govern our present lives. We do not know how to rid ourselves of some of the negative habits we acquired when we were young or after difficult or traumatic experiences.

Instilling new habits requires focused and concerted efforts. It also needs repetition over time, until our learned behaviours become automatic. Once that is achieved, we become the masters of our universes, the captains of our destinies, and at the helms of our ships. While I delve into my life and details, I invite you to immerse yourself in your own life. Picture yourself benefiting from my lessons as we need many lives to learn everything we need to accomplish our roles in life. Brian Tracy, in Lee M. Jenkins's *The Smartest Words Ever Spoken*, says,

“No one lives long enough to learn everything they need starting from scratch. To be successful, we have to absolutely, positively find the people who already have paid the price to learn the things that we need to learn to achieve our goal.”

I believe that, at times, I paid a high price to learn some powerful lessons through encountering and overcoming many challenges and adversities. This is one of the reasons why I am talking to you right now, sharing my deepest thoughts and sincere feelings with you. As 90 per cent of our values and beliefs are developed by the age of seven, I thought it only befitting to start in those early years.

I hope this will be a learning and a healing process that leads to better health, wealth, success, and reconciliation with ourselves and the world.

I believe time is a limited commodity. We don't have the luxury to waste it. How we see time defines the lifestyle we have, and once we realise the real importance of time, we will aim to maximise its value.

You often hear the adage, "Time is money." It is also said that "time is a double-edged sword." It is very valuable to understand the importance of using the resource of time efficiently. Yet, the value we attribute to it will always depend on the person doing the valuing. At the end, how we see and value ourselves is the determining factor in the value we give to time. A simple example of how different stages of time are seen by most people is the description they attribute to them and the different uses of time in our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual developments: from childhood to adulthood, from puberty to maturity, from illiteracy to wisdom, from ignorance to knowledge, from indifference to love, and from loss and darkness to light and spiritual well-being.

The impact of the Grenfell Tower fire has been far and wide. As I write these thoughts, we have witnessed the worst tragedy in modern, peacetime British history. The fire can be described as an event of global dimensions. Seventy two people died and an entire community of eleven thousands traumatised after this tragic event. I and a group of like-hearted people set up a Grenfell Trust as a legacy of hope for the bereaved and survivors. We have been providing lifeline support to the families in these difficult times. Since the tragedy, things are getting worse rather than better. The impact is only now dawning on people as they realise the loss and feel the guilt of surviving the fire.

Links to articles, radio interviews, and YouTube videos follow. You can also search my name.

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/author/nour-eddine-aboudihaj/>



One of the goals in setting up the Grenfell Trust is also to tell the stories of people who lived the tragedy in their own voices rather than through the lenses of journalists and the media. We collect and collate these survivors' stories to make it clear they are in the first-person, and not someone else telling them.

Hearing stories on how people's lives changed overnight gave me another insight and further confirmed my belief that once you have a clear life purpose, the event has a measured impact on you. Your ability to respond positively is enhanced, and you are more in control of your reactions and emotional and physical wellbeing. People of the Muslim faith have much better resilience. This is apparent in their languages and coping mechanisms. Their spiritual well-being stems from their beliefs and value systems, including the belief that justice in this life is temporary; real justice is found in the hereafter. The sense of justice they get from their faith is the stepping stone to a healing, resilience and acceptance of the tragedy that befall them and taking steps to moving forward.

I was happy to be part of the Notting Hill Carnival opening ceremony, which was attended by many dignitaries, survivors, multi-faith groups, and residents. I was privileged to be among those who released white doves as symbols of peace and freedom, and for the start of healing North Kensington communities, where the carnival takes place every year. I am now part of a team coordinating Justice4Grenfell campaign to

ensure that bereaved and survivors get justice and the support to rebuild their lives and create a stronger, healthier and more resilient community in North Kensington.



Nour-eddiNe Aboudihaj with the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan

It is extremely beneficial to one's personal growth, health, and well-being to travel back to the years of childhood and to be in touch with that hugely important side of his/her being. The science of profiling has evidenced the link between an unhappy, disturbed childhood and the criminal mind. However, there is also a strong correlation between children, who were able to focus their efforts on changing their circumstances of poverty and want into richness, success and achievements later in their adult lives. These children were encouraged to express their own voices and to focus their learning and efforts in more constructive and positive ways. The children that succeeded were helped by the fact they had role models to follow or had created archetypes in their imaginations and psyches and followed them.

One such successful person is Napoleon Hill, The author of the book Think and Grow Rich.

This is an excellent book about how to be rich and I highly recommend reading it. Napoleon said, in one his seminars, how when he was in the dire circumstances of poverty and hunger at the age of seven after his mother died. As he was starving and hungry one day standing by the river, he imagined himself lifting himself out of poverty into abundance and prosperity. This dream will be realized years later when he came back to the same spot where he felt hungry and poor with his new Rolls Royce to affirm to himself his dream.

His focus was on what he wanted and the world he had chosen to live in by adopting a positive mental attitude and a clear and definite purpose. Napoleon always acknowledged the impact that the two positive role models, his step-mother and Andrew Carnegie had on him and their positive effect that helped him to achieve his life dream.

### ***CALLS TO ACTION: STEP 1***

- *Get to know yourself well and what you want.*
- *Focus on the positive steps to achieve your dream.*
- *Focus all your energy on your desires.*
- *Fuel your motivation by small wins.*
- *Take small steps consistently and you will get to your destination.*
- *Have faith in yourself and abilities and you shall quickly deliver your sought after destiny.*



# Chapter 2

## Formative Years in Morocco

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I can vividly remember my first day at school and the excitement I felt in embarking on a new journey in my life after my pre-school days. I was wearing a blue school uniform which I went and bought with my dad and a khaki pair of shorts. I had a big black leather school bag which I carried for the next 5 years, till I finished primary school. I was among the first three pupils who always competed for the top of the class place. It was Majidi, lahmidi and me. I can almost see them now as we used to hang out together after school. We felt that we were the leaders in class. I can remember Majidi's house a few yards from the school and the games of stones we used to excel in playing. I felt that was a real time of freedom and innocence. Free from any worries and with the whole world at my fingertips. Everything had changed the day I got the first taste of disappointment and anger at the injustice of my teacher Bahloul for the punishment I received. His usual punishment was twofold: you either write, whatever number of times he chose and could be 200 or 300 times "I will not do it again; I will answer correctly next time; I will

always learn my lessons by heart; I will never make noise in the class again” or a version of one or two of these. In addition to the corporal punishments, which were between 10 and 20 lashes on the tip of fingers. It also included standing up facing the wall with one foot in the air for a period of time depending on the whims of the teacher or what he judged to be the seriousness of the misdeed.

That first feeling of injustice had a big effect on my life as I couldn’t understand why I was punished for something I didn’t do nor was ever able to shake it off from my memory till much later in my adult life. It was only in the last few years and after a lot of soul-searching and study that I was able to forgive my teacher for his deed and the trauma that he has caused me. Children are very fragile beings, even though they may seem to have a thick skin and certain traumas can be stored deeper into their psyche.

I am trying to see my childhood from a child point of you and I can say that I had a very happy child. I loved playing and running around and was good at playing games. My mother would say I was hyperactive. My friend Rachid Abied, who is now a Geriatric Surgeon in Paris, was my game partner and we grow up together. We also spent many nights studying together, not burning the midnight oil but under the street lamps of the gardens of Murdoch in Casablanca.

I now recognise that I was wrong in those assumptions that led me to develop this strong feeling of injustice, which I have been carrying for long time and failed to shake for many years. When I spoke to my mother about this happening, she told me that my assumptions were wrong and there was another version of the story she had been witness to.

She told me that my dad had gone and spoke to my teacher about the incident and how it was wrong for the teacher to punish me without clear evidence. But my dad never told me that at the time. It was only when I visited my parents lately that I found that out. The lesson to take from this is that I had been living with this feeling of injustice and

hurt all this time whereas there was no need as it was based on a child's wrong assumptions.

Always ensure that you gather all the facts and information before you make a decision or build an opinion. This is but an example of the limiting beliefs we can hold as children up to adult life and which can affect us badly even if they are not, in essence, correct or based on the truth. This incident in the classroom has triggered what turned into a rejection of all forms of authority and has subsequently impacted many of the relationships in my subsequent life.

I found myself sitting in front of a Latte in Portobello Road down Notting hill, pondering in a hazy sunny Sunday morning. It was an autumn day of the year of the Dragon. Do you know what happens to you when you don't have a precise destination before you set sails? The auto-pilot kicks in and takes you when the habit is set. The three variables myself, time and space are the backbone of any story. Today's story seems to start in the recent past. It was triggered by what happened the night before.

I slept quite late as I stayed up watching a Moroccan film called "The Wrinkled Hands". It is a story of a woman who needs a Spanish Visa to cross to Gibraltar to join her prospective husband. To pass the interview to get the visa, she had to prove to the panel of interviewers that she was used to difficult and hard chores and those could be evidenced by showing hands that are hard and tough.

As she was a nursery teacher with soft hands, she had to damage her hands using bleach and different detergents to show she was used to cleaning and doing difficult and tough jobs. My intrigue was the insistence of her prospective husband's promise of a better life on the Strait of Gibraltar, whilst he was in an irregular situation himself. The source of my enjoyment of the film was twofold. On one level the role of Protagonist in the film was performed by one of my favourite Moroccan actors who since then passed away. Secondly, the story took me back to

my early childhood, when I was 5 years old. It was my pre-school days which I seemed to have blocked from my memory for years. In those days there were between 16 to 22 kids packed like sardines in a small tiny classroom in a 1 bedroom ground floor flat, converted to a school. It was just 2 doors away from where I used to live at 18th Street, Number 99, Sidi Maarouf 4, Casablanca, Morocco, Africa, Earth, Milky Way. Our teacher used the other room as a bedroom and next to it was a kitchen. Future digital cyborg can pinpoint the place with exact precision in this infinite cosmos.

The latte was not to my satisfaction, so I reluctantly continued to sip from it from time to time, by the mere force of habit rather of pleasure or joy. It may also be due to the fact that I had already a full mug of black limited edition Taylor's filtered coffee for breakfast. The images of the children at the nursery brought a flood of memories and consequently made it easier for me to go back to that period with ease as if through a time machine or a hypnotic trance. Going to school at that tender age was my first contact with the world outside of my sheltered life of my parents' home and closer family members.

This was an important and crucial period in my personal development. It was there that I learnt how to read and write my first letters. I would like to acknowledge and salute my first teacher. He was an excellent role model of dedication and generosity. I was very happy to join our collective prayers and very proud of my yellow towel I use as a prayer mat. It is there where I learned my first verses of the Quran and how to do my ablution and prayers when I was 5 years old. His devotion and dedication to our learning were exemplary. His innovative and creative methods were excellent. We were taught Arabic and Quran in the morning session and French and Maths in the afternoon. This tuition gave a good start and this became quite apparent when I joined Ibn Batouta Primary School later on.

The School was a wider and a bigger world for a seven-year-old boy. Yet, it was an almost familiar space as it was only 3 streets away from

our house. It was halfway to my grandmother's house. The 4 years I spent there went well except for the incident with my teacher, which I mentioned beforehand.

At the age of eleven, we moved house to another part of the city called Idrissiya. I changed school and made new friends, and one of them is now a Judge and worked with my father.

Making new friends gave the first sensation of personal achievement. Mohamed Rami and I became very close and spent lot of time together either in my house or in the school yard where they used to live. This relationship became strenuous when he decided to join the Police cadets at that tender age of fourteen. I felt he could have done better as he was quite a smart young man. At the age of thirteen, I became very religious and was keen and fascinated to learn more about my faith and practice it. I endeavored to do all my prayers at the mosque and in congregations and that rekindled my previous Islamic learning as a child.

I started smoking at the age of fifteen. I was then at college and made new friends from my new neighbourhood. That was the initiation and beginning of the folly of youth.

What I can say is that Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll was the rage of the age and we did get influenced and immersed in its glamour and hedonism. All my new friends and my age group were taking cannabis. Another internal revolution was happening that was coupled with the discovery of oneself and exploration of new streams of thoughts and ideas such as Socialism, Marxism or Existentialism by writers such as Camus, Sartre, Kierkegaard, Marcel Proust and Kafka. This had eclipsed my earlier infatuation with Islamic thought and philosophers such as Ibn Rochd, Al Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Khaldun.

Now that I look back at those days, I can see that was just a form of inappropriate rebelliousness to forms of authority and blindness to reality. It would have been a better strategy to confront these negatives urges and voices and not run from them and challenge them and refute



their reasons and unbecoming behaviours. Peer group and a sense of belonging seem to lessen the resolve of resisting the internal tensions and external pressures.

The quest for new ideas of freedom, liberty, human rights and the pursuit of learning and knowledge kept me on a success path seeking to satisfy this thirst. To this end, I took the decision to explore and learn more to understand myself and the world around me better.

The company of my new friends had meant that my attention and focus was not all the time on my studies but on partying and trills seeking which eventually led to my failure to pass my Baccalaureate in 1981 and been denied to retake the exam because of my absenteeism.

That was a big blow and one of the most intense and difficult experiences in my life as a young man but I took responsibility for my result. I begged my father to appeal the decision and to be given another opportunity to study for my Baccalaureate. As he was not too pleased of how I had been behaving for almost 4 years, he told me that he wouldn't help me and I had to take responsibility for my actions. I had better luck with my mother who managed to convince him to lodge an appeal with the Ministry of Education to be given another chance to sit the exam.

The decision to allow me to go back to class was on a condition of a transfer and to change the college where I was studying before. This decision was not taken until Mid-October, whereas the academic year had started in early September. I was then transferred to a new College-Moulay Abdellah. By then, all classes were full, except for the English section which had only 2 places left and for which the newcomers had to sit a test to join the class. There were 6 of us and only two places on offer. I got one place and Mustapha got the other.

I was very relieved to be back in class in Moulay Abdellah College and to have been given the opportunity to sit my Baccalaureate exam again. I knew that maths were not my strongest points, so I bodied up with a student from the science module and we prepared for the exams

together. I would help him with philosophy, history, and geography and in return, we would revise maths together.

This collaboration was fruitful. My determination to succeed was 100% to the point that three months before the exam, I was very confident that I would not only pass the exam but I would get excellent grades and pass with flying colours. I did get good grades that allowed me to join the Centre Pédagogique Régional in Casablanca later on. Now that I think about the CPR a big smile is showing all over my face.

What I liked about joining the CPR were two things: First the sense of semi-independent living and freedom and second the joy and pleasure of the taster class and micro-teaching. The training was two years at the end of which it was compulsory to sign an eight-year teaching contract with the public sector.

The year I spent in the training centre was both work and play to extremes. It was the first time I lived on my own and away from my home. That was not completely true as I shared my room at the centre with another 3 trainees and visited home every other Saturday to see my parents and to do my laundry. My friends and I also had a flat in Maarif where we used to have our get-togethers and have parties.

My favourite subjects at CPR were Pedagogy and Psychology and in which I always got top marks. My belief was that these two subjects were the doors through which I would be able to understand myself better and forge myself a career.

The grant we used to get was quite substantial in those days compared to the one the university students were getting.

The Moroccan Education Ministry policy was that once you join the training and pass the first year it was compulsory for trainee teachers to sign an 8-year teaching contract with the public sector. At the end of the first year, I had some doubt about signing this contract, which would

mean I had to commit to an eight year employment and would not be able to fulfil my dream of going to university.

I sought advice from my Pedagogy and Psychology teacher and explained to him my dilemma. He asked me to meet him the next day, as he would have to check my scores. He told me that, according to my assignments and my grades from previous tests, I would pass to the second year, which would ultimately mean to become a teacher for the next 9 years. He asked me if I was certain of what I wanted. I replied in the affirmative. He said that there was a slight chance that your teachers could fail you on the grounds of gross misconduct. At that moment, I could feel a light shining and a window opening in front of me. I thanked him warmly.

The next day I decided it was time for the bad boy to come out.

Coming out he did, and I fought with all my teachers except for Hellen Cottington, my Methodology teacher who was very supportive throughout the year. My Writing Skills, Listening Comprehension, Phonetics, Phonology, Stylistics, French and Grammar teachers could not understand my sudden change of behaviour but they couldn't tolerate or ignore it either. I used to arrive late to classes, disrupt all classes to the point that not only all teachers were expelling me from their classes and students didn't want anything to do with me during those very intense periods of exams and assignments.

It was unbelievable that I was the happiest of all trainees because I failed my exams as my eyes were on a bigger prize, a university education and longer student life.

To celebrate this victory I spent the next 3 months holidaying at the Tamaris Beach. Those were very memorable times as my friend Abderhman Coukie, who now lives in Virginia, was also camping in the family cabin not too far from me and that had made the stay even more enjoyable.

If Hindsight is 20/20 then foresight is something that we can plan and programme. The insight I have now comes from a journey between two worlds to be a teacher or a student and I choose the latter. The moral of the story is that in my adversity there was a seed of mutual benefit. This fact has also been re-affirmed many times and that most of the major changes in my life and the difficulties I faced were the stepping-stones to a better life chances and enhanced my resilience and the ability to respond adequately and positively to future events. I also found that those events and obstacles were the things that made me who I am today. Hence, I learnt how to better deal with whatsoever come my way and develop a positive mental attitude. I am now completely reconciled and happy with myself.

After getting my first degree from Hassan II University in Casablanca, I went to University Lumière in Lyon, France for my Bachelor of Arts Degree. I was told that I had to write my dissertation in French even though I was majoring in English. I was not happy to write my thesis in French so I went back to my university and graduated with honours. This was a very important stage in my life, as it would have a lasting impact for the rest of my future. I was introduced to literary criticism and trends as part of my course and was very fascinated by the different perspectives that one can have looking at a text or at issues or situation he may face in life. The anthology of English literature was very appealing to me and broadened my horizon. It enabled me to meet my superhero, William Shakespeare.

Shakespeare became my companion and my inspiration. He succeeded against all odds and left a lasting legacy and distinct imprint on human thinking all over the world. His legacy of different characters he portrayed in his 38 plays and 156 poems shows a deep understanding of the human condition. He excelled in depicting the different facets of his characters and described, with very minute details, human aspirations and inklings and analysed them with microscopic precision, exposing their weakness and shortcomings including the rise and fall of kings and queens, sad, mad and glad characters in his comedies, tragedies

and melodramas. His famous quotes never leave me as I learnt them by heart. The soliloquies and wonderful mastery of the English Language are second to none:

*“All the world is a stage and we are merely players”:*

*“To be or not to be, that is the question? Whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer”;*

*“Nature my goddess to thy law my services are bound, where do I stand in the plague of custom”;*

and *“our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt”*

He inspired me to meet him and visit his lands, and made me cross the white Cliffs of Dover after crossing Spain and France in the summer of 1988. Once Shakespeare entered my life, I knew that his study will help me and lead me into the search of my better self. One of the secrets of been great is to spend time with the greats and rub shoulders with the giants. He was without contest one of the greatest poet that ever lived.

Recent research confirms that number one habit to develop for strong personal and professional improvement is to associate yourself with people who are your idols and learn and spend time in their company. It also helps to have your role model always closer by, to look at and focus on. Some people like to have their words in big writing in their office or at home where they can read them all the time to get the affirmation required for their change of habit and mindset.

Shakespeare and Marlowe doctrine of nature was the subject of my thesis for my final year at the University of Hassan II, Ain Chock, Casablanca. The focus on my comparative study was on the two writers worldview of nature. To understand their different perspectives one has

to delve into their world of sixteen-century England and Elizabethan era. This research is be available on an e-book soon. Check it at

[nour@success-path.co.uk](mailto:nour@success-path.co.uk)

## **CALLS TO ACTION: STEP 2**

- *Face any adversity you meet as a lesson you learn in your way to success.*
- *Focus in the deep darkness on the bright light however small and it starts to grow bigger.*
- *Get to know yourself and abilities better when facing challenges.*
- *There is no failures but different ways of solving the problems.*



In the company of my classmates at Hassan II University- Casablanca in the final year for My Bachelor of Arts in 1988 Always leading the group.



# Chapter 3

## Framing of Personal Ambitions Vs Moroccan Society and Culture

**A**s well as having your own fingerprint and unique DNA you can leave a personal legacy. That is what logic dictates. The interesting reality is that each one of us affects and influences others. It can be in a positive or negative way but the question to ask is to what degrees? What is the extent of influence and in what circles?

The great legacy is when you are remembered as having influenced the highest number of people past present and the future. The number one of the world greatest influencers is the prophet of Islam Mohamed-peace be upon him. If anyone is in any doubt about his great legacy, he can find answers to the question on the lips of one and quarter billion of his followers. His legacy of peace, human brotherhood, social justice and compassion will solve our problems today in an instant as George Bernard Shaw said.

Let's shed some light on his leadership skills and beliefs and values.

His compassion is exemplary. As it is said in the Quran and can be translated as: “*We only sent you as a mercy to mankind*”.

**Integrity:** I would challenge any leader to be called honest, truthful and trustworthy by not only his followers but even his enemies or competitors as was the case for Mohamed. He had the highest standards of morals and character throughout his life- peace be upon him- and is a role model in every aspect and represents the best and noblest in human nature. His words and deeds are the footsteps every Muslim follow.

**Relationship:** His relationships with God-Allah- and with himself, wives, family members, companions and followers and mankind were exemplary. He treated everyone with respect and everyone loved to be in his company.

**Achievements:** what he has achieved in his short lifetime and his teachings and doctrine are a perfect guide to all human beings. He left us a clear guidance that will always show us the path to success.

His vision, mission, objectives, principles and miracles can be further explored in the link below

<http://www.islam-guide.com/>

The book that was revealed to him- the Quran can also be found here

<http://www.mp3quran.net>

The Hadith- collections of his sayings and deeds gives a clear guidance of how a Muslim or non-Muslim should act in all situations and for all times. His life was written about in many books and one of them in this link is to This Is Muhammad

<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/book/this-is-muhammad/id565861936?mt=11>

The leadership of Mohamed-peace be upon him- has brought us



holistic system and a guide that look at every aspect of human life. It didn't leave anything for the good of humankind and didn't show it or something that is bad and taught us to avoid it.

The Prophet- Peace be upon him- recommends to us to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave. He recommends also learning continuously and improving ourselves and helping others find their feet, voice and calling. He also revealed to us the life beyond the grave where our deeds will be valued and rewarded. The everlasting life is a reward for our present life- Dounia- either in eternal bliss in paradise or forever torment in hellfire.

This knowledge and understanding give believers another perspective on our limited life on these plains and a new outlook on how we chose to live it.

The meaning of the one of his saying is that a man's legacy can be seeing in three things:

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: Sadaqah Jariyah (ceaseless charity); a knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him (for the deceased)." [Muslim].Sunnah.com reference: Book 13, Hadith 8, Arabic/English book reference

: Book 13, Hadith 1383

When a man dies, all his deeds will cease except for three things: a righteous son who will seek mercy for him, a good deed that benefits others or a knowledge that is helpful to others. An example of that would be but not exclusively having a son, planting a tree or a writing of a book.

The legacy is that what someone leaves behind. So my question to you is: What would you like your legacy to be? What would you like people to say on your death bed? What would you like to see in 100

years' time?

The first reaction to this question is: “why would I care about 100 years once I am dead? It is irrational”. But then when you look at it in your mind’s eye you realise that it makes a perfect sense. My First thought would be that what I do today will have a definite impact on what would come later as by the natural law of cause and effect. The second thought is that you can’t create or leave behind you something of a destructive/evil nature.

Leaving a legacy fits in under the spiritual attainment. I came to this realisation of putting it the number one priority in life only of late. That doesn’t mean that I didn’t know of its existence or importance before. As a Muslim as it is part and parcel of my belief system, but I didn’t have the same awareness I have now. I now have it as the number one priority in my life.

This has been my life journey and my soul searching for the eternal happiness and the meaning of my life. I must get off the denial and admit that I was lost as I couldn’t make any sense of my life or understood my reason d’être before. I was lost at sea. Now I am finding that this it is an area that many people fear to tread, seeking their life purpose. Many people do not want to ask these questions, let alone try to find plausible answers for them. As a man of Muslim faith, the answer for me is very clear. We are on this planet for no other reason but to worship our creator, to surrender to his divine wisdom and power. In so doing we will help our self and our fellow human beings. Worshiping of Allah and submitting to His will are what the word Islam means. This faith is defined in 6 aspects.

1. The belief in one God
2. The belief in his angels
3. The belief in his books
4. The belief in his prophets

5. The belief in destiny be it good or bad
6. The belief in the day of judgment

Many aspects of this belief system are shared among the 3 revealed religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This belief system has a far reaching implication, not only to the person but also defines his relationship with God as well as other human beings and the universe. As you may have heard it said that belief is everything. It is also the road map to eternal bliss and happiness.

A Muslim has clarity of purpose on his role in this life and has to perform this role to the best of his/her abilities.

Man as a regent of God in this universe, he was given a mind and a free will to choose which path to follow. His choices will determine the reward or punishment he will receive on the last day.

The real success is to be one of the winners in the hereafter and to win the state of eternal bliss in the heavens. That would be the true legacy. God in his sacred book the Quran shows us who are the real winners in a Surat 23 that he completely devoted for these successful people – The believers and which can be interpreted as “Successful indeed are the believers, ...” and he describes in details their characters and attributes. How they behave, what they say and do and do not do. The verses give a very clear description of who they are; how they live their lives and that they are the ones who will inherit the earth. This Surat also has in it a very clear explanation the different stages that the creation of man goes through. These different stages have baffled, in their precision and specificity all doctors of embryology in depicting exactly how “a drop is fashioned into a clot, then into a little lump, then we clothed the little lump bones with flesh, then produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of Creators” as a translation of Quran Arabic text.

Yet, man can see only what is in front of his eyes because of his short-sighted and short-term vision and believe only in what he can see, feel

and touch. He is not concerned about medium or long term, but with instant gratification and physical needs and pleasures.

Bob Proctor said: ***“to believe in the things you can see is no belief at all. But to believe in the unseen is both a triumph and a blessing.”***

Let’s examine this a bit further and shed some of light on the sources of our information and the evidence on which these assumptions are built.

All our knowledge and information is received through our senses. The 5 senses do play an extremely important role in the building of our character and identity but are by no means the way we should assess and evaluate our life.

How people learn is an area that fascinates me and a subject I have studied extensively especially lately, as part of my training for a DTLLS- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector- with the Canterbury Christ Church University in 2013. I studied for a City and Guilds 3703 in 1996 and then a Cambridge CELTA in 1997. Many of the teaching modules I studied, were on assessment and different learning styles. As a starting point there is a large number of people who do not know whether they have a preferred way of learning, be it auditory, visual or kinaesthetic or a combination of one or more of them. Whilst knowing this can enhance or hinder their personal development and character building, it doesn’t account for the other faculties that can have a deeper impact on personal development such as memory, self-esteem, motivation and attitude. Illiterate people learn through listening as they do not master written language.

One of the best English for Speakers of other Languages- ESOL- classes I really enjoyed teaching was on a Saturday. Most of the students work throughout the week and mostly in hospitality or catering. One thing they all possess is the right mental attitude to improve their lives and a keenness to learn the English language to secure a better future for themselves and their families. You can read their happiness on their

faces on the graduation day. The positive feedback I received from them and other students gave me the impetus and determination to continue teaching and the satisfaction of a job well done.

Let me just make a small remark before I go any further. The human body is full of marvels. This fact becomes more apparent when we stop and think about what they are and how they work. As a human being his mind is made of 150 billion cells. His thought process is faster than the speed of light which is 168, 00 miles in 1 second. His eyes can differentiate 10 million shades of colour. His nose can know 5 thousand different smells. His heart beats 100 thousand beats every day. His kidney regenerates every 6 weeks and his vertebral column and whole body every 6 months.

We then, understand that we are the most complex and marvellous being in the creation. Here the words of my favourite poet come running. In Hamlet Act 2, scene 2, 303–312 the dialogue goes as follows:

Hamlet: What a piece of work is a man,  
how noble in reason,  
how infinite in faculties,  
in form and moving how express and admirable,  
in action how like an angel,  
in apprehension how like a god!  
the beauty of the world,  
the paragon of animals—and yet, to me,  
what is this quintessence of dust?

Man delights not me— nor woman neither,  
though by your smiling you seem to say so.

Rosencrantz: My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

→ Reason can make him noblest of creatures

→ wicked desires can take him down to lowest form of animals

→ Infinite faculties can enable him to achieve his higher potential

- His body language is very sophisticated and expressive
- His deeds can take him so high in the sky toward the heavens
- His mind and understanding and awareness of himself and the world around him is supreme
- He can be the most beautiful of all creations
- On the top of the hierarchy of animal kingdom
- He comes from a speck of dust, a sub atomic particle in essence
- He is endowed with all these abilities to achieve his due greatness

Shakespeare is the one who made me fell in love with this England. Invoking his name has brought an extremely intense feeling. I can hear him say: “What is in the name? A rose by any other name is not a rose.”

He was my companion for the duration of my thesis in 1988 some almost thirty seven years ago. The emotion is so intense that my watering eyes are preventing me from writing and can feel my mind is becoming quite numb.

I had a very long soliloquy which took about 20 minutes. I went back to 1988 when I got very acquainted with the bard. The Shakespearean experience has been of immense impact on the rest of my life. I can say it has one of the most amazing and exciting happenings on many levels. It paved the way to the journey I was about to embark on.

The new awareness has knocked me for six yesterday so I need a bit of time to take it all in and have a new perspective on the way my life turned out and the direction it took. It is not that I wasn't at the helm of my ship but there was something deeper inside me at work. We might call at this junction an intrinsic compass that has enough data to correct the reading whenever I felt lost at sea and took me to my final destination.

Going back to 1988 brought with it many intense and strong feelings. It was a frightening experience as it was the crossroad in my early

adult life. It was a transition from student into professional life. I felt then that there was something missing in that transition as I still wanted to learn more and to get to know myself better. My fear that opportunity may disappear forever had made me reluctant to engage fully in any endeavour that would take me away from continuing my learning. I refused to be like the rest of my friends who either left Morocco before me or stayed and got jobs once they finished their university studies.

I must confess that I left Morocco to come to England with bitterness. I passed my four years with honours, which entitled me to a university bursary to continue my postgraduate studies. Up to now, I fail to understand why I was denied something that I was entitled to but then nineteen eighties was another era in Morocco. I suppose I was an angry young man. I saw a lot of things were wrong and was not able to voice my anger and frustration. Doing that could have cost me dearly, so I build a mental world in which all forms of authority and power cannot penetrate. I rebelled against all these forms of authority.

First among them was my father's. God bless him like all parents they want only the best for their children except that they never ask their children about what they want or engage with them in a meaningful communication that facilitates the relationship building and the understanding. So I rebelled against him not letting me choose my friends, do or go out when I want, buy the clothes I want or go to the school I want. Effectively, I did everything he told me not to do during my adolescence and young adult life.

I chose my own friends who introduced me to smoking and went to the school I wanted where I started to take drugs and dressed the way I wanted that my clothes are brand names I desired to join the parties I attended regularly on Saturdays.

I can say I got my way but at what cost. I had always argued my position and my views but I couldn't be happy with the outcomes.

Deep inside, I knew that many of the things I was doing were wrong and that the life I was leading wasn't taking me towards a successful end. I told myself that I had to experience everything myself. Now I know better. I know I can learn from other people experiences without committing the errors I did.

I remember the conversation my father and I once had when some of the neighbours complained to him that I wasn't doing anything except hanging at the corner of the street and smoking joints. He said: "my son do as you please as long as you bring good results from your studies." There and then, I kissed his hand and told him that what he would get at the end of the year. From that moment onward, our relationship and our communication took a completely new turn and we reconciled our differences.

A Father and son relationship is much harder and difficult to manage than that of a mother and daughter. A father is the role model that the son will follow and all the behaviours will be mirrored, mimed and imprinted in the child in the first years of his life. Since 90% of all acquired emotional intelligence and learning takes place in the first seven years of the child life, it is essential that parents understand and have awareness about how to communicate and bring their children up at that early stage.

Philosophers, physicians, anthropologists, semiotics, statisticians, and psychologists have massively enjoyed big ideas from great books. Personally, the learning that I found essential to everyone and which can be of great benefits is the personal experiences. To get to know oneself is paramount. If something doesn't exist in our awareness, it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. It is just not present in our consciousness at the time. Awareness is an acquired faculty that can be harnessed by our five senses. Yet it develops to something even more sophisticated, complex and structured that it takes over our whole life and becomes self-serving. The paradigm that is built and the habits we develop can become the autopilot that governs our behaviour.



The idea I want to talk to you about today is the grand design. The big scheme of things where a person tries to find himself, his place and how does one rate himself and his worth. I have been fascinated by the views from airplanes, a bird's eye perspective of the majestic and magnificent big designs in our planet. It gets even more fascinating as a concept, when you think of yourself, as the inhabitant of the Milky Way- that human being is no more than a speck of dust. Then, size and proportion come into play and thinking human beings are the centre of the universe does become redundant. Or does it?

In my belief system, this universe was created for a purpose. It is to serve me and for my benefit and my role as a vice-regent and guardian, it is to ensure its continuous development, improvement and its harmony. The space we inhabit and the environment we occupy can be enhanced by human endeavour.

Let's look a bit closer to this grand design. What are its constituents and mechanisms and systems that govern it? The main elements that constitute this universe are time, Space, energy, matter, and spirit.

Time determines everything we do as human beings especially when we come to realise it is a finite commodity. It is a resource that starts to deplete on our birthday. People count the years and major changes into their physical, mental and emotional life. Whereas we should use the countdown method to realise that every moment and every breath we take are counted and that we don't have time to waste, to be sick, worry or be afraid. The only time we have is to live fully and completely, cherishing every moment as if it is the last in one our life.

Now that I am typing these words, I am feeling that writing is a cathartic process that many should enjoy by telling their stories. Storytelling of personal experiences helps you review and give you another take on what happened in the past and how to reconcile yourself to it. In many of my coaching sessions I ask people to tell me their life story. The way they tell it and the emphasis on the specific parts or events

they select gives me an idea about their personality, self-confidence, and self-esteem. How we see ourselves is reflected in the external reality we live in. Travelling between the past to the present and foretelling my future is a healthy exercise. Realising how much time was wasted worrying about things that never happened. Been upset about things that happened in the past could be very draining to ones' energy and motivation. Now, I recognise it was just a futile exercise and that many of us are able to eliminate these disruptions and distractions from our lives, in so doing we could live fully and happily.

The result of a study published by the Harvard Business School Review has found out that only 8 percent of what we are worried about is real whereas 92 percent is just imaginary and would never take place. The table is as follows:

Things people worry about	
→ Things that never happen	40 %
→ Past things that can't be changed by worrying	30 %
→ Needless health worries	12 %
→ Petty, miscellaneous worries	10 %
→ Real, legitimate worries	8 %

It is wake up call for me as I have always looked at the big picture and things strategically without paying much attention to the details. This fact is evidenced by the many personality tests that I took over the years.

I always ask people to tell me how many minutes there are in the day? First, to test their numerical skills and second to raise their awareness about the value of time. I have always been asking and trying to find out what time is. Is it the minutes? Hours you see on a clock? Or on your smartphone or desktop? Is time the same for everybody? If that is the case, why do we find that some people don't know what to do with it whereas others do not seem to find enough time in the day?

Can it be defined as past present and future, days, months, seasons and years or a lifetime?

Are human beings bound by time between cradle and grave or is there something more? Is psychological time different from professional time?

A Recent study of one of the icons of the 20 century Albert Einstein brought me to the realisation that he was also fascinated by time, space and the cosmos. His thought experiments about the speed of light and acceleration of time led to the development of the Theory of General Relativity.

In 1905, Albert Einstein determined that the laws of physics are the same for non-accelerating observers and that the speed of light in a vacuum was independent of the motion of all observers. This was the theory of special relativity. It introduced a new framework for all of the physics and proposed new concepts of space and time. He built on Newton's old ideas and did away with some of them and came up with his own new theories.

Einstein then spent the best part of 10 years trying to include acceleration in the theory of general relativity and managed to achieve that in 1915. In it, he determined that massive objects cause a distortion in space-time continuum , which is felt as gravity.

### **CALLS TO ACTION: STEP 3**

- *Find out who is your role model, models.*
- *Spend time getting to know them very well, research them, read about them, learn from them, follow their steps and if they are still alive, reach out to them.*
- *Model yourself on the best role models behaviour and mirror their habits.*
- *Become the best role model yourself for others to follow.*



# Chapter 4

## Goal Setting and Moving Away for the Folly of Youth

*“You control your future, your destiny. What you think about comes about. By recording your dreams and goals, you set in motion the process of becoming the person you most want to be. Put your future in good hands – your hands.”* Mark Victor Hansen

I reverted to pen and paper as there seems to be a problem with my iPad’s set up. Is it just a simple coincidence that I am also setting my goals for the next 5 years. The answer is an emphatic No. The best way to setting goals effectively is writing them down using a pen and paper. As it is the first process of creation and turning what is an abstract thought, idea into something concrete, giving it form and making it tangible that you can see, feel and touch. Using pen and paper helps the mind in processing the first creation as it sees letters becoming words and sentences and making sense of the aspirations and the future, your desires. Effectively words create the world we live in or desire to live in. as it is said: “We become what we think about most of the time.”

As I sat among the students in my favourite café and native city Casablanca sipping my new favourite beverage: a black coffee, which now comes with a Sidi Ali, bottled water as part of the service. Now there seem to be partnerships between water companies and café owners to provide bottled water with most of the beverages. In café Royale, in Hobbous they are offering Ain Sultan, which I prefer as it has less Sodium. I found that out when I met my old university friends: Amine, Bouchaib, Mustapha as well as new acquaintances Boubaker and Esam.

My original plan to do much of my writing in this holiday in Morocco didn't materialise as I spent a big chunk of my time with my family. It is only today that I managed to have time to put pen to paper.

I am just happy and grateful that my parents, family, and friends are well. This is an area that I have made a priority for this year and the future. Now I have this window of opportunity to strengthen this bond and to be actively present and involved in my family life and also to make them part of my new life. That is something I only realised and acknowledged not so long ago, but what brought it closer to home is when I was showing my sisters my photos, Bahija said: ***"we didn't know much about your life in England brother before and it is nice that you are sharing with us your achievements and showing us these photos"***.

I rummaged through my father's wardrobe and his office in search of photos, relics, information as I revisit my past and was extremely happy to find some of old schools student's cards. My father was very keen that I study well and was proud of my achievement, especially when I got my MA from London University. In these photos, I was very skinny and with a full hair.

I believe that all my life I have been an idealist and have been living with my ideas and in my own head. I prefer to focus on the big picture as opposed to finite details. At times, those ideals didn't align with the environment in which I was living and that translated into my having a lower level of impact on and influence on those surroundings.

The two areas I selected to focus on and have maximum impact are financial freedom and abundant relationships and these came to the fore once I started the writing process.

My focus is wealth and abundant relationship stemmed from a desire to lead in this field and act a role model empowering people and supporting them to reach their full potential. It would be a good idea to advise people on how to become rich once you are rich. Having money and becoming rich seem to be the first thing people want and do not consider or value other riches and success they may have in their lives. Yet after a further investigation and questioning finance comes second to health and spiritual wellbeing. Many of the people I taught, trained or coached, when asked about that, is most important to them, their replies were usually family. The importance and priorities seem to shift with time, experience and learning.

My thirty years life quest and soul searching led me to the realisation and understanding that spiritual well-being is the first priority as it answers the fundamental question of our mission and purpose in life. It clarifies what legacy we want to leave for the next generation and about our contribution to the world and humanity. This was further affirmed by the recent episode of illness due to back pain and Sciatica. It was an opportunity for me to examine the order of priorities in my life and to carry out an audit of both my success, achievement and review the areas that need immediate attention and improvement. Understanding our role in life and doing it to the best of our abilities is the journey that most great people have been on to fulfil their destiny.

Pat Williams, who has written more than 70 books, when asked by Jack Canfield, the renowned author of “the Success Principles” about what is the greatest success secret he replied “*Figure out what you love to do as young as you can, and then organise your life around how you to make a living at it.*”

Leaving a legacy is a quite a powerful idea and can be used as an effective tool to strategically plan our life. Steven Covey pointed out in his famous book “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” that the first thing we should start out with when we plan to start a business or a project is thinking about the end result: “start with the end in mind.”

Start with the end in mind. Begin from the point of time when your goal or vision is achieved, your final destination. We need to be clear about the ultimate goal we want to achieve, and then work backward. He gave many examples and I chose two, which are about health and life purpose. He said imagine you had a heart attack and then work backward to ensure that it doesn't happen to you by living healthy, eating healthy food and doing physical exercise throughout your life. He categorised it as the best investment you can make in your whole life. The second example is when he was teaching his class about life purpose asked his students: Imagine yourself that you are now on your deathbed and people are gathered for your wake, what you would like people to say about you and your individual achievements and contribution to humanity and then design plans and actions to achieve them.

Achieving my spiritual goals to leave a legacy sits on the top of my priority list now and moving forward. This has been my life pursuit without the awareness. Now I understand better and I am clear about my definite purpose in this life.

My faith, which is based on the unseen and life after death, sees the notion of time in cycles. We start from death then life and then death and afterward life eternal. We were dead and then we are born and then we die and afterward we are reborn and do not die. Our thoughts and actions in this life are not governed and directed by our present and actual life but also about the next destination, we chose to reach. The final destination is either the blessed house of Eden, paradise or the doomed place of hellfire.

Many non-Muslim people wrestle with these concepts that the supposedly rational mind cannot grasp as it has been trained only to believe in the here and now, what it conceived as the reality of things that are defined by the senses. Understanding our soul and living our spiritual wellbeing requires a different kind of tools and learning. Most people nowadays are concerned more about their physical wellbeing of food, shelter, safety and have made that their ultimate purpose in life and consequently spend all their waking life to achieve them. This has been the result of indoctrination of the last six or seven centuries when humanism took roots in Europe as a reaction to the abuses and persecutions by the church towards scientists and innovators. They started to idolise humans and made them the centre of their study and scientific research and removing God or anything to do with spirituality and faith from the equation.

Saint Augustine said, ***“Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.”***

At last, I have come to the realisation that my life quest and soul search has led me with the help of God to this state where life is but a journey and we are just merely travellers passing through. Now my goal is the ultimate prize of the Firdaws, which is the highest level in the Garden of Eden and to this end, I seek God’s guidance to show me the way and to guide me to the straight path to success.

I must admit that when I arrived in England at the age of twenty-six, I was very fascinated with the British way of life and civilisation. I had had the chance to study British civilisation as a module for my 2nd year at Hassan II University in Casablanca and I wanted to see with my own eyes how English people lived up close and personal in London.

You can imagine my big disappointment in seeking employment that all my Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and Languages could afford me is a waiter in a restaurant in Bond Street. It has since then turned into a luxury Boutique. Even this job didn’t come that easy when



you didn't have a fixed abode or understand the law of the land. When I arrived in London I didn't have many friends. Most of my close friends at university went either to France or USA.

At first, I was living at Tent City in East Acton and the autumn of 1988 was quite cold so I used to sleep in my leather jacket to prevent me from freezing to death. All our accommodation had were singles beds in a bunker like those big military tents. I managed to move out there three weeks later when I met another 4 Moroccans at the camp site and we decided to rent a house together at the corner of Old Ross Common lane in Acton. A few months later, I moved to another house two doors away with a friend from work. When I first arrived in London, I spent the first two nights in Euston Station as I wasn't sure how long the money, I brought with me from Morocco would last, before I found employment.

You get to know people really well only when you travel or do business with them but living with them you have to tolerate their behaviour and that is not always an easy task to do. Each of us has his/her own habits but these are put under the microscope when you have roommates sharing the same house with you.

The circumstances had made it compulsory for me to learn how to accept other people with their personal attributes and good and bad habits. You don't always learn from friends. At times, your enemies can also point out to you areas that need your attention and you can improve and for that feedback, you should be grateful.

Working as a waiter was the first step on the ladder of my successful careers Now that I am a University Lecturer, a Managing Director and an Executive coach. I never saw myself just as a waiter, as three months later, I became an assistant Chef and then within eight months I was a Chef cooking for the whole restaurant. My mother and father couldn't believe that I become a great cook. When they visited me in London years later, I served them a traditional Moroccan Couscous dish and they never stopped complimenting on how quick and tasty it was since.

After a year at the Applebaum's restaurant, I became a floor manager and responsible for staff roster and induction of new staff. Two years later, I moved to the Vanderbilt Hotel and worked as a Banqueting assistant manager. I was responsible for organising both conferences and events and managed a group of 6 staff. Although this area of work was new to me, I enjoyed the challenge and I was happy to learn these new skills. It also enabled me to save some money to go to university to do my Masters.

After working for 4 years, I managed to gather up the fees for my studies. In September of 1992, I enrolled on Translation Course at Westminster University. I was able to achieve one of my life dreams. I was very happy and quite content to be able to pass my exams and my Master of Arts in 1995.

I will be publishing my translation project- a Moroccan short Story- The Folly of Youth in its entirety now that I receive confirmation from the original author Abdelkader El Chaoui lately.

I look back on my university days in London as one of the most fruitful and productive periods in my life. I used to work from 9.00 to 5.00 as an administration assistant for a Real Estate group on Grosvenor Street and then go to University in the evenings. I must acknowledge the support and help of my ex-partner Margaret Mullooly that had enabled me to succeed in achieving my goal.

After we had been married for 2 years, we both decided to go back to university and finish our studies. She had also passed her ACCL Exam in Accounting and became an account manager. After my graduation from Westminster University, I began to work as a translator/interpreter with different agencies. A year later, I worked as an examiner with the Institute of Linguists.

My work as an interpreter in hospitals, courts, social services and immigration was an eye opener for me. I found out that there were language and cultural barriers that stopped many people from accessing

the services they needed and rights they are entitled to. This was how I got involved in the charitable and voluntary sector and spend the next 16 years.

I started my voluntary work in early 1997 when I became a carer for an HIV positive Moroccan man. Since then and until today, I worked in different capacities, founded many projects or supported them to develop and succeed to cater for the need for different communities and target groups. It has been a very enriching experience in my life.

I have had the opportunity to work as an Employment and training Adviser for the Moroccan Enterprise and Training Centre at Wornington Green, the hub of the largest Moroccan Community in the UK before its closure.

During this period, I learnt a lot about the Moroccan British community. It was very intense and difficult times. METC was at its last leg and many people were not happy to see it close. The centre was a part of a Single Regeneration Budget that was coming to a close and there was no planned exit strategy except the closure and which made the Kensington and Chelsea College the biggest beneficiary of its closure in collusion with the North Kensington Training Centre. I worked in the centre for the period of 8 months in which I helped 162 people get jobs; supported 20 people go back to university to finish their studies and run 16 workshops on CV compilation, writing successful covering letters and effective interview techniques. I learned first-hand the challenges that the community faced and made up my mind to get involved in the voluntary sector and community activism. I founded the Moroccan Regeneration Project to continue supporting, advising and helping the community once the centre was closed.

The culmination of my voluntary work was when I was awarded a Community Champion grant for my mentoring project with the Moroccan youth in the summer of 1999. That was considered as an excellent example of education, youth and community work.

We used coaching and mentoring and action learning with a group of boys between 11 and 16 years old. We initially started with 26 and then ended up with over 60 kids over a period of 9 months at the end of which all the participants were fully engaged and attended all the training we provided both on and of the pitch. We won within the two and half years period 23 cups and prizes and carried three trips to Morocco and one France as a part of a cultural exchange with Moroccans in Paris.

I have had the opportunity to meet 3 of those students at a wedding of late. They were very appreciative of the work we did with them. They said that their getting together at that early age has started lasting and positive friendships in their lives. They asked me if we could go back to Paris again jokingly. One of them said that, having been involved in mentoring, coaching, football and different projects had saved many youngsters from falling victim to crime, drugs and violence that was rampant in Golborne Road at the time as you can see from the report we wrote at the time and which we are evaluating now to assess the impact of our the Moroccan Regeneration Project. A copy of the report can be requested from [www.success-path.co.uk](http://www.success-path.co.uk)

If you don't have clear goals, worthy ideals and an agenda, be certain you will be part of someone else's agenda. The media uses Agenda Setting Theory to tell the public what to think and not only about broad term issues, but also about specific ones. It directs our thought to the things which we have been exposed to most recently.

That agenda you may be aware of or it may deliberately be concealed from you for your own good or otherwise. The point here is that you have ceded the control to someone or something else outside your circles of control and influence. Sadly with the high level of illiteracy and more use of audio and visual social media, most people are prone to inertia and becoming passive in seeking the truth or real facts.

Let's spend some time trying to discern who could have an agenda that influence our behaviours or life.

We are born with an original imprint called instinct, which has been evolving since the beginning of time. That is our own DNA. That DNA is our original composite of not only our parents but all the lineage that come from as far back as Adam and Eve where all human being meet namely as part of our collective unconscious; contrary to the different theories that make a claim that man and animals somehow come from the same origin, called the Theory of Evolution by Charles Darwin.

Man, animals, plants and insects are all part of our ecosystem and constitute a well-organised and perfectly designed and harmonious universe.

Your success and uniqueness have been initiated by that minute and perfectly designed sperm that lands on the ready and awaiting egg in the woman womb. Together they have all the pre-requisite for accepting the breath of life that is blown into them on the 42nd day of their embryonic development from the big designer and the giver of life. It takes place through an angel that blows that life into the baby as ordered by the creator. That sperm has beaten millions of others to the final destination, which makes it unique and successful and well equipped for the life. Once it meets with the egg and starts to grow in the woman's womb it is to be given its soul by The Creator which most of us albeit all our scientific and technological development up to now know nothing about.

The story of the human birth is one of the many miracles of the creation of the universe. Each new birth will be seeking to belong and find itself a place and role in this vast universe as its awareness of its own self becomes clearer and its contribution to the world becomes the ultimate goal and purpose.

So saying that a man or a woman ultimate goal in life is to find its place in this universe and by finding it to achieve the mission that he or she are on this earth to complete.

Most human beings will ask the question of the purpose of life on this earth at least once in their lifetime whilst others may never do: Why are we here? Once that question is answered convincingly, everything else becomes easy and find in its rightful place.

That is the question that three years old kids keep asking all the times. They want to know the WHY of everything. Many of these questions were asked by Greek philosophers two thousand years ago.

What is the purpose of human existence and why are we here on this earth and what is our role in the world and our contribution to the humanity?

Aristotle enlightening quotes, which have inspired people to live a better life for centuries, says, “**Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim, and end of human existence.**” One of my favourite quotes was written on the Delphi Theatre and read: “**Know Thyself**” “Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.”

#### **CALLS TO ACTION: STEP 4**

- *You must take out two things from your self-talk dictionary: Fear and anxiety.*
- *These two cancers have killed more than all wars combined and kept more than 90 % of people from achieving their life dreams and living their full potential.*



# Chapter 5

## Goal Setting and Moving Away for the Folly of Youth

**T**oday I want to look back, with happiness and gratitude, on my current and past relationships. Some relationships get strengthened over time, some wither away and die whilst others continue intermittently.

What comes to mind when the word relationship is mentioned is the relationship between a man and a woman whereas in the priority order it may not be qualified for first place.

My belief is that the spiritual relationship is the number one and should be established developed and maintained continuously. After which comes the relationship with our parents then our relatives, husbands and wives and children then friends. That would be the general custom and wisdom in most societies. Yet I believe your relationship with yourself is the most important of them all and will affect all the other relationships.

This relationship can be seen in how you see yourself and then relate to others. How a person sees himself or herself depends on their self-concept and image. Self-image is not what you see in a selfie or a mirror but it is the mental picture that you hold and is part of your beliefs and experience and worldview. It is also to do with your self-esteem, self-confidence and self-worth.

As Aristotle said and you could find written in the Delphi theatre:

*“Know thyself”*.

Discovering oneself is worth the pursuit as the more you know about yourself the easier to understand your mission in this world and find your true calling and voice. Your self-image is not what you see in the mirror as it is only a reflection of your physical self. Human beings are not just bodies. They also have a heart and mind and soul. That is the source of uniqueness and greatness of human beings as compared with the other life forms.

The apparent uniqueness is that each person has a unique DNA, fingerprint, voice to name but a few characteristics. Some of these features are innate and inherent and some are acquired. Our self-image starts to develop at a younger age as we start to learn in our earlier years, moving away from complete dependence on our parents/carers to independent living where we become self-reliant. Psychologist and scientists have asserted and is evidenced that up to 90% of our values and beliefs are constructed by the age of 7 and all the margin that is left is 10 % for us to work with for the rest of our life.

Lucky for us that with that this tiny percentage we can unlearn and develop a new character and have a paradigm shift. We still have enough room to rewrite a new script.

We start to memorise our first experiences whilst we are still in the womb. We start to listen to what is happening around us. Ears are the first organ that are developed in the baby in the mother womb.



Then other organs follow suit until the time when we come out crying which is also our first sign of life in this world. At that point, we start our first relationship with the world which is with the mother in the first place and then with the father second. The parents' compassion and unconditional love are our first taste of how we relate to our parents and that is our first social imprint: "hugs, Smiles and kisses"

This love ensures our survival and satisfies all our physical dependencies and emotional needs. We are dependent on our parents for all our needs and the only way to get them satisfied is by crying. Later on, we start to articulate few words which bring enormous happiness to our parents as we utter our first words. But at this early stage, we don't know what words mean but we just mimic our parents and we start to use our 5 senses to understand our surrounding and acclimatize and adapt to it.

It wasn't an easy task to retrieve my memory for my earliest learning experiences till the day I watched a Moroccan film that triggered flashbacks. My first thought was why there was a blockage or was it that the memory was so deep that needed a trigger and catalyst or was there something else. Once the floodgates were open I was able to write up for hours non-stop about those earlier experiences with much ease.

Today, I heard the news that the band seven Engagement Manager post, I applied for two months ago was withheld. What is interesting was not what's happened but how I react to it. It is something I am thinking about but whilst it may have left some sour taste in my mouth it is really ranged as part of daily occurrence without any major issues or feeling of anger or disappointment accompanying it.

My meeting happened at midday in which I was informed that then recruitment of a permanent post will not be going ahead and only temporarily offer would be made. I refused the offer of the manager post as it was not part of the original agreement.

But on the other hand, I made an executive decision today to embark on my writing career and to publish my first book. The feeling of been

a Published Author filled me with a sense of achievement that I have been seeking for a long time now. I am just happy that I, at last, going to be touching the letters of the Keyboard to gather my thoughts, my feelings, my learning and my experience. I always knew that I have some contribution to make to this world and it only now that it starts to crystallize and to be as clear as day. I am starting to make sense of why I went the way I did and travelled the journey I travelled.

My message is simple for the simple mind and complex for the creative mind. It is “Be yourself”. “Cherish the beauty and the blessings you have and be happy with who you are”. “Accept yourself as you are, get out of the denial and disowning yourself “It is the first step to better health, self-esteem, and confidence. The world is nothing but a mirror of your inner self and perception.

You can use sunglasses and 3D lenses, a bird’s eye view to see the world you are in. It is of your own creation. It exists in your own awareness. The important thing is you are the maker of that reality and creator of that world once you take 100% responsibility for yourself.

I am happy and grateful that I will bring my own contribution to the world. I aim to be of service to the humanity and to the special race that enjoys the beauty and the abundance we have within us.

I have read and enjoyed the company of many a writer. I was able to navigate with them their own worlds both literally and metaphorically. The notion of time and space becomes irrelevant and almost blurred at times.

As Roland Barthes would have us believe in his erotic experiences in reading books in his book *SZ* or Simon du Beauvoir in her novel *The Force of Things* or Albert Camus in *The Stranger* or *The Rebel* in the French languages as part of my growing up and my formative years.

My education was in both Arabic and French up to the Age of 20 and getting my Baccalaureate. After that, it became Arabic and English.

I travelled the gardens with Turn of the screw by Henry James and the plains of Ireland with the portrait of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wild. My studies for my Bachelor of Art in English Literature and languages open my eyes to the world. I felt privileged to have had the opportunity to rub shoulders with the giants and to be in the presence with the greats.

I suppose my introduction to literary theories and critical thinking was the source of my fascination with great ideas from great books from the whole world. I get the richness and the abundance through their eyes as none of them thought only of himself or herself but they all had one thing in common which is improving the human condition and contributing positively to humanity and its civilisation.

Do we ever stop and thank Prophet of Islam- Mohammed- peace be upn him, who is sent as a mercy to mankind; Addison for enabling to use light instead of reading under the candlestick; Henry Ford for the cheap automobile or Copernicus's for the printing press and enabling the whole population to read and enjoy literature and poetry. What about the legacies of Dante, Du Vinci, Milton, Jebran, Mahfouz, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Rushd and their huge advancement of the human mind and civilisation?

I will refer you "**A Little Knowledge**" book by Micheal Macrone, Who has been tracing the development of human thought from the Greeks to our post/ postmodern area.

"Life is a stage and we are all a merely players"

This statement presupposes that the producer has already allocated definite roles for each of the actors in his story be it drama, video or audio. He also asked them to rehearse their roles and have as many takes as needed to get it perfect. While there are similarities between theatre and real life, in reality, you have only one take and you can never do things twice as the saying goes "you can only swim in the river once" as the time is a tidal wave, a current that cannot be captured or repeated twice. You can take a photo or a video to record that moment. One of

these photos dates to October 1972 when I was 10 years old. These were the most influential people in my life: father, mother next to each other my step-grandfather and my grandmother my cousin and aunts.

Yet for most successful people persistence and discipline teach them how to do things better and faster with time. Eventually acquiring a habit that ensures you become proactive rather than reactive consequently causing things to happen that are aligned with your own desire and focus. As you have an inherent reservoir you can tap into at with ease and at will once you have mastered your own feelings, life story and self-talk through rigorous self-improvement and daily meditation. Mindfulness has proved to be a good way to control our reaction to what life throw at us.

### **CALLS TO ACTION: STEP 5**

- *Make a pledge to learn a new thing every day,*
  - *read a book, listen to an audio, watch a YouTube.*
  - *update and perfect your skillset.*
  - *boost your mind capacity and performance.*
  - *Invest in your self-improvement.*
  - *Increase your financial, mental, health and spiritual wellbeing.*
- *Then : Your self-worth will equal your net-worth.*



# Chapter 6

## Emigrating to the Uk

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In search for better life chances, knowledge and an identity

Social mobility, migration, seeking new opportunities, betterment of one's life, personal and professional development can be defined as life goals that people work towards achieving, hence have a feeling of satisfaction and enjoyment. Yet when a person change his homeland and birthplace things take a different dimension. He moves from what is familiar and commonplace to what is unusual and different. In this journey, many have lost their ways and traditions and acquired the habits of the new host country.

Some of the people who have to travel to new countries have changed their names and others have changed their appearance while others changed their faith and belief system. The degree and intensity of the metamorphosis depends on the age, culture and the distance. Children

and young people can easily adapt and adopt the new culture of the host country whilst adults find it much harder and more difficult.

Many are those who get completely assimilated into the new culture and accept all the aspects of the new country while few keep their own values, beliefs and culture alive.

One of the most difficult dilemma is to have an ambivalent relationship with your mother country with a thought of Returning Home one day.

Decision making is an art and like all forms of art, it can be acquired. This means there is still a hope for us those who have been finding hard to make a decision with ease or believe that making a right decision requires one to be fully informed. From now onward be certain we can never have all the relevant and important information available to us to base that decision on. Hence we need to learn to decide on the basis of what information/facts we have at the time and use both our dynamic and organized part of the brains to create the most favourable outcome in the future state we want to be in or the destination we want to reach. This can apply to all spheres of life be it financial, emotional spiritual or health and wellbeing.

I am guilty and I have had to delay taking important decisions in the past because of fear. Fear of commitment, fear of failure or just fear of the unknown. I must confess that it had cost me a lot of wasted efforts, energies, money and aches. I had the belief that if I didn't decide then I would not be accountable or responsible. I found out it is the wrong strategy to adopt. Not making a decision is a decision in itself.

Nature doesn't favour those who are not good at making decisions as they are not following the natural laws. Not flowing with the tide is not always the best option. You have to intervene and to be quick about it otherwise, the price could be very high. Most successful people make decisions quickly and change them slowly.

Let me tell you the story of how on the spot decision has saved my life. The story was narrated by my mother as I was two years old and I don't have a recollection of it myself but it has become a cathartic event in my life. When I was two years old, I was hyperactive so I wouldn't sit in one place more than a minute. One day my parents went for a picnic by the river of that flows in Mazagan - near Eljadida in Doukala countryside. Whilst they were busy unloading the car I went and started throwing stones in the river. A few second later I fell in the river and was taken by the strong current. My mother, realizing I was no longer closer to her, pull her eyes up and couldn't find me by her side but could see my red coat floating on the water. He started shouting "***my son oh my son is drowning!!!!***". A fisherman who was a bit further could hear the shouting and turned to hear "***my son in the red coat is drowning.***" After hearing that he immediately jumped in the river and fighting the strong current, he was able to catch me and bring me to shore. My grandmother, my mother and father were very relieved and wanted to thank the man who saved me for his heroic act and risking his life to save me.

He hold me in his hands and hugged me and told my parents "***I saved him and helped him so he can help and save many others***" My mother told me this story 40 years ago and it is just of late that it came back to me as I have been unlocking some of the very old memories and going back through the most relevant events, experiences that have impacted my life.

Whenever I remember this story, I find myself overcome by emotions and tears coming down my eyes. My lack of decision at times also stemmed from the fact that I was not very clear about what I wanted. I didn't have clarity of purpose, hence I thought that I will make that right decision once I knew what I really wanted and once I answered the bigger question of my mission in this life. One thing I was sure of is to continue learning and searching until I reach that goal.

I am happy and grateful for the journey that leads me here and the experiences and knowledge that made me who I am. On the basic level

we are making decisions all the time and every day and on everything. The way we look, walk, talk, eat, sleep and live is based on decisions we have made whether these were on a conscious level or subconscious one. The two major factors that influence the way we decide are therefore pleasure and pain. The pleasure principle is a great motivator to do the thing we like to achieve and desire whereas the pain triggers the fear that drives us away from doing the things we dislike.

Some of the happiest moments I have experienced in my life are when I have been helping others. There are no better satisfaction than to empower people to do the things that have stopped them from having a voice and reaching their potential before and to remove the fear and anxiety that stop them a having voice and making them heard. I have been very lucky to have so many of those special moments of joy and happiness when both students and trainees share their success and achievement. The photos capture those moments that you can see on the faces and body language years after.







### **CALLS TO ACTION: STEP 6**

- *Treat yourself as a prince or a dignitary as you have only yourself all your life.*
- *Take time to celebrate achievements and enjoy the moment and record it in your memory.*
- *Acknowledge the small wins, write them down as these are the way to major achievement.*



# Chapter 7

## Acceptance and Gratefulness for the Need of Change

**W**hat a glorious day. A day with so much anticipation that now that is past and forever gone. It was a defining day I put quite a lot thought into and planned for meticulously. It was the day of the interview for the Patient and Public Engagement manager job. Deep inside I started to feel that the requirement of the job didn't align well with my values and beliefs.

My new perspective on things has changed since I started to pursue a different kind of path. There was a real fight between my system one who is thinking of continuing as before to ensure survival and security and system two the other part of me that pushing me in the opposite direction. A fight between a structured more comfortable state and a more dynamic and adventurous mind. I did all the hard work and planning for this 30 minutes encounter but the delivery was not up to scratch. My performance was by no means great. I couldn't make an accurate sentence, let alone develop an argument and be convincing and

persuasive. Now I am laughing at myself for not comprehending what had just happened, whereas after the meeting I was so angry and upset.

The lesson I learnt is that you have to follow the doctor's advice and not to drive a car or operate machinery whilst you take certain medications. I took 2 strong painkillers right before the interview so by the time I gave my 10 minutes presentation I was so hot so I had to take off my jacket and undo my tie. I couldn't focus on the questions let alone answer them. What a mess I thought then; but when I got back home and realized what just happened something deep inside felt relief.

Had I got the job, I wouldn't be able to take time off to relax, heal and get my health back, so I am happy and grateful that I didn't succeed in that interview. I am much happier and healthier now than I was at the time and I am grateful for the blessings in my life now.

#### The days before the journey

I have come to realise that there are laws that people can ignore to their peril. There are fixed and eternal and never change. If you start anything, keep going as there will definitely be things, issues, problems and challenges that will slow you down or stop you. Regaining momentum is very hard and requires a lot of energy and determination. The amount of fuel that spacecraft burns at the start of a take-off, exceeds that it needs in its entire journey to reach another planet.

The law of cause and effect states that for every action there is a reaction. All the process of education and learning is to know how to react and deal with the challenges we meet. To develop our response ability to what life throws at us. The big question is have we learned to do it and do it well. Most people react spontaneously without thinking and have been reacting the same way to things throughout their life, even though they do not get the results they want they continue reacting the same way, which can only interpreted as a form of insanity.

To get the outcome you want you to have to change the way you respond to the event as in  $\text{Event} + \text{Response} = \text{Outcome}$

Remember to be proactive and develop your response ability by giving yourself a few seconds to think before you react- this thinking time makes the biggest difference to the rest of your life- be aware of your actions and reactions.



# Chapter 8

## Returning Home

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I have to confess that the journey has been both in time and space. It was also the most productive and relaxing time. I also was able to do a review/audit of last year and plan the new one. I must say that I now have more clarity of purpose and better energy and determination to make the coming years the best in my life. There is also some satisfaction from the work I have done with both members of my family, clients and my friends. I am also not averse to the possibility of doing some work in Morocco but in fact, I am now seeking it. My current plan for this year is to speak at least in my old university in Casablanca, Universiapolis in Agadir and Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane.

I am pursuing these options as they would give me the opportunity to be closer to my family and also serve and empower the largest number of people that are closer to me in the hope that this will have a ripple effect on the wider community, especially family and friends who I feel deserve a special treat for the contribution they have made into my

wonderful life and the support they provided for me throughout the years.

I have to say with complete confidence that the year 2017 has been a transformative year for me on many levels. The years I got the bull by the horn as it were and faced my demons. I have now rid my system of two of the deadliest cancers: fear and anger. I am no longer afraid of anything or anyone and I am no longer angry or have grudges with anyone. That gave me a higher state of happiness and peace I never felt in my life before. It also meant that I am aligned with my spiritual values and beliefs. As I have reconciled with myself and forgave everyone else, been kind to myself and working at my own pace, I feel invigorated and appreciate every moment of my life.

The sense of belonging is a very powerful one as it gives an anchor on which you can buoy your ship. People without a strong sense of belonging are at a loss and can easily fall victim to radicalisation and brainwashing. It is why many young people become easy prey for many radical groups as their immune system can easily be penetrated as they have no sense of belonging shield.

In Morocco, we have a motto- God – Country – King in that order. I am very proud Moroccan, proud of my Glorious history, heritage and culture. I am also proud of our glorious King Mohamed VI as in his reign Morocco has made a gigantic strides to be among the most secure, stable and developed countries in the world in the current climate. I am confident that it will play a very important role in the world now and in the future.

I am also very excited about the leadership role Morocco has taken in the sustainable development of Africa, the protection of the environment by Organising COP22 after the Paris Accord and in many other areas where it is proving a major player.

I am extremely grateful to everything that Morocco gave and still offering me and showering me with gifts non-stop. I have it in my heart

and mind and I wear it on my sleeve. I love my country unconditionally as it has my dearest people in this world my Parents and my family and friends. Morocco has an excellent social and economic model that by far exceeds many of the developing countries. It has sustainable and transformation strategies that could benefit both developed and developing countries. Moroccan Diaspora can see that very well as they can analyse it in terms of strategies and policies applied in their countries of residence. The only thing that would enhance this model is better promotion and marketing. This can easily be done through the 5 million Moroccan diaspora living abroad. A prospect more beneficial than the remittance they bring back to Morocco and put Morocco in the right place to play his role in the new connected world.



Essaouira City where I spent the first years of my life



# Chapter 9

## The Power of Old Truths, Values, Wisdoms, Spiritual Comforts Recovered and Re-appreciated

**T**his has been my early diagnosis. I am everywhere and nowhere. My mind wanders the universe and then comes back to its body and temple. Some of you may call it lack of focus but it would be an inaccurate description as it is not only my mind that wanders but my whole being. That may seem kind of weird but that is what I think, feel, believe and experience. Sometimes I am absent from not only my mind but my body. Our souls leave our body when we are asleep and I believe when we daydream and meditate.

I am trying to find words to describe something that words fail to capture. This is knowledge by presence that Suffis talk about and by personal experience. People in the last feedback on the mindfulness I ran at NHS North West London CCG, 15 Marylebone Road, London said that they go into a whirling world where they experience some happiness, peace, and serenity: a special state where they are in complete harmony



with themselves. Mind, body, heart, and soul all working together. It is a state of trance, of spiritual elevation and perfect balance of heart and mind and complete control of the physical environment. I believe that my journey has been to find that special moment and make it permanent. To be fully present in everything I do: Focus, concentration, zooming and zeroing on the now. It is travelling to the deepest corners of your soul and moment of your birth and forward to your last day on this planet and moving to the next universe.

The nearest life experience that gets you closer to achieving this wonderful perfect state of perfect harmony in all these time zones and expanding of spatial dimensions I have experienced is on my trip to Mecca as a pilgrim in 2010.

The first thing that happens to start the journey is when you reach the time when you have change into the two unsewn pieces of white cloth as a man and to declare that you are you are answering to the call of God. It goes this way and the text of the talbiyah is:

Labbayka Allāhumma Labbayk. Labbayk Lā Sharīka Laka Labbayk.  
Inna l-Ḥamda, Wa n-Ni‘mata, Laka wal Mulk, Lā Sharīka Lak.

In Arabic: لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ،  
إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ لِأَشْرِيكَ لَكَ

IPA transcription:

[læb' bæjk aħɑ:' hɵmmæ læb' bæjk læbb' æjkæ læ: fæ' ri: kæ 'lækæ læb' bæjk  
'ʔinnæ l' hæmdæ wæn' ni' mætæ 'lækæ wæ l' mɵlk læ: fæ' ri: kæ læk]

translated as:

“Here I am at Thy service O Lord, here I am. Here I am at Thy service and Thou hast no partners. Thine alone is All Praise and All Bounty, and Thine alone is The Sovereignty. Thou hast no partners.”

Once these words are uttered your notion of time and space starts to change. I remember very clearly when all the people on the coach started saying these words I joined them with all my being, even though I could barely utter the words because of the flu I had so my vocal chords could barely produce the sounds. In comparing that moment and now I feel as I am carrying mountains on my shoulders whereas then I felt like a bird free to fly and tour the universe. This is as if you free yourself from the shackles of the lower self that is always seeking instant gratification and satisfaction of physical needs into the realm of spiritual enlightenment and attainment.

*Photos taken during in my Pilgrimage to the sacred places of Mecca and Madina in 2010*



Today I seem to have an intense feeling of unease which engulfs my body and affects my mind. I am trying to make sense of what it is. Did it start in my dreams that were so intense to the point that they woke me in the middle of the night twice. What had triggered these dreams in the first instance is what I am trying to comprehend. Sometimes trying to make sense you the nonsense is a bit of none sense. I know that if something doesn't exist in my awareness it doesn't mean it doesn't exist in other people awareness. My consciousness is limited with what information and experiences I have had up to this moment of writing but it may become crystal clear later, as they say "hindsight is 20/20" I will become wiser after the event.

Let's look at the last week to see if they are any hidden clues or new insight that has triggered this intensity in feeling. Last week I took an off sick day and did my usual task, carried out two coaching sessions, did my duties and had dinner with my Muslim work colleagues.

I had my coaching session with Jane and got my home for a nice relaxing dinner. The fact that I now have a new meter counting my electricity use have given me the impetus to do the same in other parts of my life and the resources I use.

This morning I made two decisions:

To plan and manage my finances

To revamp my values and beliefs: self-image, esteem, confidence and worth:

The realisation that the two are interlinked has come as a Eureka moment as part of my mind has been hiding that fact from me.

December is a good Month to evaluate your past year and to plan for the next one. That fits in with well with the medium-term planning which is the half-way house between your strategic long term and short term why of organising.

I want to remember this day and this intense feeling that stems from the realisation that my priority for next year has a financial position that would set me in the best possible position to secure the safety of myself and my family.

To achieve my goals, I will publish my book, set up my school of thought, a broadcasting station.

In doing mindfulness I have started to realise that it is the quicker way to the subconscious and that is where the seeds are planted and it is your choice to plant roses, fruits or leave the garden be covered with weeds of every kind.

I am now a new gardener who is keen to learn the best way of farming. The first thing that comes to me is that you reap what you sow. That there are laws you have to abide by and seasons you have to consider. I have spent a lot of time of my youth in the countryside. That was my favourite time of the holidays up to the age of 14 and 15. For it was an exciting experience to have to walk for 4 to 5 hours in a completely open space of plains and hills and mountains on my own or in the company of one of my uncles. You could be lost for days if you miss a turn or forget the path you had to follow which added to the sense of adventure and achievement.

My great grandfather and great grandmother were the landlord and heads of the tribe- may God have mercy on their soul. Sidi Kabour and Lalla Masouda were most loving and kind to me. They are my great parents on my mother side. SK used to call me Si Nour and use to take me with him and talk to me whereas everyone else was scared of him out of awe and respect.

I remember them more than I remember my grandfather on my father side Moulay Al Hassan Benslimane and my grandmother lalla Rokaya. My memories of him are very faint but I can see him in his white djellaba and overcoat. He was a learned man, a healer and was the judge for the village but I rarely see him speak only to express gratitude and

was in a state of constant dhikr-reciting eulogies: he had 11 sons and one daughter and my father was the youngest. I was nicely surprised to see portrait photos of my grandfather and grandmother when I asked my dad for my old photographs. I never knew that we had photos of them.

It was always a festive season and celebration whenever we went to visit them. We were treated like royalties and they were royals in comparison with the entire villagers that were living around them or in their employ.

I remember when we used to harvest the grapes on my grandfather's farm. Everything was organic and everyone in the village gets a share of the harvest and enjoy the bounties whether they have worked in the farm or not. Neighbours, as well as far distant family members, used to get a share of the harvest. There was a feeling of abundance among all of them as they were upholding the true values of Islam as well as the traditions and norms they inherently have inherited from their parents.

There was something different about that time: the people who lived then as well as my younger self. I have heard many times people say how beautiful it was then and how happier people were and I have a tendency to agree. People learned valuable lessons on how to accept and cope with their destiny than we seem to be able to do. The sense of happiness that everyone is seeking today only few people seems to be able to experience.

My belief is that happiness is something intrinsic that is to found within us and that is why when the majority of people reach for success and wealth they do not seem to find the happiness they are seeking. Can happiness be found in sex, money or with God? In my personal view it starts and ends with the person that seeks it. Things that give me joy can be very vile and repulsive to others. A conscientiously made decision which may not tally with what is imprinted deep in my value system may never see the day or materialize. It will remain as such as unless we work on and replace the feeling attached to in a way that is accepted by our subconscious through repetitive affirmative statements or self-talk.

The three basic human needs are very powerful to the point that they control most of our behaviours. They act as the interpreters of Coded messages and a language that we may, at times, find hard to understand and decipher. These needs if not controlled can cause us a lot of grief and unhappiness.

One of the challenges I have been working on for the last few years is financial freedom. While in all my life I have been interested in many blessings and richness that one can enjoy and they are too numerous to count; My focus include freedom. I believe in the law of abundance and the increased returns and I am now ready and prepared to receive this wealth in the form of specific amount of money by the 18th of April 2024. Today I went to the bank and told me that I don't need my credit card anymore. My issues with money are very deep-seated as the case is with most of our values and beliefs.

It was by a stroke of luck or divine providence as the expressions go or by a universal plan I worked with a Hypnotherapist in the years of 2012-2013. We had an arrangement where she would offer me therapy sessions whilst I would help her with fundraising for her charity and collaboration with other charitable organisations. It was there that I realised the scarcity belief that came from my early years as a child and a young man. That realisation explained a lot of my behaviours and relationship with money. It doesn't mean that I have not been able to change this belief since that realisation. When I started my last job, I said to myself that I would be able to save some money thinking my wages now are reasonably high but that didn't happen either. Now I am embarking on a new strategy and have given up my 9 to 5 job. The other reason has been my health since I have sciatica, disk hernia and many other names I found out to the ailment I have. I can no longer sit for 8 hours or do long hours sitting of any kind at the moment. I should be able to do everything later now that I finished my treatment with the Chiropractor and my old friend who is an energy healer.

The focus on health comes as a first priority now and after it comes wealth and happiness. Part of that hypnotherapy sessions was setting my dream in 5 years' time to be speaking in front of 5000 people and I believe I have been making some strides towards that and part of it is the publication of my book.

One of the lessons I have learnt in life is that we cannot be rich alone. You need a group of people to achieve that. It can be family, friends, colleagues or team of different specialists that will contribute to the making of that fortune. The best group to have is to have a mastermind group that ensures the synergy of the whole. We are not talking here about collaboration or positive emancipation or engagement but more than that. In this group, the selection process is very thorough and specific qualities are required: loyalty, reliability, commitment, integrity, flexibility and enthusiasm. The process of selection should also be rigorous. The selection of the second person is crucial. Then the two together select the third and then the three select the fourth and so on until you have the mastermind group. Each member should be an expert in his field.

One of the things I noticed is my reluctance to spend a lot of time in the finance sphere and that is partly why I am not financially secure yet. In plain English, my lack of money consciousness to the point that I even thought of it in negative terms and as a source of evil were some deep-seated beliefs I had. My scarcity belief about money may have been initiated when I was young but the subsequent and repetitive messages of a mystic and Sufi interpretation of Islam that look at seeking wealth as an endeavour not to be encouraged but to focus solely on spiritual attainment and the hereafter.

A big part of this indoctrination happened when I was in my early adolescence.

At the time we lived on the ground floor of our newly built house at Idrissiya. The construction of our new house was still going on in the

first and second floor. We had to use charcoal to keep warm at night as there was no central heating at the time. We used to put the charcoal container in the toilet at the night-time with the door closed.

Whilst I was growing up, I had known teenagers like me and we started to experiment with smoking and dating. Smoking cigarettes at the beginning is easy as everyone would be offering them to you. The problem is when you get hooked and develop the habit then you have to go and buy the cigarettes yourself.

As my father would not give me any money for buying cigarettes I used to ask him if I could buy books. That is one thing he could never say no to. So that was for some time the scenario even if my dad had realized that I wouldn't be needing books every other day.

As for dating, I studied in all boys' school at al-Mansour Aldhabi in Derb Alkabir from the age of 11 to 15 so my contact with girls was through parties that we used to organise every Saturday. We were then influenced by the Bee Gees and Saturday Night Fever and Bob Marley,

Bod Dylan, Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel and many other musicians.

There were parties every weekend.

Still, attending those parties required a special kind of dress code which meant that I had to buy the best and most fashionable clothes. While my father would buy me all the clothes I wanted he could never accept smoking or understand why I was doing it. My view then was that this was a form of rebellion and gave me a new sense of belonging to my new group of peers and friends, a natural part of growing up.

It is only now that I reconciled myself with my dad and forgave him and myself for all the misunderstanding heartache we may have caused each other. Lately I have been able to really hug him and to have a laugh with him. I am very grateful that I have been able to do that. I felt like a heavy weight has been lifted from my shoulders.



I am happy and grateful that God gave me this opportunity to establish that loving relationship that has in part affected my relationship with the world and other people. I would recommend that whatever happens, fathers and sons relationship should be maintained and developed and especially for a Muslim who is required to be good to his parents and never say a bad word to them but seek always their blessings and endeavour to make them happy. I love my dad very dearly and appreciate everything he has done for me.

The essence of a person's wealth is what he has already inherited from his parents. It can be summed up in the values and beliefs we learnt. These can play a very important role in whether we become rich or not but it is not the only factor as it has been proved that acquiring wealth depends on the person's clarity of purpose and actions to achieve his/her goal.

Wealth is above all a mental state. It is created in the mind of the person before it is can be seen in the external or real world. It is in the process of making money and acquiring wealth that any blockage or limiting beliefs appear their ugly heads. If one is thinking that money is the source of evil or has a scarcity mind-set, he is not going to attract it to him. Our subconscious will attract what we want and most likely what we are afraid of. Beware of what you become when you are rich. Financial success can be a way to achieve one's worthy ideals.



# Chapter 10

## Life in a Flash

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**W**hat does that mean to see your life in a flash? It means that the notion of time is distorted so as 40 years can seem like 40 seconds, you are able, in the shortest space of time, to see the long life of many years pass in front of your eyes very quickly . The closest images that come to mind is when you are in a deep sleep and you have a dream. Your vision is working so fast to capture the events that are taking place in your head in the dream world. They are many anecdotes of people seeing their life pass in front of them in a near death experience.

Today's experience was different as the trigger for these feelings or visions and experiences came from a multitude of sources: papers awards, newspapers, magazine articles, and photos that I have collected over the years. The earliest of these memories were when I was 17 years old on a trip to the North of Morocco- it seemed to me now as if, it was in another world. In fact, in those days, when you needed to travel you were required you to carry with you all the necessary staff needed for camping:

tent, cooking utensils, sleeping bags, and food, suffice to say that we didn't have the proper camping equipment that are available today.

This adventure was so memorable for the fact that we toured the whole North of Morocco from Oujda- Saadiya to the east to Alhoceima, then Tangiers and Tetouan and Fes. We did all this on a very low budget. We got stuck in Fes as we didn't have any money left to get back home to Casablanca. My cousins Abdelatif, who now lives in Canada with his family, and si Omar, who is a retired teacher, were asking people for help to pay coach tickets but no one seem to respond to their plea. I suggested to them to go to the train station instead of taking the coach. It was a fair bit of distance and we had a quite heavy load. We asked a man with a chariot to help us and he obliged. Once we got the train station, I told my companions to let me try my way. I approached the station headmaster and told him our plight.

He smiled at me and said:

“Today is your lucky day. I have been planning to go to Casablanca to see my sister for years and it is only today that they have agreed to give me the time off. So you will be travelling with me in my compartment.”

I thanked him and told him that they are another two people with me and he said:

“Tell them to join us.”

When I went back and told my cousins the news, they started jumping in the air and shouting:

“You are a genius; you are the youngest of us and the smartest.

You will be very successful and famous one day.

Mark our words.”

It was an eye-opening experience that took me back in time with the help of a photo of that trip. The fact that you can take a photo to record

a specific time or place is quite revealing but to manage to record a part of that experience is different. The feelings and emotions that you live through can be recorded through your writing of that specific event or time. What is recorded in your psyche is quite different. When we look at a photo of our lives in the past it can give an indication of our physical body and the effect of age on it but it doesn't tell us how our whole being has changed. I find the picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde coming to mind. Whilst the portrait changes with the effect of time and experiences Dorian Gray keeps his youthful looks and doesn't age.

The overwhelming feeling of looking through all my old archives be it photos; articles in newspaper or magazines and notes of the meeting, awards and qualifications is a sense of satisfaction and achievement. It is an enormous sense of happiness and wellbeing. I am glad and grateful for all the things in my life and I thank God for all his bounties and blessings.

I would like to pause for a minute or two to look at my journey and the major challenges. I can say that I am the sum of the experiences that have made me who I am today. I want to have a closer look at what call be called as challenges:

I can look closer at these three examples:

1. Not passing my 6th form because of bad discipline in class.
2. Not pass my baccalaureate in the first year and
3. Not continuing my teacher training.

What I found that in each of these events there was the seed of mutual benefit. When I supposedly didn't pass my class I had to change school so I went to another school which all classes were full except for the English section which has 2 places and we were 6 to fight for them. Once I passed the test I started to have more English tuition and had to do some catching up as the rest of the class have already been studying for a year and another 6 weeks before I joined them. I found that some

people work better when they are under pressure or working to deadline whereas others set the deadline and always improve and perform better so they achieve more in less time. They live in what we call the stretch zone as they are always getting better and better and once they master one thing they move to the next, consequently acquiring a pool of skills that can enable them to venture out where others fear to tread. Thus when you have the ability to take initiative and to go where most are afraid to take on the challenge we already set yourself in a favourable position than the rest. The fact that I studied in the new college gave me the opportunity to learn English and to acquire this Language consequently, having excellent grades in my Baccalaureate I was accepted at the teacher training Centre in Derb Ghalef- Casablanca.

The year I spent in the training centre was the first time I lived away from home.

The first major change in my life was in 1982. I had to look after myself and had the first taste of independent living away from the sheltered life I led with my family up to then. Even though I had rebelled against many of the prevailing forms of authority, be it my father, my schooling or my values and beliefs, One would say it is a normal path of growing up and finding and forging one's identity, it was very intense and the only way for me to deal with it and live with it was to rebel against everything.

We used to have a saying the only two best things in Morocco are sun and sea and we are blessed with both the Atlantic and Mediterranean. I must say that was one way of handling that reality and I wasn't the only one. Most of the trendy people and the smart people used to smoke and it was both the trend against the repressive regimes that came out of the sixties and seventies following the second world war. That year at the centre we must have consumed a few kilos as everybody use to bring their staff and we compare which is the best in the market in nearby Derb Ghalef or from another part of the kingdom. I learnt a big deal about myself and the world around me in that year. My favourite classes were

Pedagogy and Psychology in which I got the top marks in class. I must at this juncture thank my the teacher who saved me from a dilemma and showed me the way out.

I realized half throughout the year that I didn't want to continue and sign an eight year contract if I pass my exams. I went to my Psychology teacher and explain to him my predicament before the end of the first year. He looked at my overall grades and told me that as it stands you already have enough credit to pass but there is only one thing you can do to fail and that was on Disciplinary misconduct. In the period of the last 5 weeks, I had a fight with three of my teachers. The writing skills French teacher was the first one that I took issues with and shouted at him in front of the whole class. I was sent out of both the listening comprehension and study skills class for bad discipline. The teachers couldn't understand my change of behaviour and asked me to apologise to the teachers but I didn't. I was so happy to fail that I spent the whole of three months celebrating and camping at the beach of Dar Bouaza about 20 miles south of Casablanca.

After the holidays I went back to Ain Chock University and passed a very exciting part of my student life. There I met one of my favourite teacher Soufiani. I remember asking him to check for my grades after the first year final exams. He told me that if my marks were good he would be in touch and if they weren't I would not hear from him. As he was my neighbour, I met him by chance 2 days later and he told me "oh boy you passed with flying colours. You passed with honours". I was very pleased but I didn't tell my family and waited till the results came out.

It is after passing with honours that my father and I started talking again. He told me "**my son I am very proud of you. Do as you please. One thing I ask is that you focus on your study and future**" I graduated with honours. Whilst I was among the top 10 students in the 4 years I was deprived of my post-graduate scholarship. I was angry and upset with the nepotism system that favoured the rich and entitlements but was not based on merits.

The future prospects for most of us that graduated in 1988 were uncertain. A large number of graduates could see a bleak future in front of them and were left to a life of disillusionment and despair as they couldn't secure employment or further training.

It didn't take me long to decide what to do after my graduation. My options were limited: stay in Morocco and may end up in prison, become jobless or seek my prospect elsewhere. Most my friends had been preparing their TOFEL to study in American universities or to go to Europe during the 4 years of study at university, whilst I never thought of leaving my country. Yet when I finished my studies and started my holidays, I couldn't see a good prospect at home and decided to explore new horizons. It took me two weeks between the time of taking my decision and the day of travelling. I wasn't clear about my final destination. My thoughts were either to go to France or USA, where most of my friends were living at the time.

I bought an inter-rail train ticket, which allowed one to travel throughout Europe. I made the first of leg of the journey with my very good friend Yacine through both Spain and France. It was summertime and the trains were full of travellers so we had to sleep on the luggage racks 2 metres high in the air. Once we reached Paris, I told my friend that I would continue to England. He asked me to spend few days with him in Paris before continuing my journey but I refused and took the train to Calais.

I remember clearly reaching the white Cliff of Dover wearing my multi-coloured striped shirt and my beige funnel trousers and Louis Vuitton bag. My visa stamp shows the 18th of August 1988.

Effectively now I spent more time in the UK than in my native Morocco if it weren't for the 3 years I spent in Agadir between 2002 and 2005.

That 3 years period in itself requires another book for the intensity and experiences in those years. I decided to settle back in Morocco and

be the prodigal son, but I couldn't. I am not going to talk about the time I spend in Agadir at this time.

One of the most important needs for human beings is a sense of belonging and a huge part of it comes from your birth place. When we teach English to a beginner the second thing they learn is to say where do you come from? After what is your name?

You birthplace and nationality make up an essential part of your identity. As a Moroccan in Britain, I think I am in the minority in comparison with many of my contemporaries. Most of the age group and the people I came with and went to university with have returned to Morocco. They have now settled back home. There is a minority of the people who come to do post-graduate studies, who never went back home since they came to The UK, whilst most of others Moroccans came to England to improve their economic prospect.

I have taken some time to think before writing the last chapters of my book. I have had the feeling that since I have started this process I could see a marked changes in myself. I wanted to do quick review of what progress I have made so far and lessons I have learnt.

The first idea that came to mind when retracing back of the major stops and stations in my life, was the discovery of major events that shifted my thinking about myself and influence the direction and destination of life. I also learned about the achievements in my career and work I have been doing in my adulthood life. I found out the most interesting period of all is my childhood and how many of the current beliefs and values I have today were formed then. The second point is the audit of present day's situation and the outcomes of years of personal improvement have been enhanced by the recent coaching diploma and literature I have been studying.

This writing process has unearthed some very latent memories that I even forgot existed. I also found out they have an impact in my life today. Now I am the adult and the author who can rewrite the new



script at the present of how to behave in the future. Though the process of unlearning is much harder than the first imprint of Learning, it is doable once you take a 100 % responsibility for our life and seek help of hiring a coach or talking to a therapist and to reconcile yourself with your past. As soon as we take responsibility for our life and acknowledge that everything in our life is the result of our choices and how we respond to the events in our life, we have initiated the process of transformation that will improve the quality of our life. Hence the equation that events plus response equals outcome:  $E+R=O$ . This also solves another problem of blame and complaining, which keeps people in denial and stop them moving forward.

Nobody or nothing can affect us, be it parents, teachers, neighbours, friends or partner, weather, economy or place without our permission. It is only when we give up and accept failure that we fail.

With this new awareness, I am engaged in a new path of success by better understanding of myself and clear communication with the rest of the universe with confidence in my abilities and faith in myself.

To move from now forward I am designing the future I want to have and the life I desire. Upon deciding on my life purpose, writing down steps and goals I want to achieve to get me closer to my definite purpose.

I work simultaneously on the four facets of my personality: physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

Body:	Living fully
Heart:	Loving unconditionally
Mind:	Learning continuously
Spirit:	Leaving a legacy

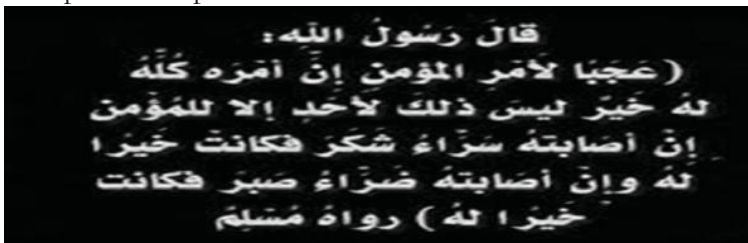
Our spiritual wellbeing can be achieved by following God's guidebook as in the Quran and the Hadith. Chief among the basic requirements of a successful relationship with God is good

communication. The communication is both vertical and horizontal. The vertical communication happens in our prayers and meditations and other form of worship that give us a spiritual elevation and when we travel to the heavens where the salat was first ordained. The books about how to improve our prayers and the pre-requisites for its performance and improvement are available for you to further research.

I suggest for further reading the books of Hamza Yahya of the Zaytona institute. They are full of wisdom and insight for the world today.

The horizontal communication with God is when you are dealing with his creatures and how you treat them: Including human beings, animals, plants and insects in the universe that is essentially created for you. By following His commandments and the footsteps of the prophet, Sala Allah Alaihi wa salam, who was sent as a mercy to mankind you are expressing your gratitude and gratefulness for his gifts and communicating your full submission to his will.

God is communicating with us every moments of our life and is with us wherever we are. Listening and hearing his messages is a skill that can be learnt and developed like all the other skills that we acquire through learning or experience. Yet this skill requires a great focus, training and discipline to reach the stage when it becomes easier to access this state of being and presence. The closer people get to this quantum communication is in the months of Ramadan or when doing Haj. It is also clear that this success-way communication is afforded to the believers who are the real successful people and have access to this communication. They have mastered the win-win strategy and live in a state that the prophet- peace be upon him- talked about in his famous Hadith.



Great is the state of a believer, for he is winner at any rate. If he is given a blessing and thus shows gratitude, it is good for him. If he is plagued with an affliction and thus shows patience, it is good for him.'

We can reach this state when we learn how to be proactive rather than reactive, to use our minds and will power and not to be guided by our habits and instincts. When we do that we have then learned to be response able for all our actions and deeds. We have finally acquired the pre-requisite of a happy life and embarked on the straight path to success.

The path where Fear and Anger do not exist, the path where you are the leader of yourself and your own life, the path where everything is paved with not a red carper but a green grass that make you feel nature's refreshing, re-energizing smells and multitude of beautiful colours and highly intense sensations. On walking on the Success Path you have reached the worthy ideal and your life mission on this earth by living permanently, loving unconditionally, learning continuously and leaving a legacy.

