

FOREWORD BY YVONNE AND RICH DUTRA-ST. JOHN

This book is a precious gift to anyone ready to be inspired and ignited by people's passions and dreams. A role model for what's possible for us all, Marnix speaks from his heart and lives the visions he has captured in every page.

We are the founders of Challenge Day and The Be the Change Movement. In 1987, we were called 'crazy dreamers' because many people thought our vision could never become a reality. Today, we are proud to say, our vision of creating a world where every child feels safe, loved and celebrated is at the core of all the work we have done. Decades later, our work has literally touched the hearts and lives of millions of young people and adults around the world.

The Book of Ideals shines a light of hope and possibility for anyone with a dream. It serves as an inspiration to the hero that lives inside us all. It is an answer to the voice that dwells deep within. The voice that calls us all forth to something greater. We stand with and behind all the other 'crazy dreamers' who hope to change the world for the better.

Marnix offers a genuinely inspiring story of his own journey towards impactful and powerful change. But his book is more than that, it is

also a practical and accessible method to determine your own drive and guide book to turn your ideals into acts and positive change. A valuable book in times like these.

Our, Formula or Change, is NOTICE—CHOOSE & ACT. When we wake up to who we are and NOTICE what's arising in our hearts, we can then CHOOSE to reach out and seek the support we deserve, to then ACT by committing to the steps needed to make our vision's reality. Trust your heart, follow your dreams and always remember you are here for a reason! You can BE THE CHANGE you wish to see created in this world!

Yvonne & Rich Dutra-St John MA MFT - coauthors, founders of Challenge Day & The Be the Change Movement

Twain Harte, California, October, 2022

FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Pursuing your ideals has turned out to be a process from the inside out for me. A circling movement from waking up to learning to let go.

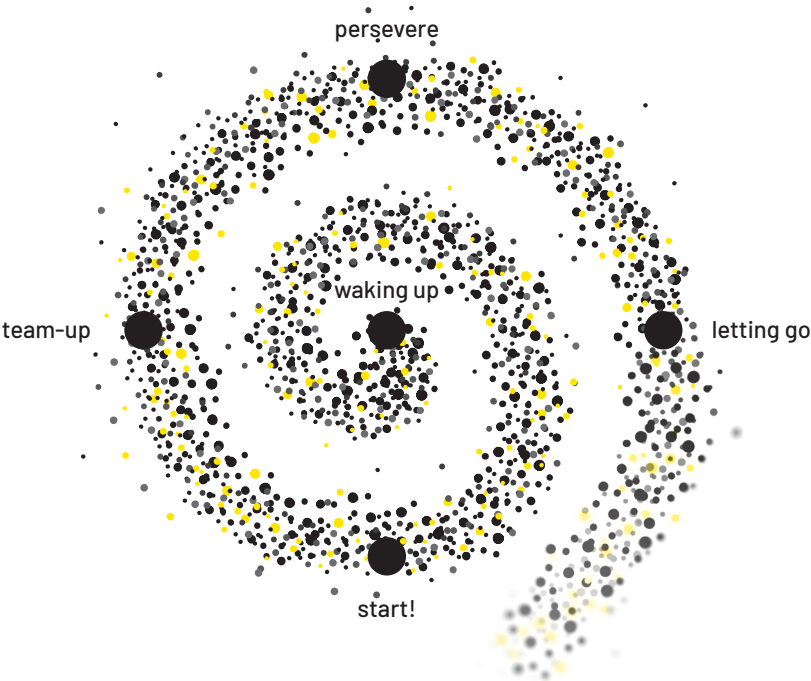
The Persian philosopher and poet Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207-1273) said:

**“YESTERDAY I WAS CLEVER, SO I WANTED
TO CHANGE THE WORLD. TODAY I AM WISE,
SO I AM CHANGING MYSELF”.**

It’s a quote that continues to haunt me. I’ll come back to it at the end of the book.

The circular movement forms the structure of the book, along five themes. I asked the publisher if we couldn’t press the book into a ball so we could read it in the round, but it turned out not to be ideal for him, my wallet, or your bookshelves. They are not built for that. The movement symbolizes the process of the ideal journey and is also the symbol of the famous ‘ripple effect’. The dots represent all the actions by you and others that cause movement. Positive

change. The dots that cynics often call the drops in the ocean, but they don't see the big picture. We do, right?



**“THE MEANING
OF LIFE IS TO
FIND YOUR GIFT.
THE PURPOSE IS
TO GIVE IT AWAY.”**

Pablo Picasso, changemaker

AN IDEAL START TO THE JOURNEY

Heaven wept profusely but people celebrated life. His life. Madiba was no more, but Madiba would always be. At the heart of the nation. In the heart of the world. Real heroes never die.

We were pressed against the door of a steaming and stomping full van with a singing and jumping mob. A pretty young girl pressed a Mandela flag into my hand and yelled “Where are you guys from?” in my ear. As the only white people with apparently also an unmistakable tourist appearance, we were quite out of tune. “Amsterdam” I yelled back into her ear. “That’s awesome!” she exclaimed even more enthusiastically, assuming that we had flown in especially for the occasion. I lied with my smile. There was no point in explaining; it would ruin the magic moment. Besides, I wouldn’t be able to make myself heard.

In a way, we had definitely specially come for the occasion in south-west township. Actually, we should have been in our rental car heading east from our carefully planned nine-day trip to Kruger Park followed by a domestic flight to Cape Town. The front desk employee of the hotel had warned us this morning: it is a long winding road through the mountains full of ‘potholes’ so you better drive on time, especially with this dreadful weather. So it cost me some strength to persuade my love to stay. Wasn’t this a godsend?

Who exactly is in Johannesburg when the Nelson Mandela memorial service takes place? In the presence of more than a hundred world leaders, together in the FNB stadium of Soweto? I had to be there. Or at least make an effort. This man is in line with Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King.

They couldn't tell us at our hotel whether you needed a ticket. We actually didn't know anything about Johannesburg ourselves because we hadn't intended to stay there. There was only one way to find out if we could be there.

We left by taxi from the hotel in the direction of Soweto, where we were then dropped off at a bus stop because the driver was unable to continue. A halved van with double the number of people took us to the foot of the stadium and there we, to our great surprise, walked straight into the gates of the arena with the music-making crowd, without any form of control or visible security. In the pouring rain, but with butterflies in the stomach. Mandela is dead. Long live Mandela.

That evening as we meandered our route through the mountains in the dark with clammy hands and eight hours delay, we could still feel the adrenaline and intense satisfaction coursing through our bodies. We were with Madiba. And he was with us. In the rain. In the music. In the movement of the people.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, a new word has emerged for people who are committed to ‘a better world’: we call them changemakers. Mandela, for example, was such a changemaker. A very big one. He was also initially an activist, a fighter, someone who did not shy away from violence. We now know him mainly as the epitome of forgiveness, reconciliation and love.

I wrote this book for everyone who, like Mandela, is or would like to become a changemaker, in order to create a more equal and sustainable world. It will appeal to you when you feel the time is right. For you personally, but certainly for the world as a whole. If you’re looking for more guidance, encouragement or just inspiration, this is the book for you.

**“THE MEANING OF LIFE,
IS TO GIVE LIFE MEANING.”**

Victor Frankl

When I talk about changemakers, the first thing that comes to mind is the people who are at the forefront of driving positive change. These people are of course of all times. They may sometimes be called do-gooders or prophets. Idealists or activists. Volunteers or

leaders. You will find them in healthcare and education. In politics and in houses of worship. And just as easily in business or in the pub. In fact, it's about all of us. Because almost everyone wants to meaningfully contribute or at least have the feeling that life has meaning. 'The meaning of life, is to give life meaning,' said psychologist and concentration camp survivor Victor Frankl.

People who work in organizations know this too. You've even seen it reflected in new job titles in recent years. The 'happiness officer' has emerged, because more happiness in the workplace turns out not only to be good for the people themselves, but also good for the results. In so-called social enterprises you see the 'brand activist' emerging. They ensure that the brand or organization continues to pursue the social mission and is not tempted to run after profit only. Increasingly, people at work are discussing what more they could do as an organization. The sustainable development goals, or SDGs for short, of the United Nations provide guidance in this regard. When looking for work, potential employers are also increasingly challenged by consciously aware high potentials. Employers would do well to take this very seriously. Some are now taking it so seriously that they have themselves screened by B Lab, an international group that tests organizations for their contribution to people and the environment after which they may or may not call themselves a 'B Corp'. These developments offer hope.

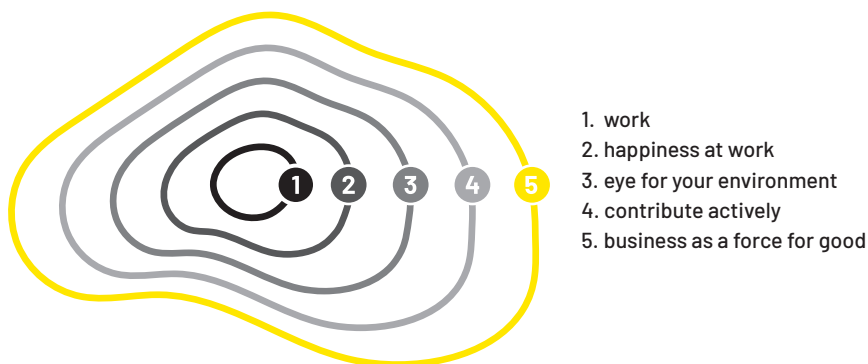
Raising the bar ever higher

I don't think it's strange that more and more people want to change the world. Because let's face it, nobody gets out of bed to contribute to the gross domestic product. You want to have fun in what you do. You want to develop yourself and others.

You do not want, with what you do, to cause harm to others or the world. Ideally, you would like to actively contribute to a more beautiful society with your work. Wouldn't you?

Maybe you dream that the whole *raison d'être* of your being, your work, your life, is essentially about 'doing good'? With *The Book of Ideals* I want to inspire as many people as possible to keep raising the bar. I want to show that you can start a huge movement on your own and not only with an entire organization around you.

With the help of the model below you can discover in which phase you are and where you want to be in the near future. From here you can have powerful conversations with colleagues, managers and clients.



In Appendix 1, 'Raise that bar' at the back of the book, I explain the model further. But essentially I want to show that we can look at entrepreneurship purely as work, a way to make money, to make a profit. But if you set the bar a little higher and really care about people, then entrepreneurship is about contributing to happiness at work. But are we only talking about the happiness of the team or do we also have an eye for our environment? This is followed by the question:

THE BOOK OF IDEALS

Would you like to be meaningful, but you don't know how to realize your ideals? This guide shows you the way. How to change yourself and the world.

Our planet is crying out for do-gooders of all colors and sizes. Fortunately, there are people everywhere who change tack, urge their employer to do things differently and, if necessary, quit their job. One climbs the Himalayas for a good cause, the other starts a social enterprise. Do you also have an ideal and could you use some help? Then take advantage of all the tips and inspiring stories in this book.

According to Marnix Geus, nothing is more motivating than an ideal. Candid and with a sense of humor, Geus shows in *The Book of Ideals* that no journey is ideal, but if you allow your journey to be guided by ideals, you can be sure that it will become more beautiful, for yourself and for others.



Hello
entrepreneur,
change agent and
do-gooder!

Marnix said goodbye to the successful PR agency he founded earlier in 2017 and started The Present Movement, a broad movement of people who fight for more compassionate humanity and

(equality) dignity. With these and other initiatives, Marnix is a key figure straddling between traditional companies and social and sustainable initiatives, helping people and companies to realize their ideals.

