

THE ART OF UNLEARNING

THE ART OF UNLEARNING

TIM COOPER

StoryTerrace®

Text Nuala Calvi on behalf of Story Terrace
Design Grade Design and Adeline Media, London
Copyright © Tim Cooper & Story Terrace
Text is private and confidential

First print August 2018

StoryTerrace®

www.StoryTerrace.com

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE	7
1. THE DAY I DECIDED TO DIE	11
2. THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING AND BEING TRUE TO YOUR VALUES	17
3. CHANGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND SURROUNDING YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE	25
4. THE ART OF GRATITUDE – AND GIVING RATHER THAN TAKING	37
5. WORKING OUT WHAT YOU REALLY WANT AND LEARNING TO TAKE ACTION	51
6. WORK ISN'T EVERYTHING	67
7. THE SEARCH FOR TRUE LOVE AND A HAPPY ENDING	81

B
HOTEL BARRIÈRE
LE FOUQUET'S
PARIS



'The good thing about the start is that you're never there again.' Tim Cooper

PROLOGUE

A successful life is not built on your ability to *add*, but on your ability to *remove*.

After spending years judging my success (and others') on the volume of shiny objects I had, I realised that attaching happiness to material things – or even to a specific outcome, in fact – is a recipe for disaster. Obsessively chasing that next promotion or collecting designer watches might seem like the mark of a winner, but if you need to have something in your life in order for you to be happy – if you are attaching your happiness to external factors – you will always be searching for that next hit of dopamine. It's like an addiction: you're always chasing that first-ever feeling of euphoria, and the satisfaction you derive becomes less and less every time.

It wasn't until I lost what I thought was everything – until my career and my material possessions were stripped away – that I claimed back my true values and gained clarity, perspective and gratitude for all that I had. I was forced into a position that made me see the world through a different set

of eyes and appreciate the small pleasures in life. As a result of my own experience, I now see that it's the simplicity and fundamentals of life that hold true beauty. You don't need more, you need less.

I'm not just talking in terms of material possessions. In today's world most of us are searching for a new tool, a new skill, more information, more knowledge – but everything we need is already inside of us. Under all the layers of fear and self-doubt, our true potential is already there, waiting for us to uncover it. It's not until we remove what's not serving us that we can see clearly what truly matters.

As I set out on my own journey, I soon came to realise that the best things in life aren't *things* at all. They are people. They are experiences.

It's time to unlearn everything that is false and unhelpful and make way for the real you to shine.



'Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.'
Winston Churchill

1

THE DAY I DECIDED TO DIE

March 10th 2016 is a memorable day for me. It was going to be my last day. It was going to be the day I killed myself.

Of course, killing myself didn't just occur to me out of the blue that morning. I didn't just wake up with a random death wish. That feeling had been slowly growing inside of me over several weeks and months, ever since my wife had left me.

I was married for 18 months, to the woman I believed was the love of my life. I had a picture-perfect life with her: a big house, three sports cars on the drive, a six-figure salary. I thought I had it all, and then I lost it.

I lost the wife. I lost the job. Without the job I couldn't pay for the cars, so one by one those started to go. The divorce was going through, the house was on the market. As the life I had built for myself unravelled, the idea of just ending it all gradually took hold. It grew like a cancer in my brain.

I began to fantasise about the different ways I could do it. I'm scared of heights, so jumping off a tall building wasn't an

option. I didn't want to jump in front of a train – I wanted to be in control. I looked at the last remaining car on the drive, my beautiful white Mercedes-AMG C63. It could go from 0 to 60 in four seconds. All I had to do was put my foot down on the accelerator, hard, and drive that baby into a wall. I knew the perfect place, too. Just off a roundabout near my house in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, where there was a nice big wall by a bus stop.

That day, March 10th, I woke up late. My head was pounding, my nose was bunged up. I was weak and shaky. All around me was the evidence of what I had been doing the night before: rolled up bank notes, credit cards, white powder on the coffee table. My vinyl records were strewn all over the place, empty bottles lay on the floor, the sink was full of dirty glasses. As usual, I had been doing my best to party myself into oblivion.

Hunger kicked in. I couldn't remember the last time I had eaten, and there was no food in the house. I threw on some dirty clothes, hid my bloodshot eyes behind a pair of sunglasses, and got into the car.

I went to a drive-through McDonalds and ordered two McFlurries. As I waited for them, I looked around at my £60,000 Mercedes. It was a filthy mess. There was rubbish everywhere and it hadn't been cleaned in months. Then I looked in the mirror. I was even more of a mess. My hair was greasy and unwashed, my chin was full of stubble. I took the McFlurries with a pang of shame.

As I turned back onto the road my mind was racing. *You're a wreck, I told myself. Look at the state of you and what you're eating. Look at the state of this beautiful car. Look at the state your life has become. You're a total failure, Tim Cooper. You've let yourself and everyone else down. Now's the time to put that plan of yours into action.*

I turned back onto the road and started driving towards the roundabout, the one I had been thinking about all those weeks. I opened the car windows and put the roof down. As the air rushed past my face, I filled my lungs and shouted my pain into the wind.

I turned off the roundabout, and as the wall by the bus stop came into view, I undid my seatbelt. Then I slammed my foot down on the accelerator. I felt the car growl in response, the powerful engine roaring into action. It was a 30-mile-an-hour zone but I was doing 50, then 60, then 70 – hurtling towards the wall.

But suddenly, it felt like I was only doing five miles an hour. Life went into slow motion, and as I crept along the road, I visualised what was about to happen. I saw the Mercedes smashing into the wall in front of me. I saw myself flying out of the seat and crumpling against the wall. And then it was my funeral, and all my family – my mum, dad and sister – were standing over my coffin.

“Tim just couldn't take it anymore,” they were saying. “Tim had so much potential, but he couldn't get over his marriage ending and losing it all. It just got the better of him.”

I saw their faces, I saw the tears in their eyes, and I felt disappointment. Disappointment in myself. I knew I couldn't do this to them. Somehow, I would have to fight this. I would have to claw my way back.

I put my foot down on the brake, and as the car slowed, life sped up again. I drove a few hundred yards down the road, then pulled over and began to sob.

I sobbed for about 20 minutes. A grown man, in a Mercedes, crying like a baby. But I was crying with gratitude, for the fact that coming so close to death had somehow given me the will to carry on living.

Instead of driving into that wall, I drove to my parents' house. And when my mum opened the door, I told her the truth for the first time. I told her how I'd lost everything, and how I'd lost myself along the way. How I'd got to the point where I didn't even value my own life anymore.

My mum's face when I told her that was devastating to see, but not as devastating as it had been when I'd seen her looking at her son's coffin.

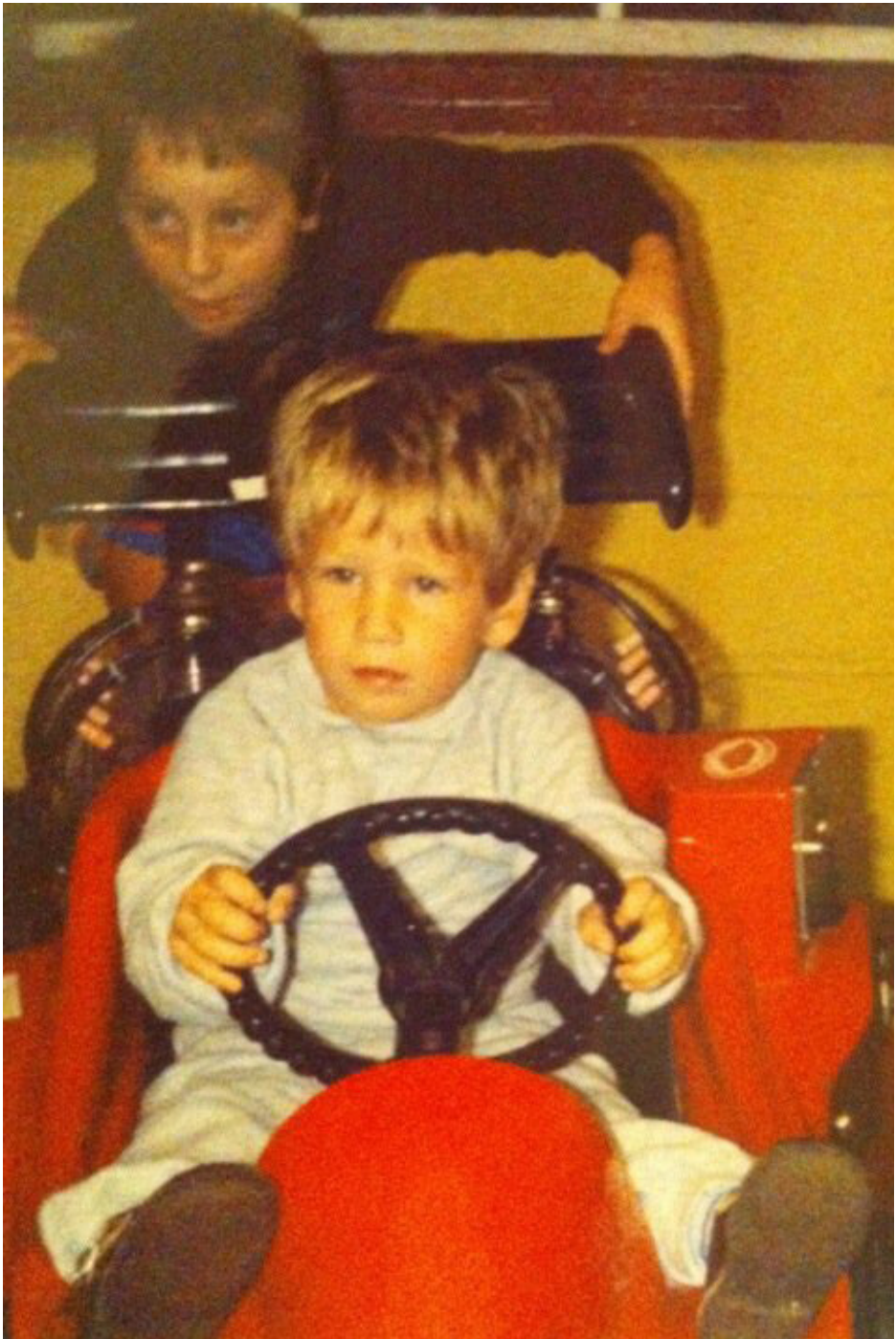
"I'm so sorry," I said. "I'm so sorry for who I've become, because it's not who you brought me up to be. I promise you I'm going to find my way back, and I'm going to be a better person."

That day, March 10th – the day I was going to kill myself – turned out to be the first day of the rest of my life. I kept my promise to my mum, although the journey wasn't always easy. And in this book, I'm going to tell you how I did it.

How I went from someone who didn't even think his life was worth living, to someone who wakes up every day full of joy and gratitude for every breath he takes. How someone who thought he had lost everything discovered that he hadn't even found out what really mattered yet.

I'm going to show you how finding out what your true values are, finding your real purpose in life and finding the right coach to help you achieve the life of your dreams can make the difference between really living and just existing. I'm going to show you that, no matter how deep the hole you've got into, no matter how bleak the future seems, you can get out and you can find a life worth living.

Trust me. I've done it.



'Childhood means simplicity. Look at the world with the child's eye - it is very beautiful.'
Kailash Satyarthi