



How to Achieve the Impossible

by reprogramming your brain for success

Ros Barber

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Reprogramming Your Brain For Success

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This version was published on 2014-08-30



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*This book is dedicated to Gary Craig & Tim Phizackerley and
everyone else who has made the impossible possible.*

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Preface

I have written this small book because one of my main jobs, as a teacher of creative writing, is to help other people get closer to achieving their dreams. I have been teaching creative writing since 1997, and it has become apparent that the biggest block to anyone's success is not talent, but attitude. Persistence and self-belief are more important than ability. Ability, after all, improves with the practice that only persistence and self-belief will facilitate. This is true of becoming a successful writer, and it is true of achieving almost any 'out of the ordinary' dream or condition.

Earlier in my life I was, for a few years, a computer programmer. Before that, I did a degree in biology, with a particular interest in animal behaviour and evolutionary psychology. Though the analogy of the brain as some kind of biological computer has its limitations, it is very useful when it comes to considering the differences between those who succeed at their dreams and those who fail, and particularly how our experiences shape our future actions. Keep shocking a mouse when he goes to get cheese and he'll stop trying, even though it's right in front of him. The various traumas of our lives (both small and large) - a teacher who mocked your writing in front of the class, a parent who said you were useless - create, in essence, new software in our brains, designed to prevent us from being hurt again. These programs, created when we were 8, or 15, or adults, can prevent us from achieving our dreams... and will keep running to the end of our lives unless we uninstall them.

The last few years have seen some extraordinary breakthroughs in methods which allow any of us - very easily and with minimal effort - to change the (once useful, now obsolete) software that causes our lives to glitch. Having used them successfully, I feel it is only fair to pass them on to anyone else who would like the same opportunities.

This is your uninstall manual.

Let me know how it goes.

1. Introduction

“Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to live in the world they’ve been given than to explore the power they have to change it. Impossible is not a fact. It’s an opinion. Impossible is not a declaration. It’s a dare. Impossible is potential. Impossible is temporary. Impossible is nothing.”

• Muhammad Ali

Is there something you’d like to do that feels impossible?

Do other people tell you it’s impossible?

Is that what you tell yourself?

Whether it’s losing weight, making a lot of money, writing a book, or a truly big ambition, there are probably quite a few things in your life that feel like impossible dreams. And as long as you feel that way about them, you can be sure they’re never going to happen.

In this book I’ll tell you how I achieved the impossible. And how, if you’re willing to adopt a very simple practice that takes just eleven minutes a day, you can too.

2. What's impossible for you?

Many people have dreams they consider impossible. Generally these dreams fall into four main categories: health, wealth, love and The Big Dream. We'll get back to The Big Dream in a moment, but let's look at the first three categories.

Health

Perhaps you have a chronic health condition that you feel is preventing you from fully enjoying your life, or that you have been told is incurable. Perhaps you are overweight or unfit, and find it impossible to eat more healthily, or to exercise regularly. Perhaps there is a unhealthy habit you'd like to curb: cigarettes, alcohol, chocolate. Perhaps you are beginning to face what you consider to be the realities of ageing. You'd like to be healthier, slimmer, stronger, fitter, more flexible - you'd like to be twenty pounds lighter with the body of an eighteen-year-old! - but as far as you're concerned, that's a unreachable goal. You've tried many things, and you've failed to make the changes stick. You've pretty much given up hoping it can ever be different. To have the kind of health you want, the kind of body you want, feels impossible. Hold that thought.

Wealth

Maybe you make just enough to get by every month, but money is always tight. You'd love to have enough money to buy the things

you think would make you happy but they never get any closer. You'd love to be able to travel, holiday whenever you feel like it, but you're tied to your job, and you can't put in any more hours than you already do. It takes every ounce of energy you have just to pay the bills. Perhaps you dream of buying your own house - or moving somewhere bigger and better, having a new car - maybe even a top-of-the-range kind of car - but the reality is, you're struggling to keep your head above water. Maybe you're carrying debt - even a lot of debt - and you don't know how you're ever going to pay it off. The sort of freedoms that money could bring, and the dream of having more than enough money to fund the life you dream about, seems impossible. Right now, it is. But keep reading.

Love

If you're single, maybe you're dreaming of Mr or Ms Right. Or even Mr or Ms Basically Acceptable! The more relationships you've had that have gone wrong, the further away the dream of a soulmate becomes. You may have been looking for a while, and concluded that everyone decent is already taken. Or perhaps you're in a relationship, but it has lost its spark. Or even become abusive, miserable, and angry. You feel deeply lonely, and when you look out on the world you see that although some people seem to have found love, many are living without it. And you are one of them. Perhaps there is someone important who you lost, and you are still heartbroken over them, holding a space for them in your life that no-one else can enter. The idea of being in a relationship with someone interesting, funny, attractive, and intelligent - someone who you adore, and who adores you - feels like an impossible dream. But what if it's not?

The Big Dream

Now we get to it. Do you have a big dream? Perhaps it's a career goal - becoming a leader in your industry, an established 'name', or a successful entrepreneur. Perhaps it's a physical achievement - swimming the channel, climbing Everest, circumnavigating the globe on an unicycle. Perhaps it's creative - you would love to be a successful actor, a bestselling novelist, make a living as a musician or an artist. Perhaps you have another skill or ability or interest that is currently only a hobby, and life would be just perfect if you only ever had to do that, and people would pay you for it. At the moment, your Big Dream might feel a long way away and the longer you've been alive, the longer a part of you doubts that it will ever become a reality. If your Big Dream is beginning to feel impossible, read on.

What if you're wrong?

What if you're wrong? What if none of this is impossible? What if there was one small thing you could do, every day - some small action you could slot into your daily routine, that was as easy as brushing your teeth, took no longer than drinking a cup of coffee, and didn't cost you a dime? What if this one small action could make the impossible possible?

Would you do it?