

“We are all born entrepreneurs. Now start acting like it.”

who will change the world...

· if not the entrepreneur

by Matt McWilliams

## About the Author

Hey, I'm Matt and I'm a world changer.

Now before you think I'm an egotistical, too-big-for-my-britches, jerk, I think we are all world changers. If we weren't born to change the world, we're unnecessary.

This is my blog, focused on the lessons I've learned from many sources, mostly my own experiences. You can read more about my story below if you're interested. In a nutshell, I arrived at my world changer philosophy after being fired four times (twice by the same company and once by own dad...just try to top that!), after facing 42 years in prison, after starting two companies that rose and fell like the Roman Empire, and after getting married, having a wonderful wife and then daughter, and finally realizing my true purpose in life.

**I am a world changer. And so are you.**

My goal here is to help you become the world changer that you were born to be. Sometimes that means helping you to shift your mindset. Sometimes it means giving you the tools you need in life, in business, or in relationships to change the world. Sometimes it means some good old fashioned motivation and inspiration.

I write daily from Monday through Friday, with the exception of major holidays. The majority of my posts are about personal development, communication, business, and leadership, all tied back to helping you unleash the world changer inside of you.

To be clear, I will not make you a world changer. You already are. My goal is to help you find that person inside of you.

**My Story**

I have worked in small business and online marketing for as long as I can remember. That is mostly because I could never make it in a “real job.”

At the age of 23, I was fired by my dad. The day after my birthday. That was the second time I'd been fired. Thankfully, I had started my own company on the side in online marketing. It only took two years for that company to go under.

At the age of 25, I was arrested and faced up to 42 years in prison. [You can read that full story here.](#)

By the age of 27, I was an executive in thriving start-up. We won the Best in Business Award from the Nashville Business Journal that year and by year's end, we had 50+ people working for us. I was personally leading a team of 12 people...and had no clue what I was doing. I sucked as a leader and everyone knew it. I was their first employee and helped start the company above the CFO's garage. I had no business leading a team, but somehow we managed to succeed in spite of me.

[Click here to read what I did about my poor leadership and how I set about improving.](#)

I was fired from there (my third firing in case you're counting) but went on to find success elsewhere. In 2010 I was recognized as the top Affiliate Marketing Manager in the world by the Affiliate Summit Pinnacle Awards. I've won numerous other awards in that field as well.

I left that company (the first time in my life that I left a job by choice) and went back to the previous company. Yes, the one that fired me. Eight months later, the CEO left and the company laid off more than half the staff. I was one of those people. Firing number four (and it will be my last).

So there I was in November of 2011. Unemployed, brand new house, a six-month daughter and stay-at-home mom to support. That was the moment I decided to change the world.

Just kidding. That was the moment I decided to panic. But, once I calmed down, I resolved to live a life of meaning and purpose. I came to realize that I can and should change the world. I resolved never again to be dependent on an employer for income or others for approval. And I resolved to leave a legacy.

Due to the path I've taken to this point, I have a unique viewpoint on the ever-changing world in which we live. Most importantly, I have failed at mostly everything I have tried the first time.

Thankfully, I usually learned from those mistakes. And that is good news for you. I invite you to learn with me and from me. I invite you to leave your own legacy. I invite you to change the world.

I was born and raised in the south and currently live in Fort Wayne, IN with my lovely wife Tara and daughter Aracelli. My consulting company, [Matt McWilliams Consulting, Inc.](#) (that name took me forever to come up with), has clients all over the country in various industries ranging from educational courses to consumer goods and the financial industry.

In my free time I enjoy spending time with my wife and daughter, running, reading, and long days of doing yard work listening to various podcasts.

You can find me elsewhere here:

Twitter: [@MattMcWilliams2](#)

LinkedIn: [Profile](#)

Google Plus: [+Matt McWilliams](#)

# Introduction

I'm a husband and a dad. Those are my two most important roles on earth.

But I am also a business owner. I'm one of those crazy people who dared to do something great. I started a business.

And I know the struggles entrepreneurs face every single day.

If you currently find yourself loving your work, making more money than you know what to do with, and are living out your calling day after day, all while feeling perfect about your personal life, this collection of essays might not be for you.

But...If you're like the other 99.999997% of us who want to:

- Find more purpose in our work
- Make more money
- Enjoy our job/business
- Have more control over our career path
- Balance having a life and owning a business

This is for you.

It's short and sweet and it's equal parts inspiration and information. Enjoy it, but even more important...do something with it.

To your success,

Matt McWilliams

April 16, 2014

## **You ARE an Entrepreneur. You WILL Change the World**

Most of us have an entrepreneurial spirit whether we realize it or not.

You've probably started more businesses than you realize. Yes, I am counting your lawncare business when you were ten. Yes, I am counting the spy agency you started when you were twelve. And yes, I am even counting the time you thought you could somehow profit from making a giant ball of rubber bands (or was that just me?).

Most kids started businesses what seemed like all the time.

### **As a child you said...**

When you were a child, you saw problems with the world and said:

"I need to do something about that."

"I should \_\_\_\_\_."

"I can solve that."

### **As an adult you say...**

But something changed in you. As an adult, you see problems with the world and needs of others and say:

"Someone needs to do something about that."

"I wish someone would \_\_\_\_\_."

"Why doesn't someone fix that?"

## What happened?

Somewhere you lost the belief that *you* were the solution.

Someone told you that others had all the answers.

Someone *lied* to you. Someone told you to stop thinking so highly of yourself. Someone told you that all innovation comes from a company that we all know and a billion dollars a day in revenue.

And at some point, you believed them.

But you can still remember a time when you saw every problem in the world as something for *you* to solve. You can still remember when everything broken was fixable...*by you*. You can still remember the excitement you had when you encountered a need and you rushed home to see if you had the supplies needed to solve it.

## You *can* get that back.

You can have that spirit again...in all aspects of life.

I often write about being more like a child ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). Being more like a child is about changing your attitude. It's about recapturing the wild creativity and passion you had when you were younger, before you bought into the lies.

It's not about living completely carefree, irresponsibly, or in a state of pure naivete. It's about finding something lost deep down inside, seemingly lost. It's about finding the real you. The you that is capable of changing the world.

Being a world-changer comes naturally. We are born to do it.

*We are born to change the world. Or else, we are unnecessary.*

It's only when someone tells we can't be world changers, and then we buy-in to the lie, that we stop trying to be.

You can change the world.

You *will* change the world.

Go. Remember the passion and can-do attitude of your youth. Recapture it. Live it.

You are the only one who will ever do what only you can do.



*Question:*

*What lies stopped you from believing you could change the world?*

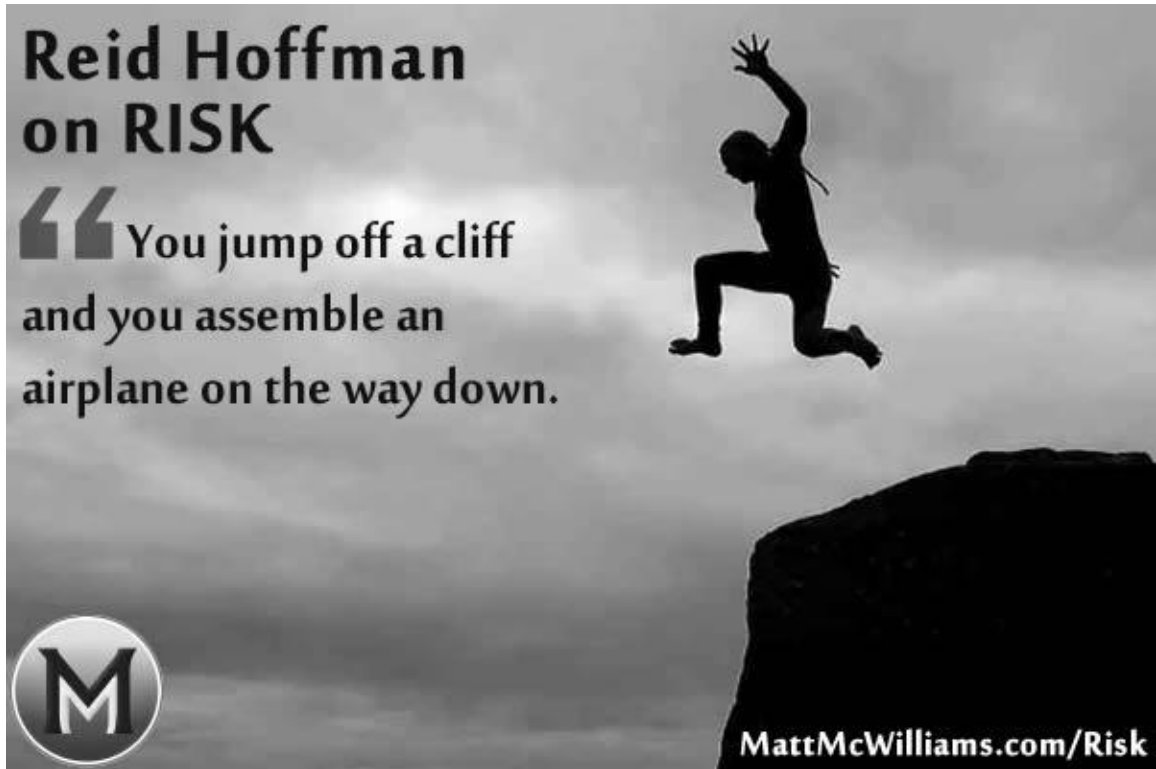
## 5 Attitudes You Must Adopt Today

If you want to change the world, there are certain attitudes you must adopt.

They are non-negotiable, absolutely essential to success, and you will notice them among all successful people.

Here are five attitudes you must adopt today.

## #1 I am a risk taker



World changers take risks.

They do as Reid Hoffman, one of the co-founders of [LinkedIn](#), suggests. They jump off a cliff and then assemble an airplane on the way down. They demonstrate faith, which Martin Luther King, Jr. described as taking the first step on a staircase when you don't even see the second step.

World changers are willing to take chances that most people are not willing to take. They recognize that nothing good comes from a place of security. They understand that nothing memorable comes easy. They know that mediocrity is the enemy of greatness.

World changers take risks.

## #2 I am creative



**I** like **nonsense.**  
It wakes up the  
**F** brain cells.  
**antasy**  
is a necessary  
**ingredient in living.**  
~**Dr. Seuss**



[MattMcWilliams.com/Dreams](http://MattMcWilliams.com/Dreams)

World changers are creative.

In order to change the world, you have to see things that most people don't. You have to think in ways that others think might be crazy. World changers have the attitude that what many might call nonsense is necessary, as Dr. Seuss says, because it wakes up the brain cells, livens the soul, and is the only force that leads to world-changing ideas and movements.

Fantasy, the ability to dream big and see things no one else can, is a necessary ingredient in living a meaningful, world-changing life.

A motorized car? That's crazy. But Karl Benz and Henry Ford changed the world. *Personal* computers? In homes? You've got to be kidding me. But, I write this one now.

The only ideas that change the world seem crazy at first. If you're going to do anything meaningful, be willing to engage in a little nonsense from time to time.

World changers are creative.

### #3 I do not need others' approval



**World changers do not wait for others' approval.**

They realize that if you live for people's acceptance, you will die from their rejection, as rapper Lecrae Moore says. The quickest way to derail a world-changing idea or movement is to ask the question:

*What will others think of this?*

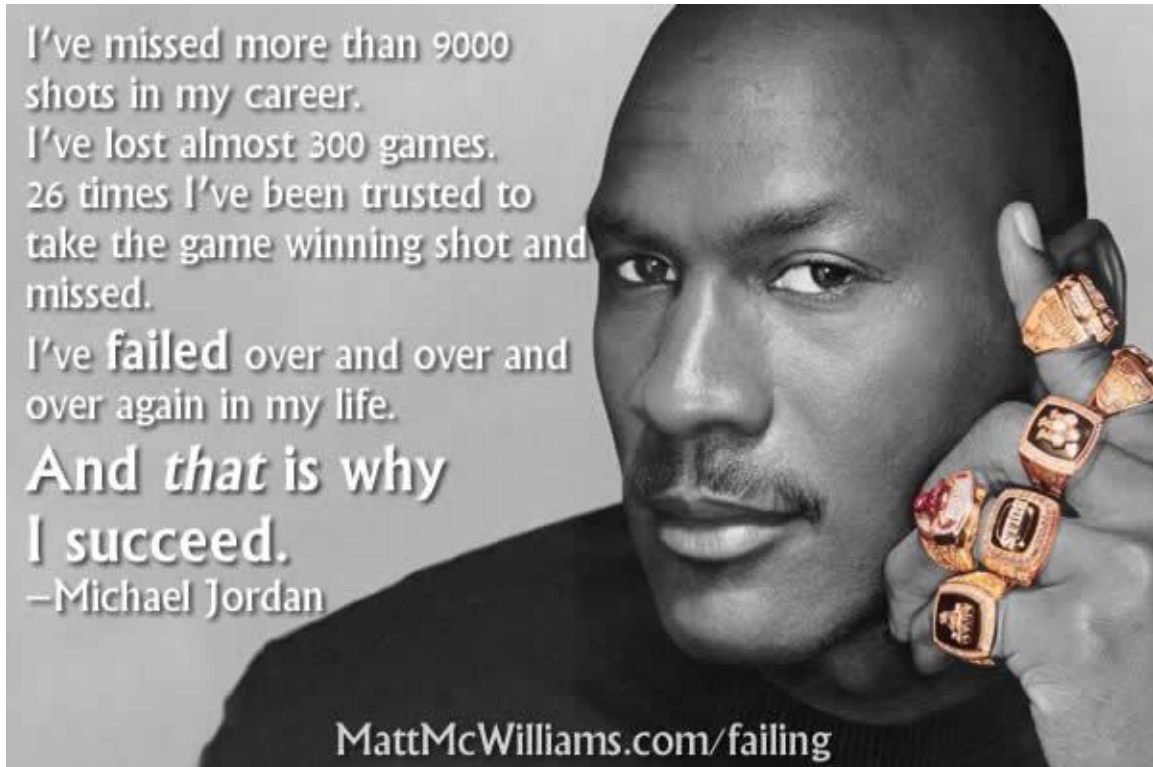
That doesn't mean you ignore the market and set about creating a product that no one needs or decide to change the world by becoming a streaker with poignant messages on your naked back. What it means is that your purpose is bigger than anyone's approval. The majority of the people around you are likely small-minded and think that anything outside of the box is too risky and too

crazy. They will do everything they can to drag you down, often unintentionally.

And when you live for their acceptance, their rejection kills your momentum. It kills your idea. It kills your soul, the one that once said you can change the world. In the end, it kills you.

That's why world changers do not wait for others' approval.

## #4 I embrace failure



**World changers succeed through failure after failure.**

Michael Jordan is arguably the greatest athlete of all time. And, yet he was [cut from his high school team](#) as a sophomore. But that was only the beginning of his failures.

It's hard to think of him failing. He was so talented. So driven. So awe-inspiring.

But we often forget that it took him seven seasons to win an NBA Championship. His early career was full of heart-breaking losses, missed shots with the game on the line, and doubters.



It was those 9,000 missed shots, the 300+ losses, the 26 game winners he missed, and each and every one of his failures in basketball and in life that led to his successes.

Michael Jordan is a world changer. He succeeded through failure after failure.

## #5 I know my purpose



World changers know their ultimate purpose.

It's to do just as their title might suggest:

To change the world.

Phil Libin, the CEO of Evernote says that the only legitimate reason to start a company is to change the world. I believe that is the only legitimate reason to start anything.

You don't have to start a company to change the world, although you might. But whatever you do, you must do it to live out your purpose. Everything you do should be done through the lens of being a world changer.

Because that is exactly who you are.

Phil Libin and Evernote are changing the world because they know their ultimate purpose. Do you?

Adopt these five attitudes of world changers and you, too, will find a life of meaning and influence.

**Action item:** Choose one world-changing attitude to focus on this month. Make it your mantra for the month ahead.

*Question:*

*Consider which of these attitudes is going to be easiest and which will be hardest to adopt. Start with the easiest and finish with the hardest.*

## Why Our 3 Year Old is Better at Business than Most Business Owners

This is the story I shared with Mary on the podcast at the end, in written form.

You're about to get a business lesson from a toddler.

My not quite three year old daughter wants to start a business.

Not someday. Right now.

And she is smarter at business than most business owners today.

Aracelli's attitude about getting into business is "Why wait?"

She wants to start a candle-making business right now and asked Tara and me for help. So, we're starting another business...with a toddler.

I was in her room playing with her and (no joke) she said:

"Time to work on our business."

In reality it was time for her nap, but she did spend a few minutes planning and talking with me.

With no prompting from me, she distilled three powerful business lessons into only a few words.

**Q: What will you do with the money?**

**A: Make more candles.**

In other words, reinvest in the business.

That is the first place to put your earnings. That is the only way to grow.

Most business owners fail to budget for continual reinvestment in the company. They only see the short-term (personal riches now) and not the long-term effect of building an empire.

So when Aracelli said she would spend the money to make more candles, it showed me she gets it.

**Q: What else will you do with the money?**

**A: Give it to Mommy to save.**

The next place to put money is in savings. Without savings, economic downturns become business disasters.

**FACT:** The economy has never caused a business to close. Dumb business owners cause them to close. ([tweet that](#))

Economic downturns are like fire to silver. They refine the business world down to only the wisest owners.

Most business owners fail to save for a rainy day. Again, this is usually the result of short-term thinking. They assume all equipment will work as intended, new employees will magically operate at 100% by the second week, and their customers will always spend like they spent today.

But the reality is: stuff breaks, employees usually cost more money than they make you for at least the first month, and your customers will come and go. So save up.

**Q: Anything else you'd do with the money?**

**A: Yes. Adopt a baby that doesn't have a home.**

The last thing that she would do with the money is cause social change. She would use it to better others' lives.

She would change the world with her profits.

I have never written prouder words than what I just wrote. The money she would make is an ends to a means...helping others.

The reality is that many business owners want their companies to be able to do good works, but by failing to reinvest in the company, it never grows and by failing to save, 95% of them go out of business in the first five years. Without growing and saving, giving is not possible.

In business, as in life, the right heart with wrong plan usually gets you nowhere.

My daughter gets business finance. She would reinvest in the business and grow it, save some for a rainy day, and give generously to help others. At its core, it really is that simple.

*Question:*

*What business lessons have you learned from unlikely sources?*



## A Note to All the Struggling Entrepreneurs in the World

According to the Small Business Administration, almost **90%** of all businesses in America fail.

When I heard that statistic, I wrote this in the hopes that someone, somewhere might read it. And that it would give them hope.

Dear Struggling Entrepreneur,

**Fight.** Don't quit.

*You've gotta be a fighter to be a successful entrepreneur.* What you are doing as an entrepreneur is far too important to quit.

*Entrepreneurship is hard.* Just because you get to do what you want, where you want, and when you want doesn't mean this is all cupcakes and lollipops. It's hard.

For most of human history, the success of a nation was 100% based on its fighters. It was based on military strength. That was where a nation's power came from.

But not anymore.

Now a nation's strength comes from business. And it mostly comes from entrepreneurs.

*Most great innovation today comes from entrepreneurs and their companies.* And innovation is what changes societies.

In America, entrepreneurs are the ones who will grow the economy, slash unemployment, end poverty, get people off welfare, and probably save marriages, decrease divorce, improve our schools, and cut the murder rate.

Think that's a stretch? Well let me tell you about where I live.

I live near an area going through a rough stretch. The homicide rate in South Fort Wayne, Indiana is higher than almost anywhere in the United States. We passed the homicide count for all of 2012 by the beginning of summer this year. I said to a friend recently, "I wonder what would happen if most of these people had \$1000 in the bank or had a business?"

His response was simple: "It would change everything." Everything.

Entrepreneurship *can* cut the murder rate, cut childhood obesity, and who knows...end dandruff. Entrepreneurs are the ones who will fund a cure for cancer, AIDS, and who knows what else...end the common cold.

And its not just in America. In fact, it's even more important in emerging markets.

Big corporations paying \$0.10 an hour are *not* going to transform Rwanda, the Congo, or Eastern Europe. It's going to be entrepreneurs. We're the ones who will change the world.

So keep fighting. Don't give up and don't get discouraged. This world needs you.

The world does need entrepreneurs. It needs entrepreneurs who don't give up, who keep fighting, and who don't stop until they leave a legacy.

*Question:*

*Are you a fighter?*

*What do you need to do to be more of a fighter?*

## Stop Waiting for Permission to Change the World

Are you waiting on someone's permission to change the world?

Heck, are you waiting on someone's permission just to be yourself?

**What is permission?**

Permission is just a slightly longer word for "approval."

*Is it OK if I step out a little?*

*Can I please do something different?*

*I'd like to change the world, but I want to check with you first.*

*I have all these great ideas, but you'll probably think they're crazy, so never mind.*

Anytime you ask for, wait on, or demand permission, you demonstrate a *need* for approval. And you are allowing the need for approval to delay, limit, or even stop you from doing what you are called to do.

### **The irony of waiting on permission**

You wait on permission.

You wait and wait and wait. You seek approval.

But it never comes. Now what?

I faced that question in 2009. I realized no one would ever "give" me permission to do anything special. No one would *grant* me permission to pursue my vision. And no one would dare to approve of any of my crazy ideas.

*So I stopped asking.* I stopped waiting. I annihilated my need for acceptance. I did what I was called to do. I became a revolutionary within my industry at the time.

But something funny happened:

When I stopped asking for permission and waiting on approval is when I began to earn the most respect ([I won a major industry award](#)). That is when I gained the most approval. That is when others *looked to me* for permission.

That is the irony of waiting on permission.

*Those who wait for permission never get it. Those who don't wait for permission are sought for theirs. They become the leaders others turn to for permission.*

### **3 paths to permission**

You have three choices when it comes to getting permission for your dreams.

#### **1. Ask for it.**

Wait, wait, wait, and wait some more. Depend on others. Desperately need approval. *Pick me, pick me, pick me.*

**Upside:** You never have to make a decision. You can always blame others for your failure to achieve anything special. You'll never ruffle any feathers. You'll never step out on your own. You'll always have people telling you just how pleasant and agreeable you are.

**Downside:** You will die having accomplished nothing of significance. Nothing.

#### **2. Demand it.**

This sounds a lot like, “you better let me do X or I’ll \_\_\_\_.” Basically, it’s the same as asking for it, but it involves a lot of whining and childish threats.

**Upside:** You might get what you want.

**Downside:** Did you catch the part about whining and childish threats? Does anything good come from those? You’ll alienate everyone who could potentially be on your side. Even if your idea or dream is a good one, no one will support it.

### 3. Give it.

Give yourself permission. Give others permission. When I stopped asking for permission in 2009, I didn’t do it with trumpets blasting. I didn’t turn my back on everyone around me. I didn’t storm out of my boss’ office guns blazing, declaring that I was going to change the world.

I simply gave myself permission. And I gave others around me the same permission.

Permission to think big.

Permission to make mistakes.

Permission to be who we are called to be.

I did it quietly. But the impact it soon had was very loud indeed.

**Action item:** Choose one thing you’ve been waiting on permission to do. And do it. Give yourself permission to do something amazing.

*Question:*

*What permission are you waiting for? Will you choose to give yourself and others permission?*

## The Seven-Year Old Who Can Change the World

This is the story of a seven-year old entrepreneur who could change the world.

Seven-year old Jalen asked me, “Do you like Burger King?”

I told her that I don’t and she mentioned that she was trying to sell a coupon for a free burger for a dollar.

“Is that for school?” I asked.

“No. I found it in the newspaper and I’m trying to sell it. It’s worth two dollars and I’m going to sell it for a dollar.”

I was finally leaving my office in an old neighborhood near downtown Fort Wayne, Indiana. I was freezing cold, ready to get home, and yet I stopped.

I know little about Jalen’s background, but from what I can make of it, she certainly *doesn’t* come from privilege. So when she showed me more entrepreneurial spirit in that moment than most people will show in a lifetime, I knew what I had to do.

“I can’t use it,” I said. That’s a lesson in targeting and rejection.

“But keep trying. Keep finding things to sell. I wish there were more people like you, Jalen. If you keep it up, you can make so much money. Keep at it, OK?”

“OK,” she said. “I know someone will buy it.”

I know that someone will too.

There is no doubt in my mind that *America...the world...needs more entrepreneurs*. It needs more people willing to create, find, and offer a service of value and accept payment for it.



Someone is getting a dollar off a burger. Jalen is getting a dollar for her efforts.

How is that not win-win?

How is that not the American ideal?

How is that not the way out of recession?

The way out of poverty.

The way out of 16 trillion dollars in national debt.

The way out of depression. Out of addiction. Out of the seemingly endless cycle of family lack, abuse, and suicide.

*Don't you dare tell me that's crazy.* Being an entrepreneur gives a person purpose. It gives a person something to dream about.

*Purpose and dreams* are what pulls people out of depression. It's what pulls a nation out of a recession. The money is secondary to the spirit that will overtake the powers of darkness prevailing in so many homes, so many schools, and across this country.

**Entrepreneurship should be encouraged like never before.**

The responsibility to do that rests on you.

*It rests on me.*

We encourage it by setting an example.

We encourage it by telling a seven-year old to keep doing it when she shows the spark of entrepreneurship.

We encourage it by celebrating entrepreneurs who have made it.

Who are about to make it.

Who are trying to make it.

Who just started.

Who have failed and are trying again.

Who have failed *again and again and again* and who are doing it *again and again and again*.

**This can change the world.**

*Question:*

*What are you doing to encourage entrepreneurship?*

*Are you encouraging your kids to be entrepreneurs?*

## WARNING: Your Brain is Less Powerful than You Thought and What That Means for World Changers

**Bad news:** Your brain is probably less powerful than you thought.

If you're like me, you thought your brain could do just about anything. That it was infinitely powerful.

But it's not...

That's the bad news. But there are *two gigantic silver linings to it*. Stay tuned...

### Your brain: the single processor

If you were born prior to 1995, and my most recent [reader survey](#) suggests that 97% of you were, you remember single processor computers. The other 3% of you will have to use your imaginations for this illustration. A single processor computer is *r-e-a-l-l-y slow* and does not allow you to have 37 programs open at the same time. In other words, you can't IM on Facebook while tweeting and hosting a Google Hangout, all while listening to Pandora. Any attempt to do so would most likely result in the "blue screen of death."

Think of your brains the same way.

Yes, your brain is more powerful than any computer ever made. But, it's essentially operating on a single processor.

It can only allot a limited amount of its power to experiencing the world around you. You can't process both [gratitude](#) and depression at the same time. You can't process rejection and hope, pessimism and optimism, or hate and love at the same time. Your brain cannot accept the input of despair and negativity from the television news and, at the same time, express the beauty of the world. It's literally impossible.

Because of this, you must choose how you use that limited power.

You can either use your brain's limited resources to:

See only negativity, despair, stress, pain, and hate.

—OR—

View the world through a lens of optimism, hope, gratitude, purpose, and love.

### **The good news, part one**

The first positive of this is that you get to choose.

No, you cannot change the reality of the world through positive thoughts alone or through magical unicorn beams. You cannot even change your own reality that way.

But you can change how you view the events of reality. You can alter how you process the world.

That changes how you act in response to negative events.

### **The good news, part two**

The second silver lining is that it can work in your favor.

If you choose to view the world through a positive lens, it becomes that much harder for [negative thoughts](#) to take root.

Andy Andrews says it this way:

It is impossible for the seeds of depression to take root in a thankful heart.

Psychologically speaking, that is sound wisdom.

Lest you think this is all feel-good mumbo jumbo, Shawn Achor, the author of one of the five books I recommend everyone read, [\*The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work\*](#), explains what a positive lens is and isn't:

[It's] not about lying to ourselves, or turning a blind eye to the negative, but about adjusting our brains so that we see the ways to rise above our circumstances.

**Related link:** [The 5 Books I Recommend Everyone Read](#)

**Action item:** What is one thing in the world that you have typically seen through a negative lens? Decide now to view it in a positive way. Change how you process that.

If you want to change the world, it starts with seeing it in the right light. Your brain is less powerful than you might have thought. You must *choose* how you see the world.

It's up to you.

Question:

*In the past, how have you chosen to process a negative event as a positive?*

## **I want to close with this...**

Our daughter gets it.

She's not even three years old yet, but she knows two things.

1. Where money comes from.
2. How to melt her daddy's heart.

“Thank you for working daddy. Thank you for making us money.”

With those eleven words, the tears flowed.

Tears of thankfulness. Tears of love. Tears from being overwhelmed. Tears of knowing that she gets it.

Of all the days to say that she chose this day. Or was it chosen for her?

363 days out of the year, I am energetic, positive, and generally love my work. This day was one of the other two. I'm not sure why, but it was.

I arrived at home early so that Tara could take our dog to the vet. I took Aracelli up for a nap and that's when she said those heart-melting words.

At first I cried. Then I smiled and gave her a big kiss on the forehead. Then I wrote this.

As she sleeps, I write. Soon, I'll help a client do something amazing. And I'll do it with the energy and passion I am known for.

All because of a little girl's words.

Special note: Aracelli, if you ever read this and in case you've forgotten how much your words meant to me that day, thank you. I'll never forget them.



*Questions:*

*Words are so incredibly powerful. How have others' words shaped your life?*

*What is one thing someone said to you that will live with you forever?*

## Connect with me

I'd love to connect with you.

Web: [MattMcWilliams.com](http://MattMcWilliams.com)

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