

Build Your Business and Lead Your Family...at the Same Time

BALANCE

finding success
as a parent
and entrepreneur



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 parent 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 parenting, 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 parenting 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 11, 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?

Coming Home Routine

Welcome to the typical American family on a weekday evening.

Honey, I'm home!

I just left the office 23 minutes ago, my boss was a total jerk today, traffic was a nightmare, I am two days behind on a project due next week, but I am home and all here, Honey.

Yeah, right. Give me a break.

Sitting in my counselor's office recently, the topic of coming home routines came up. I'd mentioned an event from the week prior that will have a lasting positive effect on my family.

The Birth of my Coming Home Routine

Between our garage and side door to our house is a breezeway. I caught myself coming home from awful day at work and when I closed the door to the garage and stood 12 feet from the next door, I made a decision...to smile and greet my family like I was excited to see them (because I was).

No drama.

No self-pity.

No "I've had such a rough day, so I'd like to disengage for the next four hours, please."

I *decided* to put on my proverbial "dad/husband hat" and make them the center of my world for a few hours. And it was a great few hours.

Since then, that is part of my coming home routine. No matter how awful my day has been, that moment in the breezeway changes it. And I keep perspective, because I always have that to go home to. When I shared that with my counselor, we began an in-depth discussion of coming home routines.

You probably have a “going to work” routine. It starts when you wake up. You pray, meditate, workout, shave, shower, and generally get motivated for the day ahead at work. In the car on the way you think about what you have to do today, listen to sales tapes, or practice an upcoming speech.

In short, you transition to “work mode” and are ready to hit the ground running when you get to work. But few people do the opposite.

If you don't, you are shortchanging your family. You *need* to develop a coming home routine.

How to Develop a Coming Home Routine:

1. **Choose a timeline.** I didn't say, “determine how long it takes you to get home.” I said, “*choose* a timeline.” That means if your commute is only 10 minutes but you need 25 to wind down, take 25. See #4 for what to do with the extra time.
2. **Develop a end-of-work trigger.** Do something that signifies you are officially leaving work for now. For me, it's turning off the computer. I am done at that point.
3. **Leave business calls at work.** Unless there is a compelling reason not to, stay at work longer to take a business call rather than have the call on the road home.
4. **Disengage from work.** Allow yourself some time (it varies depending on the person) to completely disengage. Listen to a favorite song, listen to silence, talk to your best friend, talk to no one, go to a coffee shop, do anything to completely disengage. My counselor said that one CEO she knows does just that. He goes to a coffee shop and enjoys his favorite

- coffee for 15 minutes in silence, then goes home. Every day after work. Allow yourself to breathe and be free for a moment.
5. **Prepare to engage.** Just like you might listen to sales tapes on the way to work, plan your work day or practice your speech, this is the time to think about how you want your evening to go. Listen to podcasts or books on CD about marriage and family. Plan how you want to talk to your spouse about your day. Plan how you want to approach your son about how his day went.
 6. **Take the long way home.** If you need a few extra minutes and are able to take them, do so. I've driven past our house before just to have a few extra minutes to get ready for my family.
 7. **Develop a I-am-home ritual.** My counselor said that one guy always touches the same plant as he enters. Another always goes to check the mail. That touch and that walk are their rituals.
 8. **Greet people like a dog.** When you get home, reaffirm your decision to smile and be excited. This is an exciting time! Act like. (Read: Greet People Like a Dog)
 9. **Try it for 30 days.** Decide on a routine and try it for 30 days. Then tweak it from there.

Question:

Do you have a coming home routine?

If not, what could you start making routine when you come home?

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 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?

I've Made It

It was 11:00 in the morning on a Monday...and I was on my way to the zoo.

That's when I realized *I've made it*.

I once did an interview with one of my favorite people in the world, John Lee Dumas of Entrepreneur on Fire. [You can listen here](#).

One of the questions he asks every interviewee is, "Have you had an 'I've made it' moment?" For some reason, that question rattled in my brain for a few days after we scheduled the interview.

My voices

Here's what [the voices in my head](#) told me:

"Have I made it? Of course not. That would mean I've reached the pinnacle as an entrepreneur and as a person. "

"I'll never make it. I don't want to make it. It's a lot cooler to continue to strive and push and set goals.

"HA! You think that's why you'll never make it? You'll never make it because you aren't good enough, don't work hard enough, and won't sacrifice enough."

"You work too hard. How can you 'make it' if you are always working so hard?" (It's ironic that one voice says I don't work hard *enough* and the next says I work *too* hard...voices are like that)

"You don't even know what it means to 'make it.'"

That last one was true. I didn't know what my definition was of "making it."

But the others were all crap. And I realized that at 11:00 AM on a Monday while driving to the zoo.

The zoo

Fifteen minutes earlier I was deep in work. I was focused. I was kicking butt and taking names. Until my wife called.

Tara and our daughter, Aracelli, were at the zoo together while I was working. But today was a special day, the zoo luau. So Tara called just to let me know.

And that's when I got up and left.



This was my “I’ve made it” moment.

OK, I finished my thoughts, made a list of things to do later that day, and *then* I left. I then spent the next three and a half hours at the zoo. I even had a call cancel at 2:00 that allowed me to stay a little longer (Interesting how things like that happen sometimes).

On the way there, it hit me. *This* was my definition of making it. That, in the middle of the day, I could leave work and spend 3+ hours with my family at the zoo.

That is the beauty of entrepreneurship. One day, you *will* make it. Whatever your definition is.

If you work hard enough and smart enough, dream big enough, and surround yourself with the right people, you will:

Make more money than you ever dreamed of.

Find joy in your work.

Have the freedom to do what you want when you want.

Be able to encourage others to do the same.

For the most part, I've found all four. So I can honestly say, "I've made it."

And I want the same for you.

Question:

What is your definition of “making it?” Have you “made it?”

Who Are You Really Leading?

As a parent, who are you really raising?

Parents, you are not raising children, you are raising adults. (Tweet that)

When I look at our two-and-a-half year old daughter, Aracelli, it's hard for me to look past her adorable eyes and see a grown woman someday soon. It's hard for me realize that while she struggles now with pronouncing the letter "L" correctly (she makes a "W" sound), she may one day speak in front of thousands of people. It's hard for me to see past her innocence and her purity.

But I remind myself every day that she *will* have raging hormones like every other teenager. She *will* feel peer pressure. She *will* be tempted. She *will* be exposed to things that make me cringe. She *will* make mistakes. In other words, *she will grow up.*

And I remind myself that it is my job to raise her accordingly. I am raising an adult, not a child.

When I realized that, it changed everything for me.

Question:

How are you raising an adult. Rather than a child?

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?

I want to close with this...

Moments like these

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.

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