The Unconventional Conventionalist

Coagulating Possibilities From Chaos

Zen Benefiel

Unconventionality – Is it really?

In crafting the foreword for "The Unconventional Conventionalist: Coagulating Possibilities from Chaos," I find myself reflecting on a journey that has been as much about discovering myself as it has been about understanding the intricacies of facilitating people, places, and things to work together harmoniously.

The development of this book is a testament to the unexpected and transformative power of connection and technology. It began with a moment of vulnerability shared publicly on LinkedIn, where I playfully chided Thomas Power for ghosting me, knowing it wasn't intentional.

This act of openness led to an unexpected turn when Thomas reached out with an apology and, during our ensuing conversation, shared a ChatGPT-generated book title and outline. I was curious of his query, though the response piqued my interest and passion for writing.

The suggested title and unconventional chapter headings immediately resonated with me, sparking the creation of this work. This experience underscored the serendipitous nature of creativity and the importance of embracing the unexpected paths our journeys can take.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Thomas Power for not only mending a missed connection but for going beyond the call of duty by providing the inspiration for this book. His unsolicited act of sharing the ChatGPT response was a gift that significantly shaped the direction of this project.

This book's development from a single interaction highlights the profound impact of generosity, friendship, and the willingness to support others' creative expressions. It's a reminder of the importance of nurturing connections and the unexpected ways they can lead to meaningful and transformative outcomes.

This book encapsulates not just my experiences but also a profound exploration into how we can bring joy and efficiency into the processes that define our personal and professional lives.

This narrative is an invitation to you, the reader, to join me in redefining the boundaries of what's possible, armed with curiosity and a readiness to transform challenges into opportunities for growth, prosperity, and possibly world peace.

Ultimately, it’s about harvesting the past, honoring the present and collaborating for the future by removing the planks in our own eyes

before attempting to remove the splinters in others so our vision is unimpeded.

Some Kind Words

As Zen suggested within, "Let this narrative inspire you to step off the beaten path in search of something more, something extraordinary, guided by the belief that true discovery requires not just curiosity but the courage to explore the uncharted." His stories are told with candor and eloquence and an extraordinary level of honesty –which becomes the magic that we can all draw from as we navigate our life's journey.

Dennis J. Pitocco, Publisher & Editor-in-Chief BIZCATALYST 360°, Chief ReImaginator 360° Nation (USA)

Benefiel's guiding curiosity, asking "why" and "how," leads him from a childhood of questioning to a career in the aerospace industry, where he applies creative solutions to complex systems. His experiences with diverse teams and his challenge to the status quo, like "Monday Discoveries," provide valuable insights for both individuals and organizations. Readers will undoubtedly enjoy riding the waves of this thought-provoking book.

Ali Anani, Ph.D., Author, Consultant (Jordan)

A person who gets results and makes positive changes constantly asks Why, How, and What if? This person is not stuck in the quagmire of outdated best practices, we have always done things this way, or it is what it is. Zen Benefiel is that person.

The Unconventionall Conventionalist, provides first hand examples of how constantly asking why, how, and what if, becomes a catalyst for change. We cannot control the wind, but we can adjust the sails.

Frank Zaccari Co-founder -Trust the Process Book Marketing, NAMCA certified speaker (USA)

"The Unconventional Conventionalist" is like a friendly chat about innovation and leadership, but an insightful manual at the same time. Zen effortlessly blends real-world stories with deep thoughts, crafting a cool symphony of unconventional ideas. It's not just for the corporate crowd – it's a must-read for anyone keen on turning chaos into order and adding a touch of grace to their leadership style.

Mark Reid, JD Host: ZenSammich Podcast (Japan)

This book is dedicated to both sets of parents, adoptive and birth, who's combined efforts have given me a life worth living in ways they all imagined and more, toward harmony among people and planet, and to my wife, Luba, my twin-flame and true love, who encourages and inspires me to live fully.

I was blessed and fortunate to have the unconditional love and support of Robert and Louise Benefiel, their examples of excellence, and their encouragement to be all I can be. I hope to make them proud, beyond life.

I'm grateful for the chance meeting and time with Leroy Carlisle, who exited in 2017, and eventual reconnection with Madonna Mullanix and time we had before her passing in 2021. Having such reconnections are rare as a gift.

We can leave few things behind in recognition of our appreciation of our heritage as well as all the mentors and tormentors in our lives, yet without them our lives would have been much different, less brilliant because of their lights shining through us. Gratitude fills my soul.

Alas, this work is a gesture forward for my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and a future filled with possibility.

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Chapter 1: The Genesis of Unconventionality - Tracing the Roots of Innovation

My Early Awakening to Unconventionality

My journey into the heart of unconventionality began not in the throes of my professional career but in the quiet, reflective moments of my early life. Adopted six weeks after being orphaned, the seeds of my quest for identity and understanding were sown amidst the backdrop of a profound curiosity about the world and my place within it.

This curiosity wasn't just a fleeting interest; it was a burning desire to explore, to question, and to understand the layers of life that lay hidden beneath the surface of conventional paths. I found the ‘thoughtmosphere’ to be a wonderful place to meander and play, especially enjoyable in the company of others.

The Spark of Innovation

As I ventured into the world, my path was anything but linear. I found myself drawn to opportunities that challenged the status quo, whether it was through the creation of Be the Dream, LLC, Team Partnering, LLC, United We

Stand Productions, LLC, or other ventures that sought to bridge the gap between diverse communities and innovative solutions.

Each project was a leap into the unknown, a testament to the belief that within chaos lies the potential for order and within questions, the seeds of answers. Honestly, I didn’t know what I couldn’t do, so it made it easier to attempt things from that perspective with the radical curiosity of a child, outside the ‘traditional’ realms of command-and-control environments of last century and prior. We are crafting a ‘new normal’ as we re-establish priorities.

Building Community Through Innovation

One of my most significant undertakings was the involvement with Native Americans in the redevelopment of the Indian School in Phoenix. This project wasn't just about the physical transformation of a space; it was about honoring the rich tapestry of stories, cultures, and histories that the land held. It was a lesson in listening, in empathy, and in the power of collaborative innovation to create solutions that respect and integrate the needs of all stakeholders, Native and non-Native.

I was invited to be the note taker for the Phoenix Indian School Preservation Coalition, made up of representatives from 18 of 21 Tribes in Arizona. Little did I know that would require addressing the Mayor, City Council and Parks and Recreations Planning Subcommittee multiple times over several years. All but one of the items for inclusion happened yet, the Coalition was never mentioned in the final write up of the Specific Plan and its development.

Reflections on Personal Growth

Each step of my journey, each venture, and each challenge, has been a stepping stone towards deeper self-understanding and professional growth. From navigating the complexities of entrepreneurship to engaging in community-building projects, every experience has contributed to my evolving perspective on innovation, leadership, and resilience.

In my late 20s, during my first corporate position as a Production Control Coordinator in the aerospace industry, I spearheaded initiatives that significantly exceeded $7MM monthly shipping goals for aircraft spare parts. My advocacy for interpersonal skills development, despite personal and professional adversities, including a demotion and personal life challenges, led to a

transformative proposal that was initially met with resistance. Ultimately, my departure preceded the company-wide adoption of these practices, marking a bittersweet validation of my impactful contributions to the corporate culture and operational efficiency.

Embracing the Unconventional Path

I've danced with unconventionality, stepping beyond the familiar rhythms of tradition and expectation. Actually, I’m a prog drummer, too, another talent I’ve exercised occasionally. You know, the one that plays to a different beat and loves improv more than standards, with dynamic and rich fills perfectly timed in the musical conversations that often turn magical.

Each step, each leap into the unknown, was not a departure from the path, more a creation of my own trail that, at first, was quite tumultuous. It wasn't about rejecting the past, it was harvesting it and embracing the future with open arms and heart, crafting a life uniquely mine.

My adventures into the uncharted realms of creativity and innovation were not acts of rebellion but affirmations of my belief in the boundless potential within each of us to redefine the possible. This unconventional path I've tread

has taught me that our greatest achievements often lie just beyond the edge of uncertainty.

So, I invite you to join me in this dance of defiance against the conventional. Let's view each challenge not as a barrier but as a canvas for our creativity, each obstacle an opportunity to innovate. If I can do it, so can you. It’s fun!

I encourage you to embrace your unique talents, perspectives, and passions. Use them to paint your life's masterpiece, a vibrant testament to the power of unconventionality, non-linearity and passion-filled activities that flow like water.

As I reflect on the journey thus far, I'm reminded of the importance of embracing one's unique path, of the transformative power of living unconventionally. It's a path that requires courage, curiosity, and an unwavering commitment to exploration and growth.

Together, let's prove that when we dare to be different, we unlock the potential to create not just a meaningful personal and professional life, but a brighter world for all. This book being in your hands now is a serendipitous synchronicity waiting to unfold as you continue.

Chapter 2: The Art of Asking 'Why and how?'- Cultivating Curiosity in Leadership

Cultivating a Culture of Curiosity

My life has been a testament to the power of curiosity, to the simple yet profound act of asking "Why and how?". This question has guided me through the maze of personal and professional growth, leading me to new insights, understanding, and pathways. It's not just a question; it's a way of engaging with the world, a method for peeling back the layers of what is to discover what could be.

I found that arriving in each moment with an attitude of gratitude, along with the curiosity of how to contribute to its specific needs as well as I could perceive them, offered splendid opportunities to engage with a sense of joy. That doesn’t mean they were always joyful, just that I could choose my altitude and attitude, simply.

Leadership Through Inquiry

In my roles as a transformational life coach and a leader, I've witnessed firsthand the transformative power of curiosity. Whether it's in

one-on-one coaching sessions or leading workshops for diverse groups, the willingness to ask open-ended questions and explore the depths of human motivation and consciousness has opened doors to growth and understanding for myself and others.

For nearly two decades, I led stakeholder partnering sessions for major construction projects, aligning various parties on protocols and resolution plans for potential issues within 2 to 5-year project schedules.

I introduced innovative concepts like paradigm shifts, emphasizing communication, honesty, and proactiveness, with creative terms such as 'jobarchy' and phrases like 'no ego without wego.' These strategies were aimed at fostering a cooperative team environment, lightening the mood while solidifying the team's commitment and intent. Some of those projects won awards.

Engaging with the World Through Questions

My dialogues on platforms such as the Campfire Project and the Business News Network podcast have been opportunities to dive into the intellectual rigor and transformational themes that shape our lives. These conversations, characterized by a deep curiosity and a

willingness to explore complex topics, have reinforced my belief in the importance of maintaining an inquisitive mind.

On the Business Broadcast Network, my conversation revolved around the essence and approach of transformational coaching. I discussed the deep internal exploration necessary for authentic change, emphasizing the importance of confronting inner fears to achieve congruence between one's internal state and external reality. This dialogue underscored the practical methodologies and introspective questioning I employ to guide individuals toward realizing their fullest potential and embracing their true selves.

On the Campfire Project, I shared a deeply personal story of transformation following a near-death experience at 18, which propelled me into a lifelong quest for understanding consciousness and our connection to the divine. This platform provided a space to explore the philosophical and existential questions that have shaped my journey, illustrating the trials and triumphs encountered along the way. My narrative highlighted the significance of continuous inquiry and the quest for personal and universal understanding.

Overcoming the Challenges of Curiosity

Embracing curiosity, especially in environments that may resist questioning, has its challenges. Yet, it's in these moments of resistance that the true power of curiosity shines through. By staying true to my inquisitive nature, I've navigated skepticism and obstacles, finding new ways to inspire growth and innovation.

Radical curiosity in the face of skepticism has been a hallmark of my journey, a path illuminated by early encounters with the unknown. My inquisitive nature was sparked by childhood experiences around the time of President Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, a period that dovetailed with my own profound revelations.

Learning of my adoption and experiencing a disembodied voice calling out in the darkness were pivotal moments that deepened my quest for understanding beyond the conventional, setting the stage for a lifetime dedicated to exploring the unseen and unspoken realms of existence apparently available to anyone.

Curiosity as a Catalyst for Change

Through my work and personal experiences, I've seen how curiosity can act as a catalyst for

change, driving innovation, fostering collaboration, and leading to meaningful transformation. It's a tool not just for personal growth but for creating a ripple effect of positive change in the world around us.

Through my work and personal experiences, I've discovered that curiosity is not just a personal trait but a powerful catalyst for change, innovation, and meaningful transformation in both ourselves and the world around us. My journey into the realms of curiosity began in childhood, amidst natural explorations and mystical encounters with a guiding 'Voice,' laying a foundation for a life marked by inquiry and discovery.

These early experiences—ranging from out-of-body explorations to the solitary contemplation of nature's wonders—underscored the profound impact of curiosity. They taught me that by embracing the unknown and challenging conventional boundaries, we can foster collaboration, drive innovation, and initiate a ripple effect of positive change. This holistic view of curiosity as a transformative force reflects my belief in its potential to not only facilitate personal growth but also to inspire collective advancement and a deeper connection to the world around us.

The Interconnection of Curiosity and Innovation

Reflecting on my unconventionality, I see curiosity as the thread that weaves through the fabric of innovation. Each venture, each project, and each leap into the unknown were underscored by the simple act of questioning—of looking beyond what is to imagine what could be.

This foundational principle not only shaped my path but also prepared me for the complexities and challenges of fostering innovation in various domains.

A pivotal midlife event that encapsulates this journey of curiosity and transformation occurred during the Harmonic Convergence in August 1987. On my way to work, the notion of this global synchronization, as discussed on a local radio station, ignited a profound curiosity within me. It made my gut shake, literally.

This led to a spontaneous decision to immerse myself and my family in the event by camping near Sedona, seeking a deeper connection and understanding of this cosmic alignment. My engagement with this phenomenon, driven by an instinctive pull towards the metaphysical, underscored a pivotal moment of reawakening—

a vivid illustration that I couldn’t tell the difference between a dream or a vision of how my unceasing curiosity has been the catalyst for personal evolution and the exploration of new dimensions of consciousness.

Curiosity in Action: Bridging the Cosmic and the Mundane

As we transition from exploring the roots of innovation to cultivating curiosity in leadership, and looking ahead to the evolution of a visionary, it's clear that the art of asking "Why and how?" serves as a bridge. This bridge spans the gap between the cosmic questions that fuel our existential inquiries and the mundane challenges that ground us in our daily lives and professional endeavors.

As we delve into the essence of innovation and the cultivation of curiosity within leadership, my personal journey offers a vivid illustration of the practical application of these concepts. A pivotal moment occurred when I embraced the role of a construction partnering facilitator, working with stakeholders in the aerospace industry. This role required not just technical acumen but a profound shift in perspective—viewing challenges as opportunities and fostering a collaborative

environment through open communication and mutual respect.

This experience underscored the importance of asking "Why and how?" not only in philosophical or existential contexts but in addressing real-world problems, bridging the cosmic with the mundane and demonstrating the transformative power of curiosity in leading teams and projects towards success.

Setting the Stage for Chapter 3: From Starry-Eyed to Strategy-Eyed

The journey from being starry-eyed—awed by the vastness of the universe and the depth of human potential—to becoming strategy-eyed, where visions are translated into actionable strategies, is a testament to the transformative power of curiosity.

In Chapter 3, we will delve deeper into how this transition has manifested in my life, from the exploration of consciousness and the cosmos to applying these insights in strategic and visionary leadership. The evolution from curiosity to strategic vision encapsulates the essence of my journey, highlighting the pivotal role of asking "Why and how?" in navigating the path from inspiration to implementation.

In Conclusion

The journey of curiosity is an ongoing voyage of discovery—one that challenges us to continually explore, question, and connect. As we move forward, the lessons gleaned from the art of asking "Why and how?" serve as a compass, guiding us through the intricacies of innovation, leadership, and vision. It's a journey that not only shapes our personal and professional lives but also impacts the world around us, encouraging others to embark on their own paths of discovery and success.

As I continue on my journey, the art of asking "Why and how?" remains at the core of my approach to life and leadership. It remains a beacon, guiding me through the uncharted territories of both the personal and professional spheres. The art of inquiry is not just about seeking answers but about fostering a deeper connection with the world and the myriad possibilities it holds.

Chapter 3: From Starry-Eyed to Strategy-Eyed - The Evolution of a Visionary

Bridging Worlds: My Cosmic Curiosity

Reflecting on my journey, the transition from being starry-eyed—filled with wonder at the cosmos and its mysteries—to becoming strategy-eyed, where the awe of the universe informs strategic thinking and visionary leadership, has been both profound and transformative.

This evolution began in the quiet moments of introspection and curiosity, asking "Why and how?" about the universe and our place within it. My early fascination with the stars and the vast questions of existence laid the groundwork for a journey that would eventually merge the cosmic with the practical.

A Visionary's Path: Applying Cosmic Insights

The leap from curiosity to strategy wasn't immediate but evolved through countless experiences and explorations. My ventures, from the entrepreneurial to the educational, were

laboratories for testing how cosmic insights could inform practical strategies.

For instance, the development of Be The Dream, LLC, and Team Partnering, LLC, was not just about creating businesses but about embodying the principles of interconnectedness and unity that the cosmos so elegantly displays. These principles became the bedrock of my approach to leadership and innovation.

Strategic Leadership: Navigating Complexity

As a transformational life coach and a facilitator of change, I've navigated the complexities of human and organizational development with a strategic eye, always looking for the underlying patterns that connect the micro to the macro.

The insights gained from my study of the cosmos—about the interconnectedness of all things, the cycles of growth and change, and the balance between chaos and order—have been instrumental in developing strategies that are both visionary and grounded.

Creating Order from Chaos

My work with large public events, managing chaos, and fostering collaboration amidst

diversity, served as a practical application of these cosmic principles.

Each event was a microcosm of the universe, a dance of elements coming together to create something greater than the sum of its parts. This experience reinforced my belief in the potential for harmony and synergy, even in the most chaotic environments, and honed my skills in creating order and structure from the ground up.

As we transition from exploring the roots of innovation to cultivating curiosity in leadership, and looking ahead to the evolution of a visionary, it's clear that the art of asking "Why and how?" serves as a bridge. This bridge spans the gap between the cosmic questions that fuel our existential inquiries and the mundane challenges that ground us in our daily lives and professional endeavors that currently pay the bills.

My involvement in orchestrating large arts and crafts festivals and the Fiesta Bowl Block Party, each drawing nearly a quarter million patrons, was a testament to this philosophy in action. These experiences were not just about managing logistics but about creating a microcosm of harmony amidst chaos, demonstrating the power of curiosity-driven leadership in transforming

complex challenges into opportunities for collective joy and engagement.

Moreover, my work with the developmentally disabled adult population further grounded my explorations from the cosmic to the mundane. By stepping into this role, I found a profound connection with individuals whose unique perspectives and psychic abilities challenged me to apply my curiosity in deeply empathetic and innovative ways.

These roles underscored the versatility of curiosity as a tool—not just for navigating the logistical complexities of large-scale events but also for fostering personal growth and understanding in more intimate, transformative settings. Through these varied experiences, I've seen firsthand how asking "Why and how?" can illuminate the path from visionary ideas to real-world applications, bridging worlds and expanding our collective capacity for innovation and empathy.

Empowering Others: The Role of Curiosity and Vision

Empowering others to see beyond their immediate circumstances to the broader vistas of their potential has been a key aspect of my

work. Through coaching, workshops, and public speaking, I've encouraged individuals and organizations to ask "Why and how?" and to use the answers as a springboard for strategic action. This approach has not only transformed my life but has also helped countless others to navigate their own journeys of growth and discovery.

Bridging Curiosity and Adaptability

My journey's genesis, deeply rooted in unconventionality and a relentless pursuit of "Why and how?", laid the foundational stone for the adaptability that would become crucial in my professional life. Just as my innate curiosity propelled me through various ventures, it also equipped me with the flexibility to navigate the unpredictable waters of startups and corporates.

This curiosity wasn't just about seeking new knowledge; it was about being open to changing course as new insights and challenges emerged. It was apocalyptic in nature, constantly uncovering new knowledge and insights.

From Strategy-Eyed Vision to Adaptive Action

The transition from being starry-eyed to strategy-eyed wasn't merely a shift in perspective but a preparation for the adaptable

approach required in the dynamic environments of startups and corporates. The visionary strategies developed from cosmic curiosity had to be fluid, ready to evolve as the landscape changed. This evolution underscored the importance of not just having a vision but being prepared to adapt that vision to the realities of the market and organizational dynamics.

Adaptability in Startups: A Reflection of Curiosity and Innovation

In the realm of startups, where each day presented a new challenge, the lessons from my early ventures and the innovative approaches cultivated through curiosity became my guide.

Each startup was a test of my ability to apply strategic vision in real-time, constantly adapting to new information, feedback, and circumstances. This process was a practical application of being strategy-eyed, where the strategic vision had to be as adaptable as it was ambitious in its execution.

Over two years with the Self Employment Loan Fund, I led business plan workshops and facilitated microloans for women and minority-owned businesses, fostering their growth and success. Concurrently, during my one-year

tenure as temporary COO for Club Entrepreneur in Tempe, I organized entrepreneurial workshops that promoted innovation and strategic thinking.

These roles tested and honed my strategic vision, emphasizing the importance of adaptability and foresight in the dynamic world of entrepreneurship. I find that just pondering different types of roles offers insight and wisdom, helping to make better choices.

Corporate Environments: Strategic Vision Meets Organizational Flexibility

Navigating the corporate world required a different kind of adaptability. Here, the challenge was to introduce innovation within established structures and cultures resistant to change. It was a delicate balance of respecting existing frameworks while pushing for evolutionary growth.

My journey through corporate environments was a testament to the strategic vision informed by my cosmic curiosity—applying it in a way that was both respectful of corporate norms and conducive to fostering innovation. I learned to have fun in the often-chaotic environment. My attitude spilled out to others along the way and my results were the evidence of it.

The Visionary's Journey Continues

As I look ahead, the journey from starry-eyed to strategy-eyed continues. The evolution of a visionary is not a destination but a continual process of learning, questioning, and connecting the dots between the seemingly disparate aspects of our world.

The next chapters of this journey will explore how these strategic visions are implemented, the challenges faced, and the lessons learned along the way. Yes, there are always lessons. We learn something new every day, either about ourselves, others or the world around us.

By sharing this narrative, I hope to inspire others to embrace their own paths of curiosity and innovation, to ask "Why and how?" and to let the answers guide them toward their own visionary futures and the action plans to fulfill them.

I can only offer my own experience as a reference, so at times I’m sure it sounds a bit self-aggrandizing with the repetition. I only seek to offer real-world examples that may be beneficial to you, your business, your relationships and life.

Chapter 4: Wearing Hats in Hurricanes - Adaptability in Startups and Corporates

Embracing Chaos

My journey has often felt like wearing multiple hats in the midst of hurricanes, navigating the unpredictable and chaotic nature of startups and corporate environments alike. I used to have a ‘manyhatma’ wall, with over 30 hats of different styles, and my wife forbade me to put them up in our present location. Still, the manyhatma’ label fits quite well, perhaps even understatement.

This chapter delves into the art of adaptability, a skill honed through experiences that taught me the importance of remaining flexible and resilient in the face of constant change. Reflecting on my path from being starry-eyed to strategy-eyed, I've learned that adaptability is not just about surviving the storm but thriving within it.

The Startup Odyssey: Navigating New Territories

Embarking on startup ventures like Be The Dream, LLC, and Team Partnering, LLC, I encountered the exhilarating and tumultuous

nature of bringing a vision to life. Each venture was a journey into uncharted territory, where the only constant was change. The challenges were manifold—issues with specifications, plan design, schedules, value engineering and building a team to pivot in-the-field as well as leadership strategies to manage production.

These experiences underscored the necessity of wearing different hats, sometimes simultaneously, to steer the ship through rough waters. I was scared to death the first project, then found my way with the curiosity and not knowing, being able to ask the right questions that led to resolutions.

Corporate Chronicles: Finding Order in Chaos

Transitioning from startups to navigating the complexities of corporate environments presented a different set of challenges. Here, the hurricanes were often bureaucratic storms and rigid structures that resisted change.

My role often involved introducing innovative thinking and strategies into these environments, advocating for adaptability and flexibility in systems that were traditionally resistant to such concepts. It was a delicate dance of pushing

boundaries while respecting the existing framework, all the while wearing the hat of an innovator, mediator, and sometimes, a disruptor.

Adaptability in Action: Real-World Examples

One vivid example of adaptability in action was my involvement in managing large public events, where unforeseen challenges were the norm. Crowds are somewhat predictable when you set up the environment well.

Whether it was last-minute changes to the lineup, venue issues, or weather disruptions, the ability to adapt quickly and efficiently was crucial. The Tempe Arts Festival was in the same place, and it didn't take long to realize where inherent problems were and be proactive toward them. I often had vendors think I was psychic because I'd show up at the perfect time.

These experiences taught me valuable lessons in crisis management, team leadership, and the importance of maintaining a calm and focused demeanor amidst chaos. Be observant of patterns. Once is random, twice is a pattern. When you can recognize patterns, you can often alter them toward better results. Just observe some of your own for now, identify and adjust.

Lessons Learned: The Power of Flexibility and Resilience

Through the highs and lows of startups and corporates, the key takeaway has been the power of flexibility and resilience. Adaptability has become my compass, guiding me through the uncertainties of professional endeavors and life's unpredictable nature. It's about embracing change as an opportunity for growth, learning, and innovation.

The ‘Why and how?’ is adaptability on the fly, never knowing the answers and often bumping up against your belief system needing a bit of adjustment when your experience doesn’t match your belief about what should have happened. It opens the door to the magic of flow.

The Adaptive Path Forward

As I continue on this journey, the principle of adaptability remains central to my approach to life and work. It's a reminder that while we may not control the direction of the wind, we can adjust our sails to navigate through the storms.

The path of adaptability is about being a ‘manyhatma’ with grace, facing each hurricane with courage, and emerging stronger and more resilient on the other side.

The journey through the tumultuous landscapes of startups and corporate environments, as detailed in this chapter, not only honed my adaptability but also set the stage for a deeper exploration into the heart of innovation.

Adaptability, with its requirement for quick thinking and flexibility, naturally feeds into the innovative process. It's this ability to pivot and persevere through the hurricanes of change that primes the ground for innovation to flourish.

Adaptability as the Prelude to Innovation

As I navigated the challenges and opportunities presented by both startups and corporates, I found that adaptability wasn't just about survival—it was about preparation.

Each adaptation, each pivot, and each strategic shift was a step towards something greater: the cultivation of a fertile ground where innovative ideas could take root and grow.

The dynamic nature of wearing multiple hats wasn't just a test of endurance; it was a crucible for creativity, where the pressures and challenges became the very ingredients for brewing the caffeine of innovation.

Energizing Ideas into Action

Transitioning into Chapter 5, "The Caffeine of Innovation: Energizing Ideas into Action," it becomes clear that the adaptability cultivated in the face of constant change is akin to brewing a potent blend of creativity and action.

Just as caffeine awakens our senses and sharpens our focus, the innovative process energizes ideas, transforming them from mere concepts into tangible realities. This transition marks a shift from navigating the storms of change to harnessing those very storms as a source of power for innovation.

From Strategic Vision to Innovative Execution

The strategic vision developed from my cosmic curiosity and honed through the adaptability required in startups and corporates now finds its expression in the act of innovation. It's one thing to envision a future shaped by groundbreaking ideas; it's another to bring that vision to life.

Chapter 5 delves into the methodologies, mindsets, and mechanisms that enable the translation of visionary ideas into actionable outcomes. It explores how the adaptability and resilience cultivated in earlier experiences

become the driving force behind the execution of innovative projects.

Innovation as a Continuum

The narrative thread that connects these chapters emphasizes that innovation is not a standalone event but a continuum. It's a process fueled by the lessons learned through adaptability, the insights gained from questioning the status quo, and the strategic foresight to see beyond the immediate.

As we move forward, the focus shifts from the individual's ability to adapt and navigate to the collective capacity to innovate and execute. This shift underscores the importance of not just generating ideas but also creating the environment and culture where those ideas can thrive and lead to meaningful change.

Bridging Chapters, Bridging Worlds

As this chapter concludes, the journey from adaptability to innovation reflects a broader theme of transformation. It's a testament to the power of embracing change, not as an obstacle but as an opportunity—an opportunity to energize ideas into action and to turn the visions of what could be into the realities of what is.

The transition from wearing hats in hurricanes to brewing the caffeine of innovation encapsulates the essence of a journey that is about much more than survival; it's about thriving through the creation and execution of ideas that have the power to change the world.

Chapter 5: The Caffeine of Innovation - Energizing Ideas into Action

From Adaptability to Innovation

The lessons learned from navigating the storms of change, as detailed in Chapter 4, have not only honed my adaptability but also prepared me for the crucial task of energizing ideas into action. Adaptability in the face of change is akin to the process of brewing a potent blend of creativity and action.

Here, I delve into how the innovative process, fueled by the pressures and challenges encountered, becomes the caffeine that awakens the potential of ideas, transforming them from concepts into tangible realities.

As I transitioned from the tempestuous world of startups and corporates, where adaptability was my sail and rudder, I found myself on the brink of a new horizon—the realm of innovation. This was not just any innovation, but one that acted as the caffeine for my soul, invigorating every idea with the potential for action. My journey of adaptability had taught me to dance in the rain, but now, it was time to harness the storm itself.

Cultivating an Innovative Mindset

Innovation requires more than just a good idea; it demands a mindset that's both receptive to the new and resilient in the face of setbacks. Drawing from my experiences in startups and corporates, I explore how each challenge faced and each pivot made contributed to cultivating an innovative mindset.

It's a mindset characterized by curiosity, a willingness to experiment, and an unyielding commitment to bringing visions to life.

Through initiatives like Live and Let Live and Planetary Citizens, as well as engaging with other world servers, I have been driven by the belief that we can create a more harmonious world.

This belief was further reinforced by the insights gained from orchestrating entrepreneurial workshops and supporting underrepresented entrepreneurs, which highlighted the potential for collective action and the power of a united vision to initiate real and lasting impact on both a local and global scale.

The Process of Energizing Ideas

Energizing ideas into action involves a series of steps, from ideation to execution. This section

breaks down the process, highlighting key strategies for nurturing ideas, fostering creativity within teams, and overcoming the inevitable obstacles that arise. Real-world examples from my ventures serve as case studies, illustrating the transformation of innovative concepts into successful projects.

Energizing Ideas into Action

Innovation, I learned, is more than a spark of creativity; it's the relentless pursuit of transforming 'what if' into 'what is.' The challenge was never in the ideation but in the execution—how to take the ethereal and make it tangible. This process demanded not just creativity but a disciplined approach to bringing ideas to life…a plan.

I remember the early days of conceptualizing a project that aimed to bridge communities through digital storytelling. The idea was vibrant in my mind, yet translating it into a viable, impactful initiative required more than just vision. It demanded an understanding of technology, a knack for storytelling, and, most importantly, the ability to engage and collaborate with others. This project became my first real foray into the caffeine of innovation—turning a

dream into a digital platform that connected stories and people across the globe.

Leveraging Technology and Team Dynamics

In today’s digital age, technology plays a pivotal role in innovation. Here, I discuss how leveraging digital tools and platforms has enabled me to bring ideas to fruition more effectively.

Additionally, the importance of team dynamics cannot be overstated—innovation thrives in environments where collaboration, diversity, and open communication are encouraged. I share insights on building and leading teams that are not just adaptable but also deeply invested in the innovation process.

In my capacity as Operations Director for the Live and Let Live Foundation, I spearheaded initiatives that exemplify the essence of fostering innovation through collaboration, diversity, and open communication. The Foundation's ethos, centered around the principles of non-aggression and exemplary human conduct, provided a robust framework for nurturing an environment conducive to innovation.

By promoting a culture of voluntary kindness, tolerance, and open-mindedness, we empowered team members to contribute diverse perspectives

and collaborate effectively, driving forward our mission of global peace and prosperity.

The operational strategies and community engagement efforts of the Live and Let Live Foundation underscore the pivotal role of positive team dynamics in the innovation process. Our commitment to these principles facilitated the creation of a workspace where innovation could flourish, guided by the foundation's dual focus on legal norms to prevent aggression and moral values to inspire personal excellence.

This holistic approach not only propelled our organizational goals but also served as a blueprint for building and leading teams deeply invested in driving innovation and change. In a short amount of time, there were already 31 chapters in 19 countries. The various Directors span multiple countries and time zones, too.

Leveraging Technology and Teams

Technology, I discovered, was both a tool and a teacher. Each digital platform, each software application, became a stepping stone towards realizing my innovative visions. But the true power of technology was realized in its ability to bring people together. Collaboration became the cornerstone of innovation.

Leading teams through the uncharted waters of each project, I learned that diversity of thought and openness to change were the fuel for innovative solutions. I also found this to be true: Go slow to go fast. Be meticulous in your work.

There was a project that particularly tested our collective innovative spirit—a venture aimed at creating a sustainable business model for artists. The challenge was multifaceted, requiring not just a deep understanding of the art world but also the ability to conceptualize a platform that could support artists financially.

The team was a tapestry of talents, from tech wizards to art aficionados, each bringing a unique perspective to the table. Our brainstorming sessions were electric, charged with the caffeine of innovation, and caffeine, as we pieced together a platform that was by artists, for artists.

The Impact of Innovation

Innovation has the power to change industries, societies, and even the way we perceive the world. This section reflects on the broader impact of the innovative projects I've been involved with, from community-building initiatives to ventures that push the boundaries of technology

and collaboration. The stories shared here underscore the potential of innovation to create positive change on a global scale.

The Ripple Effect of Innovation

The impact of these innovative ventures extended beyond the immediate success of the projects. They acted as catalysts for change, challenging existing paradigms and inspiring others to think differently.

The digital storytelling platform not only connected stories but also sparked conversations on social change, diversity, and inclusion. The artist support platform became a testament to the power of collaborative innovation in creating sustainable models for creative work.

Innovation as a Catalyst for Growth

In concluding this chapter, I reiterate the importance of innovation as a catalyst for personal, professional, and societal growth. The journey from adaptability to energizing ideas into action is a testament to the power of embracing change, not just as a challenge but as an opportunity—an opportunity to lead, to create, and to inspire.

As I reflect on the journey from navigating startups and corporates to energizing ideas into action, I realize that innovation is not a destination but a continuous journey. It's a journey that challenges us to remain curious, to embrace change, and to leverage our collective talents towards creating something meaningful. The caffeine of innovation is not just about energizing ideas; it's about awakening the potential within each of us to make a difference.

Transition to Chapter 6

The narrative will continue to weave together the lessons learned, the challenges overcome, and the insights gained, highlighting the continuous interplay between innovation, adaptability, and skill development.

As this chapter draws to a close, the narrative seamlessly flows into the theme of the next chapter, "The Swiss Army Knife of Skills: Building a Diverse Toolkit." The innovation journey has underscored the importance of a diverse skill set—each skill acting as a tool in the innovator's toolbox.

The upcoming chapter will delve deeper into how cultivating a broad range of skills supports the

innovation process, enabling us to adapt, create, and lead in an ever-evolving world.

The transition from the innovation-driven journey in Chapter 5 into the exploration of diverse skill sets in Chapter 6 naturally flows from my life's tapestry of experiences. My journey, marked by an early awareness of being adopted, set the stage for a lifetime of curiosity and exploration.

This curiosity wasn't just about understanding my origins but extended to a deep dive into the nature of reality itself, spurred by encounters that challenged the conventional and propelled me into the realms of the extraordinary.

Chapter 6: The Swiss Army Knife of Skills - Building a Diverse Toolkit

The journey of innovation, as explored in the last chapter, was invigorating—each idea brought to life acting as a shot of caffeine to my soul. Yet, the realization dawned that innovation doesn't thrive in isolation. It demands a diverse set of skills, a toolkit not just for creation but for navigating the complexities of the modern world. This chapter delves into the myriad skills that have been instrumental in my journey, framing me as a 'Swiss Army Knife'—versatile, adaptable, and always ready.

From producing and hosting over 120 episodes of "One World" in the early '90s, a public access TV show aimed at exploring the convergence of science and spirituality, to deep spiritual and extraterrestrial encounters that expanded my consciousness and understanding of the universe, each experience added a unique tool to my metaphorical Swiss Army knife.

My guests were all professionals across the gamut of realms in society. These weren't just abstract adventures but practical lessons in adaptability, communication, leadership, and

innovation—skills that proved invaluable in my professional endeavors, especially to transformational coaching and beyond.

The essence of adaptability was further honed through my work with diverse groups, from Native American projects aiming at community building to navigating the complexities of corporate environments. These roles demanded a broad range of skills, emphasizing the importance of strategic thinking, empathy, and the ability to act decisively in uncertain situations. Emotional intelligence played a huge role in being able to facilitate people, places and things to achieve unexpectedly great results.

The Foundation of Diverse Skills

My foray into the world of startups, corporates, and community projects underscored a pivotal truth: versatility is key. From digital literacy to strategic planning, from empathetic leadership to effective communication, each skill acquired was like adding another tool to my kit.

These weren't just abilities picked up along the way; they were necessities, each playing a crucial role in the success of my ventures. What I also noticed was that as each cycle of activity, each change of organization or project, as one

door closed, another would open serendipitously. I just had to pay attention and let go of wanting to control any of the process, a tough thing to do for a guy who likes to step in and lead.

Leveraging Skills for Innovation

The digital storytelling project, a beacon of innovation from the last chapter, served as a prime example of how a diverse skill set turns vision into reality. It wasn't enough to have the idea; bringing it to life required technical skills to navigate digital platforms, storytelling prowess to engage audiences, and collaborative leadership to unite a team around a common goal. This project was a testament to the power of a multifaceted skill set in the innovation process.

A more recent endeavor in process as I write, is Planetary Citizens. We received our 509(a)(2) status in December of 2023. Now the work of assembling a team that is even more diverse than the above begins, inviting self-initiating activity fulfilling to volunteers as well as raising funds to hire and train staff. Diversity of this group engages understatement and, of course, multipotentialites are welcome. The digital and virtual worlds are crucial in this activity.

Skills in Adaptation and Growth

Adaptability, a recurring theme in my narrative, found its strength in the diversity of my skills. Each new challenge or change was met not with resistance but with the question, "Which tool in my kit will help navigate this?"

This mindset transformed obstacles into opportunities for growth, pushing me to continuously expand my toolkit and, by extension, my capacity for innovation and leadership.

I'm sure that, if you were to examine your tool kit, you'd find a litany of skills you didn't realize you have, let alone a way to apply them toward your own dream or vision for life.

The Interplay of Skills and Team Dynamics

Innovation is not a solo journey. It thrives on collaboration, on the dynamic interplay of skills within a team. My role often shifted from leader to mentor, from strategist to executor, depending on the needs of the project and the team. I always wanted to know how every detail was accomplished so I could fit in anywhere that was necessary for the moment. Do you?

This fluidity was possible only because of the diverse skills I had developed, allowing me to contribute effectively in various capacities and to foster a culture of mutual learning and growth.

Versatility of Skills - Catalyst for Change

Reflecting on the path tread thus far, it's clear that the diversity of skills I've cultivated has been my greatest asset. It wasn't until I reached the age of maturity, 51 according to Native tradition, did I realize the value I'd received.

Like a Swiss Army Knife, the versatility of these skills has prepared me for the myriad challenges and opportunities that have come my way, enabling not just personal growth but also the ability to drive meaningful change.

Transitioning

As we pivot from the exploration of skills in Chapter 6, we edge closer to the themes of Chapter 7, "Connecting Dots Across Different Pages: Strategic Thinking and Networking." The diverse toolkit not only facilitates innovation and adaptability but also lays the groundwork for strategic thinking and effective networking.

The next chapter will explore how these skills intersect, enabling not just the creation of

innovative solutions but also the formation of strategic partnerships and networks that amplify impact. As this chapter concludes, the narrative seamlessly leads into "Connecting Dots Across Different Pages: Strategic Thinking and Networking."

The diverse skills acquired through my unconventional journey—underpinned by deep spiritual insights, leadership in varied settings, and innovative project execution—set the foundation for strategic thinking and effective networking.

The next chapter will explore how these skills enable not just the envisioning of innovative solutions but also the building of strategic partnerships and networks that amplify impact, illustrating the interconnectedness of personal growth, professional development, and the broader quest for understanding and harmony within the cosmos.

This framework for Chapter 6, enriched with personal anecdotes from my books, underscores the journey from a curious, questioning child to an adult who bridges worlds, embodying the versatility and adaptability of a Swiss Army knife in both thought and action.

Chapter 7: Connecting Dots Across Different Pages - Strategic Thinking and Networking

In the realm of my experiences, strategic thinking and networking have not just been about forming connections or crafting plans. They've been about understanding the deeper narratives that bind us, the threads of consciousness that weave through the fabric of our professional and personal lives.

My journey, exemplified by the creation and hosting of the "One World" television show, was an early indication of my passion for bridging worlds—bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to explore the convergence of science, spirituality, and society. We produced over 120 shows in two years.

From Vision to Reality

Creating "One World" wasn't just an act of media production; it was a manifestation of strategic thinking long before the opportunity presented itself. The whole thing was rather magical in how it all came together.

The inception of "One World" exemplifies strategic foresight in action, well before the actual opportunity for its creation emerged. After proposing the Earth Concert 1989 concept to the Christown Lions Club, a suggestion to meet a member involved in public access TV catalyzed the birth of a new vision.

I imagined hosting a show focused on personal and professional triumphs over adversity. This vision silently resonated, and through participation in a cable company's training program, it was recognized by the director who proposed I host my own show.

This suggestion was aligned with my unspoken vision, leading to the birth of "One World" a month later, a project that was not merely about media production but a strategic realization of connecting people through shared stories of overcoming fears and challenges.It required seeing beyond the immediate, recognizing the potential for deep conversations in a time when such discussions were rare.

This vision for a more interconnected dialogue about our place in the universe and our responsibilities to each other and our planet was a bold step. The education I received was far beyond the PhD level in a very real sense.

It demanded networking, reaching out to thinkers, doers, and dreamers, and inviting them to share their insights on a public platform. Each episode was a testament to the power of strategic connections, of dots connected across different disciplines to present a cohesive, enlightening narrative.

Creating "One World" was a labor of love and vision, requiring not just the ability to see beyond the horizon but to also bring others along on the journey. Each guest brought a piece of the puzzle, a snapshot of the infinite diversity of human experience and wisdom.

This endeavor taught me the invaluable lesson that strategic thinking is as much about envisioning new worlds as it is about creating spaces where these visions can be shared and explored together. It was a symphony of voices, each unique, yet together creating a harmony that spoke to the deeper truths of our existence.

Navigating the Professional Sphere with Strategic Networking

My professional journey has been marked by an array of roles— from educator to partnering facilitator to transformational coaching to facilitating large-scale events and projects. Each

role demanded a unique blend of skills, but more importantly, it required the ability to strategically network. Networking, for me, has never been about superficial connections.

It's been about finding resonance, aligning with individuals and groups whose visions and values complement my own. This approach has opened doors to collaborations that have enriched my professional endeavors and contributed to my personal growth immensely.

In my professional life, strategic networking has been a dance of synchronicity and intention. Each connection made was a step towards a greater understanding of the interconnectedness of our professional lives with our personal quests for meaning. I've found tremendous richness in the connections on LinkedIn, a treasure trove of guest for my new podcast, One World in a New World, 30 years later.

I learned early on that the strongest networks are built on the foundation of genuine relationships, where mutual growth and support are the primary goals. This understanding transformed my approach to networking, making each interaction not just a means to an end but a part of a larger journey towards collective enlightenment and service.

The Impact of Strategic Thinking and Networking

The influence of strategic thinking and networking extends beyond professional success. It's about creating a legacy of connections that foster collective growth and understanding. My work, particularly in the realms of ufology and consciousness, has often placed me at the intersection of diverse communities.

Bridging these communities has not only been about sharing knowledge but also about building networks of support and collaboration that challenge us to think bigger, to see the potential for transformation in our world.

The ripple effects of strategic thinking and networking have been far-reaching, touching not just my own life but also the lives of countless others. Through initiatives like "One World," I've witnessed the power of ideas to ignite change, to challenge the status quo, and to inspire new ways of thinking and being.

This journey has reinforced my belief in the potential of collective action, driven by strategic connections, to create a world that reflects the best of our shared humanity and our individual dreams. What dreams do you have or hold?

Preparing for the Future and Beyond

As this chapter concludes, I find myself reflecting on the journey thus far and the path that lies ahead. The strategic thinking and networking that have characterized my journey are not endpoints but stepping stones. They prepare me for the challenges and opportunities of Chapter 8 and beyond, where the focus shifts to applying these skills in new contexts, exploring uncharted territories, and continuing to bridge the gaps between diverse fields of inquiry and action.

As I stand at the threshold of the next chapter, I am reminded that the journey of connecting dots across different pages is an ongoing one. The skills of strategic thinking and networking that I've honed over the years are not static but dynamic, evolving with each new challenge and opportunity to experience the awe in flow.

The future beckons with the promise of unexplored territories, new connections to be made, and further dots to be connected. It's a future that I step into with anticipation, armed with the lessons of the past and the openness to embrace the unknown.

Chapter 8: The Magnificent to the Mundane – Transforming Everyday Operations

The Alchemy of the Ordinary

In the fabric of the everyday lies the extraordinary, waiting to be unveiled. My journey through event logistics and classroom teaching has been a testament to this belief. Whether orchestrating large-scale public events or guiding minds in the classroom, I've found that the key to transforming mundane operations lies in perspective. Seeing the magnificence in mundane tasks is an alchemy of sorts, transforming routine into ritual, chaos into order, and everyday tasks into opportunities for mindfulness and presence.

Reflecting on my life, the transformation of mundane operations into realms of growth and learning has been a consistent theme. Whether it was orchestrating the dynamics of event logistics or engaging students in the classroom, each task offered a unique opportunity to witness the extraordinary within the ordinary. This perspective was significantly shaped during my experiences with the "One World" television show, where the challenge of bringing diverse

voices together taught me the importance of seeing beyond the surface, finding depth in the listening and meaning in every interaction.

Creating Order from Chaos

The challenge of creating order from chaos is not just a logistical one; it's a philosophical endeavor. Each event, with its myriad details and potential for unpredictability, served as a microcosm of life's larger chaos. By approaching each task with intention and a deep sense of interconnectedness, I discovered that the most chaotic situations often hold the seeds of creativity, innovation, and learning.

This approach has not only been effective in managing events but has also informed my teaching philosophy, where fostering an environment conducive to growth and learning begins with embracing the unpredictable as an integral part of the journey.

My journey has also been about embracing chaos and finding order within it. This was vividly illustrated during a large public event I managed, where unforeseen challenges threatened to derail the entire operation. Drawing upon my spiritual practices and strategic thinking, I navigated these challenges by staying present and

adaptable, turning potential chaos into a harmoniously executed event. This experience reinforced my belief that within every challenge lies an opportunity for growth and learning, a lesson I've carried into every aspect of my life.

Fostering Environments for Growth

In the classroom, this philosophy took on a new dimension. Beyond the logistics of lesson planning and classroom management, I sought to create spaces where curiosity could flourish, where students felt empowered to explore and where the mundane became a gateway to discovery. This meant breaking away from traditional teaching methods to embrace a more holistic, student-centered approach, where the journey of learning was as important as the destination, if not moreso.

In the classroom, this philosophy of transforming the mundane into magnificent learning opportunities was put into practice through innovative teaching methods. I strived to create a learning environment that encouraged curiosity and critical thinking, where students could connect theoretical knowledge with real-world applications. This approach often involved breaking down complex concepts into relatable, everyday examples, demonstrating how

mundane subjects could spark profound insights and understanding.

Building on this foundation, I pioneered the establishment of multiple intelligence learning centers as part of a holistic educational strategy. Recognizing the diverse ways in which students learn and process information, these centers were inspired by Dr. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. By integrating this theory into the curriculum, we crafted spaces where students could explore subjects in ways that resonated with their unique learning styles.

Whether through linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, or naturalistic approaches, each center was designed to foster an inclusive learning environment. This innovation not only enhanced student engagement and understanding but also underscored the importance of adapting educational practices to meet the varied needs and talents of all learners.

The Mundane as a Mirror

The mundane tasks of everyday operations, from logistical planning to classroom instruction, served as a mirror, reflecting back the lessons of

patience, resilience, and the power of a positive perspective. It was in these moments, often overlooked as merely routine, that I found the deepest insights into leadership, teamwork, and the human capacity for adaptation and growth.

The routine tasks of everyday life, from planning lessons to coordinating event logistics, have served as mirrors reflecting the deeper lessons of patience, resilience, and the transformative power of perspective. These experiences have taught me the value of mindfulness and the impact of approaching even the most routine tasks with intention and openness to growth.

Embracing the Magnificent Mundane

As I reflect on the journey thus far, I realize that finding magnificence in the mundane is more than a strategy for effective operations; it's a way of life. During a late night and extremely deep conversation with my wife, sitting on our back porch, I kept hearing the buzzing of a bee.

I finally looked up, noticing it in the center of the dome light and announced, ‘That’s it! Be Light!’ The synchronicity was spectacular and a perfect Nature’s exclamation point to our conversation.

It's about seeing beyond the surface to the deeper patterns that connect us, to the

opportunities for growth and learning that lie hidden in everyday tasks and innocent encounters with Nature. This perspective is not just about transforming operations; it's about transforming our relationship with the world around us.

Transitioning to Chapter 9

Looking ahead to Chapter 9, the journey continues as we explore the dynamics of "Choreographing Corporate Ballet: Grace in Leadership and Management." The lessons learned in embracing the magnificent mundane lay the groundwork for navigating the complexities of leadership and management with grace, agility, and a deep understanding of the human element that underpins all successful endeavors.

Chapter 9: Choreographing Corporate Ballet - Grace in Leadership and Management

Embracing Harmony and Precision

My journey into leadership was less about asserting dominance and more about understanding the rhythm and flow of a well-orchestrated team. In the early days of my career, I found myself at the helm of projects that seemed like chaotic ensembles of differing talents, opinions, and working styles.

It reminded me of my experiences with music and dance, where harmony and precision were paramount. I learned that, like in a ballet, every individual had a unique role that, when performed with grace and in alignment with others, created a masterpiece.

This understanding transformed my approach to leadership, seeing it as an opportunity to conduct an orchestra of talents toward achieving a unified vision. Based on past experience, I knew it would be excruciatingly fun at times, simply because I knew the pain of chaos would lead to order.

The Alchemy of Order in Chaos

My time at an aerospace company was a crucible of my management style, a place where I learned the alchemy of transforming chaos into order. Entrusted with an emergency response team and later, a commercial spares production desk managing over $7 million in parts monthly, I was thrown into the deep end.

The challenge wasn't just logistical but deeply human – how to solicit collaboration without direct command, how to inspire a team to exceed not just meet goals, how to engage a diverse workforce, let alone keep track of all the parts in process. It was here I discovered my 'secret sauce' wasn't a strategy but a culture of respect, recognition, and shared purpose.

Fostering Collaboration and Communication

Faced with the daunting task of reducing military spares delivery delinquencies from 28% at an aerospace company—a challenge that had significant financial implications due to halted progress payments from the Department of Defence—I leveraged my previous successes and insights. Understanding that the solution lay beyond mere logistics, I initiated the creation of a comprehensive document to facilitate seamless

interdepartmental communication among purchasing, manufacturing, and testing teams.

This approach, rooted in a culture of respect, recognition, and shared purpose, not only aligned everyone towards a common goal but also dramatically improved operational efficiency.

By fostering this environment of collaboration without direct command, we successfully reduced the delinquency rate to under 10% in under a year, far exceeding management's expectations and solidifying the belief that the heart of strategy lies in cultivating the right culture.

Building Bridges, Not Walls

Leading diverse teams, especially in projects without direct authority, taught me the essence of 'soft power' – leading by influence, not command. My approach was always to build bridges, fostering an environment where every team member felt valued and understood.

This approach became my guiding star, whether facilitating workshops or steering complex projects. It wasn't just about getting the job done but how we got there together, turning potential conflicts into opportunities for collaboration and growth.

Transforming Everyday Operations

The transformation of everyday operations into opportunities for innovation and growth became a hallmark of my management style. Drawing from my experiences in both event logistics and classroom teaching, I developed a keen eye for identifying and nurturing the potential within mundane tasks and processes. I learned how to make things enjoyable, if not fun.

By encouraging my team to view every challenge as an opportunity for learning and improvement, we were able to elevate our work beyond the routine, turning our daily operations into a source of inspiration and excellence.

Leading with Poise and Purpose

Navigating the complexities of corporate management often felt like performing a delicate dance, where each step had to be executed with precision and awareness. My leadership philosophy evolved to prioritize poise under pressure and clarity of purpose in every decision.

This approach was shaped by my diverse experiences, from confronting the unknown in exploratory discussions on consciousness to navigating the practical challenges of project management. Leading with grace meant

maintaining a calm and composed demeanor, even in the face of adversity, inspiring my team to do the same. Acquiring the moniker of ‘Zen’ from One World, it was a challenge to be so.

Facilitating Workshops: A Symphony of Ideas

Facilitating workshops was like conducting a symphony – each participant a musician with a unique instrument and voice. I learned early on that the magic lay not in imposing my agenda but in guiding the collective energy towards harmony. This required a deep listening, an openness to the emergent flow of ideas, and the agility to adapt the direction as the group's collective intelligence took shape. It was here, in these collaborative spaces, that I witnessed the transformative power of collective insight and purpose that only needed a gentle nudge.

Orchestrating Complex Projects with Poise

Orchestrating complex projects required more than just managerial skills; it demanded a choreographer's grace. Each project was a dance of moving parts, a ballet where timing, coordination, and flow were paramount. My role was to ensure that each 'dancer' knew their steps, that the 'music' of our goals and deadlines

was clear, and that we moved as one towards our performance. This often meant stepping back, allowing the team the space to innovate, while being ready to guide and support as needed, and enjoying the ride.

A Dance of Collaboration and Communication

At the heart of my leadership and management style is a belief in the power of collaboration and effective communication. I've always viewed my teams as ensembles of talent, each with something valuable to contribute. Creating an environment where open communication, mutual respect, and collective problem-solving are the norm has been key to our success. It's a dance that requires patience, empathy, and a genuine commitment to the well-being and growth of each team member.

A Symphony of Success

As I reflect on the journey of choreographing this corporate ballet, I recognize that the grace in leadership and management comes from the ability to harmonize diverse talents and perspectives into a cohesive and thriving entity. It is about guiding with a clear vision, encouraging open dialogue, and fostering an

environment where every member feels valued and understood. The success of our projects and the growth of our team stand as a testament to the power of leading with grace, collaboration, and effective communication.

Leading with Grace

Looking back, I see my journey as a continuous learning process, a path where each challenge and opportunity has been a step in mastering the art of leading with grace. This chapter of my story is a reflection on the lessons learned in the dance of leadership and management, a dance that is as much about the heart and soul as it is about the mind.

Transitioning to the Next Act

Looking forward to the themes of Chapter 10, the lessons learned in orchestrating this corporate ballet lay the groundwork for exploring the deeper nuances of personal and professional fulfillment. The journey continues as we delve into the art of balancing ambition with contentment, further exemplifying how the principles of grace, collaboration, and purposeful leadership extend beyond the boardroom to influence every aspect of our lives.

As we move forward to Chapter 10, the focus shifts from the internal dynamics of leadership and management to the external impact of our efforts. The grace with which we lead and manage is not just for the benefit of our immediate teams but for the broader community and the world at large. The next chapter will explore how the principles of leadership and management extend beyond the corporate and educational realms, influencing change and fostering growth on a global scale.

Chapter 10: Turning Mondays into Fridays: Cultivating Workplace Enjoyment and Engagement

The Philosophy of Enjoyment in Work

Throughout my career, I've always believed that the key to a vibrant workplace lies not just in the tasks we perform but in how we feel about them. I've seen how the atmosphere of dread for Monday mornings turns into a palpable excitement for Fridays. My goal was to create a workplace where every day feels as anticipated as a Friday, where the energy and enthusiasm are constant companions in our journey.

In my career, whether leading teams in aerospace, education, or the non-profit sector, I've always been intrigued by the challenge of transforming the workplace culture. The goal? To make every day as eagerly anticipated as Friday. Here, I'll share how embedding joy, engagement, and purpose into the fabric of daily operations can turn the daunting into the desirable.

Cultivating a Culture of Engagement

Creating this environment was about more than just fun activities or casual Fridays; it was about embedding a sense of purpose and joy in every aspect of our work. I initiated team-building exercises that went beyond the conventional, integrating aspects of play and creativity into our everyday operations. This wasn't just about enjoyment; it was about fostering a culture where everyone felt valued, heard, and connected to the mission.

The Joy in Discovery

I remember walking into the office on what felt like an ordinary Monday morning. The atmosphere was the usual mix of weekend hangovers and looming weekly objectives. Yet, it struck me—why should Mondays feel any less exciting than Fridays?

Inspired, I initiated "Monday Discoveries," a simple practice where each team member would share something new they learned over the weekend, personal or professional. The shift was palpable. I've suggested the same practice for some of my managerial coaching clients and got similar results when they implemented it.

Mondays transformed from a day of dread to a day of sharing, learning, and laughter. Engagement soared as we found joy in the mundane, reminding us that growth and discovery don't adhere to the constraints of a workweek.

From Meetings to Gatherings

Meetings, often the bane of workplace existence, were transformed into gatherings of minds eager to collaborate and innovate. I introduced roundtable discussions where every voice had its moment, ensuring that these sessions were as much about listening as they were about speaking. This shift not only improved our project outcomes but significantly enhanced our collective morale.

It worked extremely well with the construction partnering sessions, turning them into roundtables instead of having a sage on stage presenting a PowerPoint of boring points of order for instruction on partnering. Conversation, especially skillfully facilitated, brings everyone into the project story, feeling acknowledged, heard and respected.

Cultivating a Culture of Engagement

Leading diverse teams across different projects taught me that engagement is less about the tasks at hand and more about the sense of belonging and purpose each member feels. I spearheaded a project where team members were encouraged to identify personal values and align them with our collective mission. This alignment exercise was not just an operational strategy but a commitment to seeing and nurturing the human behind the role.

The result? A team that saw beyond the 'job' to the collective impact we were making, turning every project, every meeting, into a step towards something greater than ourselves. Could that same process work ubiquitously, even in politics and world government? Perhaps. Not yet.

The Ripple Effect of Positive Leadership

As a leader, I recognized that my attitude and approach could set the tone for the entire team. I made it a point to lead with optimism, transparency, and encouragement. Celebrating small victories became a regular part of our routine, reinforcing the notion that our efforts, no matter how minor they seemed, contributed to our larger success. This positive reinforcement created a ripple effect, encouraging everyone to adopt a similar mindset.

Fostering Workplace Enjoyment

Workplace enjoyment for me has always been about creating environments where laughter is as common as conversation, where failures are celebrated for the learning they bring, and where success is a collective experience.

I introduced "Fail Forward Fridays," a forum for sharing mistakes and the lessons learned in a light-hearted, supportive setting. It became our most anticipated weekly event, transforming the workplace into a dynamic learning environment where enjoyment stemmed from our shared humanity and vulnerability.

Embracing Change and Challenges

Challenges were inevitable, but instead of viewing them as obstacles, we saw them as opportunities to grow and innovate. I encouraged my team to approach problems with curiosity and an open mind, fostering an environment where experimentation and learning from failures were valued. This mindset helped us navigate uncertainties with grace and agility, turning potential stressors into sources of inspiration.

The Impact of Enjoyment on Productivity

The transformation was perceivable. Not only did our enjoyment of work increase, but so did our productivity and creativity. The once-dreaded Monday mornings turned into opportunities to catch up and share our excitement for the projects ahead. The division between weekdays and weekends blurred as we found fulfillment in our contributions, regardless of the day.

The Grace of Engagement

Engagement, I've found, is deeply intertwined with the grace we extend to ourselves and each other in the pursuit of excellence. It's about balancing ambition with compassion, drive with understanding. I made it a practice to personally connect with each team member, understanding their motivations, their challenges, and their aspirations. This personalized approach didn't just boost morale; it knit us closer, making the pursuit of our goals a shared, engaging journey that felt less like work and more like a shared adventure.

A Symphony of Purpose

As I reflect on the journey of turning Mondays into Fridays, I realize it's less about the specific strategies and more about the underlying philosophy. It's about cultivating an environment

where joy, purpose, and engagement are not dictated by the day of the week but are woven into the very fabric of our workplace culture. This chapter of my journey underscores the belief that when we approach work with intention, creativity, and a deep respect for the human spirit, every day has the potential to be as fulfilling as Friday.

Preparing for the Next Chapter

As this chapter of my journey concludes, it's clear that cultivating workplace enjoyment and engagement is an ongoing process, one that requires constant attention and adaptation. But the foundation we've built—a culture that values joy, collaboration, and purpose—prepares us for whatever comes next.

Moving into Chapter 11, we'll explore the journey of problem-solving, building on the lessons of engagement and enjoyment to tackle challenges with creativity and resilience.

As we transition from cultivating workplace enjoyment and engagement, the next chapter will delve into the art of navigating chaos to order. It's about applying the principles of joy, purpose, and engagement to steer through the unpredictability and challenges of life and work,

demonstrating that the true test of our workplace culture is not just in its brightest moments but in how we dance through the storms together.

Chapter 11: Chaos to Order - The Journey of Problem Solving

Navigating from chaos to order has been a recurring theme in my life and career, a journey that has taught me the art of finding clarity in confusion and transforming challenges into opportunities. This chapter reflects on the strategies I've employed to bring structure to disorder, emphasizing the role of vision and determination in overcoming obstacles.

From Confusion to Clarity

In the early days of my professional career, I encountered situations that seemed insurmountable. One such instance was when I found myself at the helm of a project plagued by miscommunication and conflicting objectives.

The project was spiraling into chaos, with deadlines missed and team morale at an all-time low. It was a baptism by fire, teaching me the importance of stepping back to assess the situation from a broader perspective.

By embracing the chaos instead of resisting it, I began to see patterns in the disorder. This shift in perspective was instrumental in devising a

strategy that aligned team efforts, clarified objectives, and set us on a path to success.

During my tenure as a project manager in the aerospace industry, I was once tasked with salvaging a project mired in confusion and miscommunication. The situation was dire, with the project teetering on the brink of failure.

I convened a series of brainstorming sessions, inviting input from every team member, regardless of rank. It was during these meetings that a breakthrough idea emerged from an intern, traditionally silent in such gatherings. This solution not only rescued the project but also reinforced my belief in the power of collective wisdom to bring clarity to chaos.

The Role of Clear Vision

Having a clear vision has been my compass through the stormiest of times. During a particularly challenging period in an aerospace project, where the complexity and scope seemed overwhelming, I realized that the key to navigating the maze was not just in meticulous planning but in holding a clear vision of the desired outcome. This vision became our guiding light, focusing our efforts and enabling us to break down the project into manageable

segments. By keeping the end goal in sight, we were able to prioritize tasks, allocate resources more effectively, and gradually transform the chaos into a structured, orderly process.

As the founder of Be The Dream, LLC, I've always anchored my ventures in a clear vision, molding dreams into reality. This was put to the test when we embarked on an ambitious project to introduce innovative educational methodologies. Skepticism was rampant, and the path forward was anything but clear.

By remaining steadfast in our vision, we gradually converted skeptics into believers, proving that a clear vision is a beacon that can guide a team through the fog of uncertainty to the shores of success. We're all in relation-ships, seeking safe harbor from the ocean of emotion we experience in chaotic situations.

Overcoming Obstacles with Determination

Determination in the face of adversity has been a critical factor in my journey from chaos to order. An example of this was when I spearheaded an initiative to integrate new technology into our operational processes. The resistance was obvious, rooted in fear of the unknown and comfort in the status quo. It required unwavering

determination and patience to guide the team through the transition. By fostering an environment of trust and open communication, we were able to address concerns, demystify the new technology, and gradually shift from resistance to acceptance and, eventually, to enthusiasm for the new possibilities it opened up.

My work with Team Partnering, LLC, involved facilitating workshops that demanded high levels of collaboration among participants who were often strangers or even competitors outside the workshop setting. The construction industry is known for its often adversarial relationships. The initial resistance was noticeable, but through persistence and a focus on common goals, we were able to break down barriers, fostering a spirit of cooperation that translated into successful project outcomes.

Embracing the Process

Learning to embrace the process of moving from chaos to order has been a transformative experience. It has taught me that chaos is not an obstacle but a necessary part of the journey towards growth and innovation. Each challenge, each roadblock, has been an opportunity to learn, adapt, and evolve. This mindset has enabled me to approach problem-solving with a

sense of curiosity and openness, leading to solutions that are often as unexpected as they

The creation of "One World in a New World" and its mission to bridge science and spirituality was fraught with challenges, from securing funding to finding a platform for its unconventional content.

At the time of this writing and from its first weekly episode on June 1, 2021, our YouTube channel only has 14,000 subscribers and slightly less than one million views. In YouTube terms, we're low on the totem pole, yet we're progressing nicely. Monetization is slow.

Guest responses have been phenomenal, noting the apocalyptic nature of our generative conversations as we weave through chaotic to cohesive life stories and discover hidden insights and wisdom for future generations. Over 60% of viewers are between 25 and 44, so we're getting through.

A Journey of Continuous Learning

The journey from chaos to order is, in essence, a journey of continuous learning. It has taught me the importance of adaptability, the value of a clear vision, and the strength that comes from patience, persistence, perseverance, passion and purpose that is practiced relentlessly.

As I reflect on this journey, I am reminded that the greatest achievements often come from the most challenging circumstances. It is in the process of navigating these challenges that we discover our potential to innovate, lead, and transform not just our environment but ourselves. Look for what challenges you.

Reflecting on my journey from chaos to order, I recall the early days of my career, filled with uncertainty and the daunting task of establishing a new business. The chaos was overwhelming, but it was through this very turmoil that I learned the most valuable lessons about leadership, resilience, and the transformative power of a positive outlook. Each challenge, each setback, was a stepping stone to greater understanding and success.

These personal anecdotes illustrate the journey from chaos to order, highlighting the resilience, creativity, and strategic thinking that have characterized my approach to problem-solving and leadership.

Preparing for the Next Chapter

As we move forward, the lessons learned in bringing order to chaos will serve as a foundation for the challenges and opportunities that lie

ahead. The next chapter will delve into the intricacies of embracing professional diversity, highlighting how the skills and insights gained in this journey are applied across various aspects of life and work, further illustrating the interconnectedness of our experiences and the collective growth they foster.

Chapter 12: The Sock Collection of Careers - Embracing Professional Diversity

Teaching: A Foundation of Patience and Possibility

My journey into teaching, particularly in unconventional environments, was less about imparting knowledge and more about unlocking the potential within each student. I recall a semester where we transformed a standard curriculum into a dynamic exploration of real-world challenges and solutions, encouraging students to apply critical thinking and collaboration beyond the classroom. This approach not only engaged them more deeply but also prepared them for the complexities of life outside the academic bubble.

In my first-year teaching at an inner-city Phoenix school, I was drawn into special education, where the challenge was not just to teach but to unlock each student's potential. Tasked with a freshman English class, I introduced research papers as a semester project, meeting initial resistance with innovation.

By leveraging a new computer lab and fostering peer collaboration, I guided students through their apprehensions towards mutual support and achievement. The journey from doubt to accomplishment was epitomized by a student who, overwhelmed at first, ended the semester with tears of joy, holding his completed project, having realized his capability to surpass his initial doubts. My heart was certainly warmed.

Transformational Coaching: Unveiling Inner Potential

After nearly a decade of teaching, transitioning from the classroom to personal coaching, I discovered the power of one-on-one interaction in fostering profound personal and professional growth. One memorable client was stuck in a career rut, feeling unfulfilled and uncertain.

Through our sessions, we unraveled the threads of his discontent, revealing a passion for environmental conservation. Witnessing his transformation from disillusionment to launching a successful green startup was a testament to the transformative power of embracing one's true calling.

A pivotal moment in my coaching career was when a client, initially resistant to change,

experienced a profound personal breakthrough after identifying a subconscious block during one of our sessions.

This breakthrough not only propelled them toward their professional goals but also deepened my appreciation for the transformative power of coaching, reinforcing my commitment to guiding others on their paths to self-discovery and fulfillment.

Digital Media: Crafting Stories that Resonate

My foray into digital media was a leap into the unknown, a challenge to convey complex ideas through compelling storytelling. Producing a series on community activism, I blended interviews, research, and personal narratives to create content that not only informed but inspired action. The feedback from viewers, who made significant changes in their lives based on our work, reinforced the impact well-crafted stories can have on individuals and communities.

Creating a Spectrum Academy business plan using a holistic educational model brought me face-to-face with innovators challenging the status quo. One inventor’s story, in particular, struck a chord, showcasing a technology decade

ahead of its time yet struggling for recognition. I felt his angst as sharing the Spectrum Academy with a director of education for Arizona's Child Protective Services met with encouragement and dismay, being 'light years' ahead, from his response. Excellent plan, ahead of its time.

This journey into the heart of education and innovation reinforced my belief in the power of digital media to amplify crucial, yet often overlooked, voices and ideas. It allows me to share highlights of it one the web, hoping others might have the ability to implement some of its components in their schools.

Facilitating Large Public Events: Symphony of Coordination

Organizing large public events, especially those focused on community and personal development, was like conducting a symphony. Some see it as herding cats. Each event required meticulous planning, from coordinating speakers and workshops to ensuring the event space fostered connection and growth.

A particularly ambitious conference, blending spirituality and science, demonstrated the beauty of diverse minds coming together, creating a tapestry of ideas that left attendees enriched and

empowered. I like being ambitious toward helping others, no matter the environment.

The challenge of bringing together diverse speakers for a holistic health symposium was daunting. However, the event's success, marked by a spontaneous standing ovation for a keynote address that bridged science and spirituality, was a vivid reminder of the magic that occurs when diverse perspectives are harmoniously aligned. It was a reaffirmation of my role as a facilitator of unity and understanding.

The Rich Tapestry of Professional Diversity

Reflecting on my career, I see not just a collection of jobs but a mosaic of experiences that have shaped me. Like a drawer full of colorful socks, each role I've played has added depth, texture, and vibrancy to my professional journey. Embracing this diversity has not only enriched my life but has also allowed me to contribute to the lives of others in meaningful, varied ways. Next to those colorful socks are my tie-dyed underwear.

Each role I've undertaken has been a chapter in a larger story of growth and discovery. Whether standing before a classroom, sitting across from a coaching client, behind a camera, or

orchestrating an event, the common thread has been a commitment to making a meaningful impact. This journey of embracing professional diversity has not just shaped my career but has also sculpted my character, teaching me the value of adaptability, empathy, and the endless potential for transformation.

These anecdotes serve to highlight the unique, often unexpected moments that have punctuated my career, each contributing to a broader understanding of the impact and importance of embracing professional diversity.

As we move toward the next chapter, I carry with me the lessons learned from each of these roles, applying them to new challenges and opportunities. The journey of embracing professional diversity is ongoing, a continuous process of learning, growing, and transforming—both personally and professionally.

Chapter 13: Roadside Diners and the Changing Pies – Finding Inspiration in the Unexpected

The Earth Concert 1989: A Symphony of Serendipity

The Earth Concert 1989 was an ambitious vision, aiming to unite the globe through music and shared concern for our planet. The project's genesis was as unexpected as it was profound, beginning with a serendipitous encounter with Jean Hudon, author of *The Immortal Child*, and his request.

Jean reached out to me, having heard of me through a mutual acquaintance, to help organize the Phoenix portion of this global event, painting a picture of satellite uplinks from each of the 32 locations, weaving a tapestry of harmony and hope that spanned continents.

Flying out to meet Jean, filled with anticipation and driven by the magnitude of what we aimed to achieve, I was met with a reality check. Despite Jean's enthusiasm and the compelling vision, we shared, the groundwork necessary to bring this vision to life was notably absent. This realization hit home during a crucial meeting with

a representative from Coca-Cola, who presented us with an incredible opportunity: sponsorship covering the $2 million satellite uplink cost, contingent on a solid business plan. It was a moment of truth, revealing that Jean had not prepared such a plan. I was not in a position to write one sufficient to meet their needs.

Finding Ground in the Unexpected

This revelation could have been the end of the road for our ambitious project. Instead, it became a catalyst for innovation and resourcefulness. Faced with the potential collapse of our grand vision, I found myself drawing inspiration from the most unexpected of places—a simple pie shared in a roadside diner.

This pie, unassuming yet filled with the warmth and simplicity of home, reminded me that profound insights and solutions often lie in the simplest of experiences. It was a moment of clarity, a slice of inspiration that fueled a renewed determination to see our project through, despite the setbacks.

Why not put our own event? It would be small, though the process would provide others creative outlets and a chance for their voice to be heard. We could still have our pie.

Reimagining the Path Forward

Emboldened by this newfound insight, I took the reins, diving into the creation of a local event with the dedicated people that had gathered to craft the Phoenix portion. The process was grueling, a test of perseverance and creativity, but it was also a journey of discovery.

The group that had assembled put on our own Earth Concert at a meeting hall in Scottsdale, spanning two days, with music, speakers and activities to inform the public about the devastation of rain forests in South America and other eco-disasters in process if left unchecked.

I learned that inspiration could be found in every encounter, every challenge, and every seemingly mundane moment, including those of despair.

The Prophets Conference: Culmination of Creativity and Canvas of Collective Wisdom

The Earth Concert set the stage for 'The Prophets Conference,' an event that further exemplified the power of finding inspiration in the unexpected. Organizing the logistics for this conference was a journey filled with moments of serendipity, where chance encounters and offhand conversations sparked ideas that would

shape the event into a transformative experience for all involved.

It was a testament to the magic that happens when we remain open to the wisdom and creativity present in our everyday experiences and encounters. Having all the contacts necessary from my Tempe Arts Festival engagements twice a year made it easier.

My involvement in 'The Prophets Conference' was a significant chapter in my journey, a testament to the richness of embracing professional diversity and the unexpected twists that often accompany such endeavors.

Recommended for my decade of experience in organizing large-scale events, I was entrusted with orchestrating an event that promised to be as enlightening as it was ambitious. The conference, set against the backdrop of the sprawling 17-acre Corona Ranch, was a convergence of minds and spirits, featuring 120 vendors and over 30 speakers across four locations.

A Week of Whirlwind Preparation

The timing was serendipitous; I had a week off from my Teacher's Education program at the University of Phoenix. Diving headfirst into the

preparations, I embarked on a marathon of logistical planning and coordination. By Monday, the seeds were sown, and by Wednesday, the event was fully fleshed out, with Thursday dedicated to setting the stage for a weekend that would draw over 5,000 attendees.

The whirlwind of activity was a dance of determination and dedication, a reflection of my commitment to creating spaces that fostered connection, exploration and invited participation of 50 volunteers who got to see their favorites as a reward for their time commitment.

A Stellar Event Amidst Shadows

The event itself was a resounding success, a gathering that left patrons and volunteers alike in awe of the experience crafted through tireless effort. However, the aftermath revealed a shadow side to the endeavor.

The producers, in a disheartening turn of events, absconded with the cash receipts, leaving for Sedona immediately after the conference concluded. The financial recompense for my efforts was minimal, amounting to a few hundred dollars returned from the property deposit—far from the promised 5% share of the net revenue.

Moments of Luminescence

Despite the financial fallout, the conference remains a highlight of my life, a period of intense creativity and collaboration that brought me face to face with luminaries like Dr. Edgar Mitchell, the sixth man on the moon, and Jose Arguelles, the visionary who introduced the Mayan Calendar to public consciousness. These encounters were more than mere meetings; they were exchanges of wisdom, moments of connection that underscored the profound impact of gathering diverse voices and perspectives in dialogue with one another.

Embracing the Journey Beyond the Event

The experience taught me invaluable lessons about trust, integrity, and the true value of my contributions. While the promise of financial gain was unfulfilled, the wealth of experience and the joy of facilitating such a monumental gathering were rewards in their own right. It reinforced my belief in the importance of pursuing passion and purpose, even in the face of uncertainty or disappointment.

Embracing the Unexpected

My journey through organizing the Earth Concert 1989 and producing 'The Prophets Conference'

has been a testament to the beauty of serendipity, to the profound impact of remaining open to finding inspiration in the most unexpected of places. From roadside diners to life-changing pies, the simplest of moments have held the deepest insights. This chapter challenges you, the reader, to remain open to the wisdom and creativity that life offers, to embrace the unexpected, and to find the extraordinary in the ordinary.

Looking Forward with Wisdom and Wonder

As we move forward, the lessons learned from these experiences remind us that inspiration is everywhere, waiting to be discovered. The next chapter will delve into the art of innovation and illusion in business, exploring how the unexpected moments and serendipitous encounters that have punctuated my journey can be harnessed to create impactful, innovative solutions in the professional realm.

As I reflect on the journey from organizing the Earth Concert to producing 'The Prophets Conference,' I'm reminded of the unpredictable nature of life and the beauty of remaining open to inspiration from all quarters.

The next chapter of my journey delves deeper into the realm of innovation and illusion in business, exploring how the lessons learned and the inspiration gleaned from these experiences inform my approach to creating impactful, innovative solutions in the professional realm.

Chapter 14: The Rabbit Hat Trick - Innovation and Illusion in Business

In the ever-evolving landscape of business, the line between innovation and illusion can sometimes blur, like a magician's sleight of hand. My journey through diverse professional terrains has been a testament to mastering this delicate balance, using strategic innovation to create impactful realities from what might initially appear as mere illusions.

In the labyrinth of my career, I've often found that innovation and the perception of innovation—what I like to call the rabbit hat trick—play pivotal roles in navigating the unpredictable terrains of business. This chapter draws from the essence of my varied experiences, where the sleight of hand in business strategy and the genuine breakthroughs in creativity have been equally instrumental.

The Earth Concert 1989: An Illusion of Preparation

The journey of organizing the Earth Concert 1989 with Jean Hudon serves as a profound lesson in innovation under the guise of illusion. Jean's

vision was grand—a global concert to unite the world. However, his preparation was an illusion, a mirage that nearly led to the project's downfall. When I flew out to meet him, buoyed by the promise of satellite uplinks connecting us globally, I was confronted with the reality: there was no business plan, just the illusion of one.

Yet, this setback became a canvas for innovation. Drawing from a conversation with a Coca-Cola representative who offered to cover the $2 million satellite uplink cost contingent on a solid business plan, I realized the power of turning illusion into action. Despite Jean's lack of preparation, I was thrust into a position where I had to conjure innovation from thin air, so we did with our own version, less effective than hoped for, yet still informative to local patrons.

Sleight of Hand in Startups

Launching Be The Dream, LLC, felt like performing a high-stakes magic trick, convincing clients to believe in a vision that was yet to materialize. The early days were fraught with uncertainty, a constant juggle between maintaining the illusion of stability and control while scrambling behind the scenes to garner clients. It was a lesson in trust—both in myself and in the process of innovation. Like a magician

who knows the outcome of the trick but must create a moment of suspense for the audience, I learned to navigate the startup world with a mix of confidence and humility, ensuring the final reveal was worth the wait. It was.

The Prophets Conference: Reality from Illusion

Organizing large public events, particularly 'The Prophets Conference,' required a mastery of illusion on a grand scale—presenting an image of seamless coordination and unity amidst the backstage chaos of logistics, negotiations, and last-minute changes. The event was a complex illusion, a carefully orchestrated dance designed to appear effortless to the attendees. Yet, the real magic lay not in the illusion of perfection but in the innovative solutions crafted to address each challenge, turning potential disasters into moments of triumph.

My involvement in 'The Prophets Conference' further illustrates the rabbit hat trick in action. Recommended for my expertise in managing large events, I was promised a 5% share of net revenue. The event was a tsunami of activity, bringing together 120 vendors and over 30 speakers across a 17-acre property, drawing

5,000 attendees in a spectacle of coordination and creativity.

Yet, the illusion shattered post-event as the producers vanished with the cash, leaving me with a paltry sum and bills to be paid. Despite this, the real magic was in the connections made, the ideas shared, and the joy of facilitating such a monumental gathering.

Meeting visionaries like Dr. Edgar Mitchell and Jose Arguelles was a reminder that the essence of innovation often lies beyond the illusions of business dealings. I had several conversations over the weekend with both, with a secret shared by Dr. Mitchell has asked I hold until his death.

The Magic of Perception

My adventure into the realm of digital media during my second master's degree, in organizational management, production provided an early lesson in the art of the "rabbit hat trick" in business. Tasked with creating a compelling narrative for a Spectrum Academy business plan, I faced the challenge of transforming complex, often abstract concepts into engaging, understandable content.

Spectrum Academy emerged from my journey through the educational system, where I

discovered gaps that needed filling. It began as a dream to create a holistic learning community for at-risk youth, evolving into a plan for an alternative school and village that prioritizes the healing of emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual wounds.

This venture aims to restore cultural pride, personal hope, and inspiration, utilizing a peer-community approach based on respect, shared responsibility, and mutual support. The academy is designed to empower youth towards success and contribution to society through a holistic educational model that integrates mind, body, spirit, and the interconnectedness of environmental and societal systems.

It was akin to pulling a rabbit out of a hat, making the invisible visible and the incomprehensible compelling. The success of the business plan taught me the power of perception in business—how presenting an idea in a certain light can turn skepticism into belief, transforming potential illusions into tangible innovations.

Unfortunately, it never broke ground yet is still shelf-ready to dust off and proceed. Many of its components weren't available at its conception, yet they are today. There is still hope.

The Illusion of Control

One of the most profound lessons in my career has been the realization that control, often sought in the business world, is itself an illusion. Like a magician who must adapt to the unexpected reactions of the audience, I learned that true innovation requires a willingness to let go, to embrace uncertainty as a catalyst for creativity and collaboration.

This was starkly illustrated when, despite meticulous planning, an unforeseen technological glitch threatened to derail a major project. The solution came from an unexpected source, a reminder that innovation often emerges from the chaos we strive so hard to control.

Navigating the unexpected, a technological glitch threatened to disrupt a major event I was involved with—the Phoenix Futures Forum. In searching for a keynote speaker, the City managed to secure Dennis Weaver through a contact with his agent, who's number had found its way to me a few weeks prior.

When faced with a prohibitive cost to televise the event, an innovative solution emerged through my connection with the public access manager I knew through One World. He also was in charge

of the ESPN remote truck and offered his services at no charge, epitomizing innovation's rise from chaos. This not only saved the event but also granted me a valuable 15-minute interview with Weaver, showcasing the power of leveraging personal networks and embracing unforeseen opportunities for creative problem-solving under pressure.

Innovation in the Face of Illusion

Throughout my career, whether steering through the illusion of preparedness with the Earth Concert or facing the harsh realities post-The Prophets Conference, the constant has been the ability to innovate—to pull the rabbit out of the hat when least expected. The ‘universe’ always seemed to provide a way.

These experiences taught me that innovation isn't just about grand ideas or breakthrough technologies; it's about the ability to adapt, to see beyond the illusion, and to craft something tangible and impactful from the ethereal promise of what could be.

Beyond the Illusion

Reflecting on the "rabbit hat tricks" of my career, I've come to see innovation and illusion not as opposites but as partners in the dance of

creation. Each venture, each project, has been an act of magic in its own right, turning ideas into realities, visions into successes. It's a journey that has taught me the importance of perception, the value of trust, and the power of embracing the unknown.

Mastering the Art of the Illusion

The art of the rabbit hat trick in business is not in deception but in the revelation of potential where none seems to exist. It's a dance between the seen and the unseen, the real and the imagined, where innovation thrives on the edge of illusion. As I reflect on these experiences, I'm reminded that true innovation often requires us to look beyond the immediate, to imagine the impossible, and to bring it into reality, even when all we have is a hat, a rabbit, and an audience yearning for wonder.

Looking Ahead

As we move forward, the lessons learned from navigating the realms of innovation and illusion in business are more than just anecdotes; they're a roadmap for future endeavors. They teach us that in every illusion lies the seed of innovation, waiting to be nurtured into reality. The next chapter will delve deeper into weaving

fun into the professional tapestry, exploring how the joy and wonder that come from mastering the rabbit hat trick can infuse our work with creativity, purpose, and, ultimately, success.

As this chapter closes, the journey continues, with the lessons learned in the interplay of innovation and illusion guiding the way. The next chapter will explore the weaving of fun into the fabric of professional life, demonstrating how the principles of innovation and the willingness to engage with the unexpected can enrich not only our work but our lives as a whole.

Chapter 15: Weaving Fun into the Professional Tapestry - The Philosophy of Enjoyable Work

In the tapestry of my professional journey, weaving fun into the fabric of work has not only been a philosophy but a practiced reality. From the classrooms and workshops to the high-stakes environment of aerospace and digital media production, the infusion of enjoyment and playfulness into the workday has been pivotal.

This chapter delves into the essence of creating work environments where fun is not just an occasional visitor but a permanent, enriching presence everyone can enjoy.

Transforming Classrooms into Arenas of Discovery

My tenure as a teacher and educator provided the initial canvas for experimenting with the philosophy of enjoyable work. I recall transforming a traditional classroom setting into an interactive learning environment where students were not just passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in a journey of discovery of *how* they learned.

Projects were designed not merely for educational value but for the joy of exploration and creativity. This approach not only increased student engagement but also fostered a sense of joy in learning, illustrating that when fun is integrated into education, the boundaries of engagement and understanding expand exponentially.

Facilitating Workshops with a Twist of Enjoyment

In the realm of professional development and team-building workshops, I introduced elements of improvisation and role-play, much to the participants' initial surprise. However, this surprise quickly turned into delight as they found themselves engaging in activities that not only illuminated key professional skills but did so in a manner that was enjoyable and memorable.

One workshop, aimed at enhancing communication skills, saw participants crafting stories together, a task that sparked laughter and camaraderie, transforming a routine training session into an unforgettable shared experience.

Innovating with Joy in the Aerospace Sector

The aerospace sector, with its rigid protocols and high-pressure projects, might seem an unlikely

place for fun to flourish. Yet, it was here that I spearheaded initiatives to integrate playful brainstorming sessions and team-building exercises that broke the monotony and stress of project deadlines.

These initiatives not only alleviated the tension but also sparked innovative solutions to complex problems, proving that even in the most serious of workplaces, there is room for joy and that its presence can be a catalyst for innovation and team cohesion.

Digital Media Production: A Platform for Creative Joy

Producing digital media content, particularly on topics of education, self-awareness and social impact, offered a unique platform to blend creativity with purpose. I initiated project brainstorming sessions that resembled writers' rooms, where ideas were bounced around not just for their potential impact but for the storytelling joy they could bring to both creators and viewers.

This approach resulted in content that was not only informative and transformative but also engaging and enjoyable to produce and

consume, reinforcing the idea that work, even in its most earnest form, can and should be fun.

The Enduring Impact of Enjoyable Work

Reflecting on the various threads of my career, from education to aerospace, from workshops to digital media production, the philosophy of weaving fun into the professional tapestry has been a constant.

This approach has not only made the work more enjoyable for me and those I've worked with but has also enhanced creativity, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. It's a philosophy I advocate for, a testament to the belief that work, no matter how serious its objectives, benefits immeasurably from the infusion of enjoyment and play.

Happy workers get more done with less supervision and will outperform expectations given the appropriate resources and training.

Looking Ahead

As this chapter closes, the philosophy of enjoyable work stands as a beacon for future endeavors, a principle to carry forward into new projects and roles. It's a reminder that the pursuit of professional excellence and the

cultivation of a joyful work environment are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing. The journey ahead promises to be one where fun and professionalism continue to intertwine, creating a work life that is not only productive but profoundly satisfying.

Here's some nice toppings for that pie we offered earlier. They are two personal insights that have offered so much in assisting me to find flow.

First, we cannot think our way through a system built on vibration, we have to feel/sense our way. Quantum mechanics and physics have proven there is only energy, no actual physical material, that makes up the universe.

Second, your discipline in being aware of your attention, intention and interactions will guide you to the appropriate choices for each moment.

Chapter 16: Harmonizing Horizons - A Future Vision

As we draw the final threads of this narrative together, the last chapter of our journey is not merely a conclusion but a gateway to the future—a vision woven from the principles of the Live and Let Live Movement and Planetary Citizens, enriched by the dialogue and insights garnered through the "One World in a New World" podcasts.

This chapter, therefore, is a tapestry of personal transformation, global missions, and the collective call to action for a harmonious existence among people and our planet.

"One World in a New World" as a Catalyst

The launch of the "One World in a New World" podcast series has been a transformative platform, facilitating deep conversations with thought leaders from various sectors. These dialogues have explored the intersection of personal transformation and its application in addressing global challenges.

The insights gained have not only enriched my understanding but have also highlighted the interconnectedness of our collective efforts

toward a harmonious future. Many of my guests have had moments of, ‘I never thought about it that way,’ spawning apocalyptic moments of their own which they took back into their work.

The "One World in a New World" podcasts have been instrumental in this journey, offering a platform to explore the intersection of inner development and practical application in real-world situations. Through conversations with thought leaders across the globe, we've delved into the myriad ways in which personal transformation can fuel global change.

These dialogues have not only enriched my understanding but have also highlighted the interconnectedness of our missions, principles, and the collective effort required to manifest our shared vision. We’re at 14,000 subscribers with nearly a million views as of this writing, with over 130 episodes to date.

As we embark on the final leg of our journey through the narrative of transformative change and global harmony, this chapter stands as a testament to the power of dialogue, the strength of convictions, and the profound impact of collective action. It is structured around key milestones and insights that have shaped my engagement with the Live and Let Live

Movement and Planetary Citizens, illuminated by the conversations sparked through "One World in a New World."

The Genesis of Engagement

My introduction to the Live and Let Live Global Peace Movement was serendipitous, emerging from an interview with its founder for my podcast series. This conversation was not just an exchange of ideas but a pivotal moment that realigned my path towards advocating for global peace, freedom, and prosperity.

The movement's commitment to non-aggression and moral excellence resonated deeply, compelling me to contribute to its mission at a deeper level. I offered my help in leadership and two months later joined a female partner as co-directors, she taking on the Executive Director title and I, Operations Director.

At the heart of this vision lies the essence of the Live and Let Live Movement—a commitment to a world where freedom, peace, and prosperity reign supreme, guided by the principles of non-aggression and moral excellence. My role as Operations Director of the Live and Let Live Foundation has deepened my involvement in advocating for a legal and cultural framework

that cherishes human dignity and autonomy, ensuring that aggression has no place in our future in establishing freedom and peace.

The Path of Planetary Citizenship - Decades in the Making

Parallel to my engagement with Live and Let Live, my involvement with Planetary Citizens represents a longstanding commitment to fostering a sustainable and regenerative future. The recent achievement of receiving a 509(a)(2) status has been a crowning moment in our journey, marking the beginning of a structured approach to realizing our mission. It's a commitment to a world where systems serve life, integrating societal needs with the integrity of nature in designing new regenerative cultures.

Planetary Citizens represents a decades-long commitment to fostering a regenerative and sustainable future. Our achievement of a public charity status, also able to generate income, marks a pivotal moment in our journey, empowering us to build the organizational structure needed to champion our mission. We stand at the cusp of creating a world where holistic systems integrate societal needs with the integrity of nature, promoting a truly egalitarian and democratic community.

As we look to the future, we are reminded of the power of collective action and the importance of each individual's contribution to the greater whole. The principles of Live and Let Live, coupled with the mission of Planetary Citizens, provide a framework for action—a call to embody the highest standards of human character, to advocate for systems that protect and nurture life, and to engage in the co-creation of a sustainable and harmonious world.

This chapter, therefore, is both an end and a beginning—an invitation to join us in this noble endeavor. It is a call to action for all who dream of a better world, to step forward and contribute their voice, their energy, and their passion to the collective creation of a future that honors and sustains life in all its forms. Together, we have the power to transform our world, to weave a new narrative of peace, freedom, and prosperity. Let us embrace this journey with hope, courage, and unwavering commitment to the vision that unites us.

The Road Ahead

An Invitation to Co-create Our Future

As we look to the future, this chapter is not just a conclusion but an invitation—an invitation to

join us in co-creating a world characterized by peace, freedom, and sustainability. It's a call to action for everyone who dreams of a better tomorrow, to contribute their energy, passion, and ideas towards the collective creation of a future that honors and sustains life in all its forms. I invite you to join the Live and Let Live Global Peace movement at url: LiveandLetLive.org

Together, we stand on the brink of a new dawn, guided by our shared aspirations and commitments. Let this chapter serve as a beacon of hope, a source of inspiration, and a roadmap for action. The journey ahead is filled with promise, guided by the light of our collective vision for a harmonious world where humanity and the planet thrive together.

As we close this work of soulful expression, let us carry forward the lessons learned, the relationships forged, and the vision shared. The path ahead is filled with promise and potential, guided by the light of our collective aspirations. With each step, we move closer to realizing a world that reflects our highest ideals—a world where every individual can truly live and let live, and where our planet thrives alongside its stewards. This is our legacy, our challenge, and our gift to the future.

About the Author

Zen Benefiel is a unique fusion of practical wisdom and mystical exploration, holding an eclectic mix of academic degrees in Business, Project Management, and Organizational Management, along with certifications in Life Coaching, Hypnotherapy, Secondary Teaching, and Construction Partnering Facilitation.

His work transcends traditional boundaries, guiding individuals and organizations through transformation with a holistic approach that marries psychology, spirituality, and practical business insights.

Zen's pursuit of understanding the deeper connections of the universe, alongside his commitment to applying these insights in tangible ways, makes his book a beacon for those seeking to navigate their path to personal and professional fulfillment.

By advocating for the exploration of unconventional paths, Zen invites readers to unlock their potential and embrace the transformative power of living with authenticity and purpose. Thank you for your attention.