

About Steve Head



At the age of four Steve was diagnosed with asthma and as this was before the days of quick relief inhalers he spent many nights gasping for air with his head over a bucket of steaming water being nursed by his probably very scared parents.

This health challenge became the cause of many missed school days.

By the time he was 16 he became the Under 19 Northumberland squash champion and today he remains a passionate sportsman as well as being a father of two, a husband and personal development coach and speaker.

As a businessman he became the number one salesman in Bayer Pharmaceuticals in 1989 after just three years with the company. Aged just 26 he was appointed as Bayer's youngest ever Area Manager.

He wouldn't describe himself as competitive but he was heard to say once, 'who wants a drawer full of second prizes?'

In 2001 he set up Headstart, a high performance coaching company following 20 years' experience as a sports coach and 16 years in sales, marketing and training.

He runs inspirational personal development programmes and delivers keynote speeches to organisations throughout the UK and Europe.

About Steve Head

Once asked who he considered to be his target audience, and knowing that everyone needs a niche, Steve responded, 'I talk to anyone with a heartbeat.' this means that he has just under 6 billion people left to work with!

His audiences so far have ranged from 13 - 65 years old.

He is known for his down to earth, humorous delivery and practical, doable approach which puts high performance and self-improvement within reach of anyone who wants it.

His intention is definitely not for you to change your life - just to make the most of the one you've got.

Steve lives with his wife Abby and his two children Christopher and Anna in Berkshire, England.



Dedication

I dedicate this book to my brother John who died on 6th November 1987 at the age of 33. He keeps me rational and reminds me every day to enjoy the things most people take for granted.

And to our twins, Stephen and Jennifer, who never saw the light of day but whose birth changed our perspective forever.

Acknowledgements

All books have acknowledgements but in this book the people I am choosing to thank are evidence that success is not a solitary journey.

Many people have had a powerful impact on my life and I am privileged to be able to recognise them now.

I thank my beautiful wife Abby for her unconditional support and love in everything I do.

My beautiful kids Anna and Christopher for their inspiration behind every story I tell.

My mam and dad for instilling in me the character to work hard and the values that give me strength every day.

To my brother Eric for always telling me the truth and helping me see things rationally and clearly.

Kriss Akabusi, Nigel Risner and Marie Mosely who came along just at the right time. I would not have a successful business without their consistent support, encouragement and friendship.

Very special thanks to Bryan Beeson for being my Number One role model and close friend who taught me to 'Just do it!!'

Paul Dawson for spotting my talent at 15 years old. You will never know how significant that was in shaping my whole life.

Arthur Williams for trusting that I was good enough in the business world well before I had any proof.

Thanks to the 100's of kids I've coached and 1000's of people who cross my path every year. Without those rich experiences I would have nothing to say.

And we couldn't have that now could we . . .

Foreword

Let me say up front that Steve Head is a personal friend and professional co-worker in the speaking and training industry. As such I could be charged with being slightly biased in my observations on this his first experience as a 'publisher of thoughts'. I promise that I have tried to be as objective as possible about a subject that can be pretty subjective.

It is my pleasure to write the foreword to Steve's publication 'How to Avoid a Near Life Experience.' I met him some five years ago at a professional speakers' association programme in London where he was a keynote speaker talking about coaching. So much of what he said resonated with my experience as a world-class athlete that we hit it off straight away. Not only did Steve and I develop a friendship but he also coached me through the fundamentals of building a workshop and working as a facilitator on my Firestarter and Be the CEO of Your Own Career programmes.

This is an easy book to read (it took me two hours without doing the exercises) and is packed with down to earth, no nonsense, gritty ideas that come not from an ivory tower but from within the workshop arena. As you leaf through the pages and work on the contents you will soon find that you have a front row seat on one of Steve Head's personal and professional development programmes. He says within the book that the Pareto Law (the 80/20 rule) applies and that 80% of people who read this will be affected in some way but that only 20% will allow the book to go to work on their life. Is this a good moment to ask in which group you will be?

Steve's experience leaps out of the page and his anecdotal evidence provides a humane background to what at times can be an ephemeral subject. In my time working with Steve I was struck by his integrity and forthrightness and I think you may feel the same.

A word of warning though! This is not a panacea, quick fix, put-it-under-your-bed-at-night-and-hey-presto-my-life-is-sorted kinda deal, but an opportunity is provided by this guide for the serious sojourner who wants to make the most of his or her three score years and 10 and leave a mark on this world.

Congratulations on being one of the many who will pick up this book. I pray that you will be one of the few to allow its contents to make a difference in your life.

C-ya and remember to 'live a life and not your fears'.

Kriss Akabusi MBE

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Introduction

If you want to maximise your potential and use your talents to the full, then this book is for you. In fact, if you have a heartbeat you will benefit from the ideas and strategies you are going to read about in the following pages.

I meet hundreds and thousands of people from all walks of life. I meet doctors, lawyers, accountants, sales people, nurses and computer programmers. All kinds of people. Often, at my seminars and personal development programmes, we sit and talk about dreams and aspirations. I am always amazed at how many people are just not happy. They seem to be plodding along feeling unfulfilled, somehow resigned to the fact that they will probably never get the chance to do what they really want, be who they want to be or have what they want to own. Sadly, like so many, they are waiting for their retirement or some other magical day in the future when they will get their chance to go for it. They are holding back. And apparently with good reason.

People may choose to hold back because of FEAR, or because of PEER PRESSURE and other negative influences. Or they think they are just being REALISTS, believing the risks are too great. Or they LACK CONFIDENCE or SELF-AWARENESS. Some people just simply do not believe how good or capable they really are.

But they have to justify their inaction. They develop mechanisms and excuses to keep them well and truly in their rut. They say they are too old, not educated enough, too busy, too broke, or whatever it might be. Whatever the reasons, they are always ABOUT TO DO IT, they are VERY NEARLY going to enjoy the life they deserve, but, instead, they settle for the NEAR LIFE experience they currently have.

So . . .

If you want to achieve even more success, wealth, happiness, comfort, security, fulfilment or even enhanced relationships, then you are stepping in the right direction by reading this short book. Even if you just want to be more relaxed and content this book is ideal. Just by buying this book you have already made your first move towards a more consistent performance in any area of your life that needs it.

Oh, and by the way, if you do read it all the way through you are in the top 1% of the population who on average read less than one book per year. Buying this book puts you into a very prestigious category . . . You see, you are already pretty special and you haven't even reached the end of the introduction.

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Of course, having read literally hundreds of self help books and listened to as many tapes and motivational CDs, I would never suggest that this one single book is the one, but every practical idea in it I have used either as a coach or in my life personally and the results have been good to brilliant. Some of the ideas won't work for you or won't suit you, others will be exactly right.

Why bother?

Life is busy. Stress is becoming one of the major causes of sickness in the work place in the UK and USA. People, in the western world particularly, have got more than ever before - more money, more opportunity and more things - yet, as I said, most of the people I meet are feeling unfulfilled or even unhappy. They crave something else but they can't quite put their finger on what it is. But there is one thing for sure - WHAT THEY ARE DOING NOW IS NOT WORKING VERY WELL OR NOT WORKING AT ALL.

I am going to share with you here the steps you need to take if you are to become SUCCESSFUL. And if you feel that things are not that bad and that you are already enjoying some successes in your life then the ideas in this book will help you to be even more consistent and MORE SUCCESSFUL.

Through my 16 years' management experience in sales and marketing in the pharmaceutical industry, as well as the 20 years or so I have spent as a sports coach, I have learned some interesting truths about what makes certain people achieve greater levels of success than others. For reasons of simplicity I will call these people HIGH PERFORMERS. You can call them what you like, but however you think of them, the fact is some people are achieving more contentment, more wealth, more happiness and far less stress in their lives than others. Overall these people, these HIGH PERFORMERS ARE IN CONTROL of their lives and they are LOVING IT.

This doesn't mean that High Performers are not having problems or challenges. They are. It's just that, overall, they seem to be capable of more than the rest of us. They ride the challenges seemingly more effectively. They deal with failure and move on.

Are some people just naturally gifted?

Is this success something that is only available to the chosen few?

Is this success something that is only available to the chosen few?

Introduction

Well, the good news is that I have identified some very simple philosophies that these high performers employ and that any one of us could, if we chose to, also apply in our own lives.

I personally have used, and continue to use, the exact ideas that you are going to read about, in my sports life, in my various jobs at Bayer and for the last three years as a self employed High Performance Coach and Speaker.

They work, every time.

Read this book if you too want to learn the ingredients that make High Performance People and how to be one. What have you got to lose?

Here is a brief outline of the High Performance Strategies you are about to explore. As I said, it's simple stuff, but honestly, you are going to need to develop a genuine passion for success in order to apply them in your own life.

How it works

I have created just seven chapters or key themes structured in a logical sequence. Actually, I could have arranged them in any order because they are all of equal importance when it comes to maximising performance. Here is a brief outline of what you will find in each chapter. Feel free to read them in any order, but do ensure you read them all.

- **It's up to you**

Take responsibility for your life. If you do not accept that this is your life, you will always find an excuse. Did you know that one of the symptoms of mild depression is having a perception that life is out of your control? The sooner you accept that everything is down to you the sooner things will start to get better.

- **Know what you want**

You must begin to understand **your purpose and direction**. Having a sense of why you get out of bed and what you are aiming towards even in the short term is vital. Again, many people simply do not have any idea why they do what they do, nor do they have a passion for their work. Yet passion and purpose are key to personal motivation.

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- **Expect the best**

From yourself and **set your expectations high**. There is no benefit in expecting the worst or limiting your goals or vision just in case you are disappointed. The pain of failure is no less because you planned for it.

- **Motivational fuel**

Set personal goals. I have differentiated goal setting from 'Know What You Want and Why' as this is much more specific and tangible than what I call the Purpose Principle. There are some golden rules to setting and achieving personal goals and you can learn them here.

- **Get feedback**

Increasing **self-awareness is often the first step** in self-improvement. Setting up mechanisms to gain good quality, balanced feedback is pivotal to high performance. Always be open to learn and grow.

- **Create a dream team**

No one ever achieved anything great on their own. Even Steve Redgrave never once rowed past a winning line for one of his FIVE Olympic GOLD medals, by himself. So **develop powerful support teams, minimise conflict and maximise good relationships**. Who you choose to be with, listen to, learn from and possibly model, can be life changing.

- **Model what you want**

People will treat you the way you allow them to. Becoming aware of your behaviour is crucial to your success. **The way you act** will directly affect those around you.

Now I am a practical person, so all of the ideas and tips in this book are based on practical experience. I like a bit of theory but most people I meet just want to get on with it. So I have included only the stuff that has worked for me personally and for my teams and clients . . . oh and for thousands of successful people across the world too, of course.

This is not theory, or *role play*, this is *real play*.

I will now take you through each of these themes and offer several practical exercises for you to do as you read.

I know myself that I have bought books like this and promised myself I will do this exercise or that task later but somehow I got distracted and life got too busy.

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It may be worth getting a pen NOW.

Write your name on the cover of this book. Make it your book. The stuff you are going to write in it will be personal and life-changing. You don't want someone else to pick it up by mistake.

Draw on this book. Use a highlighter pen. Consider getting yourself a personal journal to capture the particularly relevant bits and to make extra notes, or to chart your progress.

So, sit up straight, with your pen in your hand and get ready to GET PRACTICAL.

By the way, my aim is not for you to change your life, just to make the most of the one you have got. I promise you all the talent you will ever need is sitting in your chair.

OK. Let's get straight to it.



Steve Head

CHAPTER 1



You are the chief executive of your life. That means you choose what you do, who you spend time with, what you eat and you choose the consequences of those choices.

Why you should read this chapter:

- **Because you need to take responsibility for your life.** If you do not accept that this is your life, you will always find an excuse.
- **Because you need to be in control.** Did you know that one of the symptoms of mild depression is having a perception that life is out of your control?
- **Because today is not a day too soon.** The sooner you accept that everything is down to you the sooner things can start to get better.

Before you get into the meat of this book please read this brief statement marked A. As you read it, consider how it makes you feel.

Statement A

You are accountable for your life . . .

Good or bad, successful or unsuccessful, happy or sad, fair or unfair, you own your life.

You are accountable, you always have been and you always will be. That may not be how you want it to be, but that is how it is.

If you don't like your job, you're accountable. If your relationships are on the rocks, you're accountable. If you are overweight, you are accountable. If you don't trust people easily, you are accountable. If you are not getting the results out of life that you feel you deserve, you are accountable.

How did it make you feel?

Did you read it and think ABSOLUTELY RIGHT! Or do you CATAGORICALLY DISAGREE!? Or do you think, perhaps WELL IT DEPENDS . . . ?

It's up to you

The funny thing is that as I travel all over the UK and EUROPE running personal development workshops with literally thousands of people from all walks of life, I ask my students the same question. I ask them how they feel about Statement A. In general everyone agrees, but it seems that there are a few conditions:

Most people say that they agree if Statement A refers to the positive areas of their lives, such as Statement B, below:

Statement B

Well it depends

If your life is going really well, you're accountable. If you love your job, you're accountable. If your relationships are rich, loving, caring and balanced, you're accountable.

It's a bit like bad golfers - every bad round is the weather's fault, or the club's fault or the noisy group ahead puts them off. Yet when they have the rare good round they are very happy to accept they did it themselves and were accountable

The thing is both statements (A and B) are ABSOLUTELY TRUE.

The greatest realisation that anyone can have is that YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF YOUR LIFE.

Good, bad, happy or sad it's completely down to you.

You are the chief executive of your life. That means you choose what you do, who you spend time with, what you eat and you choose the consequences of those choices.

It's up to you

So here's the thing. This book will be absolutely useless to you unless you categorically agree with both accountability statements.

So if you don't agree now and know that you never will, then you might as well put the book down and go off and do something else...

Still here?

Excellent! Then you are now assuming the mindset of the few - the High Performance mindset that is guaranteed to set you up for more success, contentment, achievement and happiness.