

# CHAPTER 1

## DESIRE

I am dedicating this chapter to my father, who has been a great inspiration for me. This book is called *The Power of Learning from DAD*. For the rest of the world, the first D represents ‘desire’, while the A is for ‘attitude’ and the second D for ‘decision’. But for me, this is all for my father, who I lost in a tragic accident. In this chapter I am going to begin sharing the experiences and the teaching that I got from him as a child and until I was 36, when I lost him.

We had an exceedingly difficult, but happy, family life when I was young. I was born in Sri Lanka and, during the war up until 1990, life was incredibly difficult. The memories I have from between the ages of 10 and 20 were of experiencing the war and living with fear.

In 1990, we came to the United Kingdom and we were so grateful for this wonderful nation that gave us a home when we were not able to lead a peaceful life. My parents and I started our lives here and we

had a fantastic 16 years with my dad. That was a formative period when I learned a lot from him. Prior to that in Sri Lanka, in the middle of the war, it was very difficult, and I was incredibly young.

This chapter is about the years of spending time with a great man who had huge, huge wisdom and the ability to see a lot of things and explain them in simple terminology.

This chapter is also heavily indebted to the work of Napoleon Hill, and particularly his book *Think and Grow Rich*. Hill talked about desire, and you will see many of my dad's teachings mirror those thoughts. I frequently wonder whether my dad himself may have read Hill's works and was trying in his own way to pass those insights to me. Throughout this chapter, there will be analogies between Dad's words and Hill's writing and one can therefore read this as an extended discussion of that work. For me, these are just insights passed to me from my dad.

So, what is desire? Desire is something that we have absolutely burning inside us, to do what we want to do. Every human being who reaches a particular age of understanding should have a purpose to their life and set a goal. Once they have a purpose and they have set a goal, the desire to achieve that goal needs to be developed.

Desire is a state of mind that becomes an obsession. It involves planning definite ways and means to acquire your stated dreams and backing those plans with persistence, which does not recognise failure. Sometimes there is a perception that a goal is always financial in nature, but that is not the case; it is something that you really, really want to achieve. Desire is the method by which a goal is

achieved, which can then be transmitted through to success, which is often financial.

Dad used to talk about a step-by-step plan as a means to achieving success. He said that first you just need to know exactly what you want. He always impressed on me the need to be very precise; you need to know exactly what you want and have a mental picture of that.

‘The next step,’ he said, ‘is you need to know what you are going to give in order to achieve.’ He always said there’s never a free lunch, there’s never something for nothing. He believed that if you want to achieve something, first you have got to give. You can only receive if you first give.

My subsequent studies with Bob Proctor and learning from the work of Earl Nightingale have expanded my ideas around this concept, but at the time I must admit I did not have the faintest clue what Dad was talking about. At the time, even though I studied physics, I did not quite understand the basic law that every action has its equal and opposite reaction, so exactly what you give is exactly what you receive.

Sometimes people, including myself, confuse giving with trading. Trading means doing something for something in return, which is premeditated. By doing that, the laws of nature say you cannot actually receive what you really want. These are extremely interesting ideas that I will discuss in more depth later in this book, as I discuss more about my father’s teachings.

He used to tell me a story in which one day he won the lottery. I do not believe in lotteries but for some reason he went and bought those

tickets. Having lost everything, maybe he thought someday he might win. But he always told me that if he won, he would give me half of it and the other half would go to others. In fact, he did win £50 at one point and he stuck to what he said. This may be a trivial story, but my dad was a true giver.

Another important step is to establish a definite date by which you intend to achieve; that is incredibly important. He always stressed that I might not achieve by that particular date because I wasn't perfect and could not be sure what would happen in the future. And he used to tell me I must pick a date and work towards it. 'When you do get to the date,' he said, 'do not be disappointed if you have not achieved, just accept that you are not perfect. But carry on and devise another plan.'

That takes us to the next point, which is to create a definite plan for carrying out your desires. Begin at once, whether you are ready or not, to put this plan into action. Do it now, absolutely now. Do not think about it and procrastinate; people that do that do not achieve their goals. The people who achieve their goals have a burning desire as soon as they think about something to get it done.

Dad also advised to write out a clear and concise statement on what you intend to achieve, to imagine you have already got it, and then work backwards to the present. Live from that space. There is a lot of research by Napoleon Hill, Earl Nightingale, and other great authors, talking about goal achievement, success and life fulfilment, that builds on this point. Dad used to talk about just living in that space and I can now relate to that.

Finally, he said, ‘Repeat what you really want, just emotionalise it every day and put it into your subconscious mind.’ Obviously, I did not understand this creative process at the time, but he meant build it into your mind. In fact, when I went to Harvard, my life started to change through my studies with Professor Clay Christensen. Around the time that I lost my dad in the accident, I had an encounter with Clay. He talked to me about the laws of nature, which I did not understand at the time.

Dad used to talk a lot about values and these steps that I have described. He used to say, as Hill has said, that if you truly desire something so keenly that your desire becomes an obsession, it has got to be a positive. You will have no difficulty in convincing yourself that you will acquire it, if it is there, deep in your subconscious mind.

The objective is to want something that is valuable – something that you really want, rather than what others want. You must then become so determined to have it and convince yourself that you will have it, because thoughts become things. Now I relate to what Bob Proctor said and what Dad used to say, which was, ‘If you can see it in your mind, then you will hold it in your hand.’ I never understood that, but it is true, because your ambitions can become reality through imagination, careful planning and self-discipline.

Only those who become conscious for achievement ever accumulate rewards and achieve. To expand on this idea: you do not always need to do hard labour, sometimes it is about shifting your thinking. Dad used to talk about working on remote control. What he meant was that he wasn’t necessarily always doing things, but he was always thinking;

he understood things were happening in the way that he would like things to happen. Again, it was exceedingly difficult at the time to comprehend, but now I can reflect and understand.

You can never have success in great quantity unless you work yourself into that desire and believe in that desire. Hill said that every great leader, from the dawn of civilisation down to the present, has been a dreamer, and my dad also talked about dreams, by which he meant imagination. He always compared science and theology, with the science being about the cause and effect, the action and reaction, and my thinking really came from him.

In theology, Hill observed how Christianity is the greatest predictive power in the world today, because its founder was an intense dreamer who had the vision and imagination to see reality in the spiritual form, or non-form. Sometimes reading the word spiritual goes into a different tangent, but it is about the non-form, the things we cannot see. Throughout this book I will talk about non-form, rather than using the word spiritual, which is a synonym.

Before it is transmuted into a physical form, if you do not see great success in your imagination it will never come to you, he always said.

Dad always talked about the power of tolerance. He said tolerance and an open mind are practical necessities for life, and if you have a desire and you want to achieve, tolerance is absolutely crucial. He was the embodiment of tolerance, yet when I was young, I was the opposite. Mum had a fiery personality and perhaps I got some of that from her or from my environment, but nevertheless my dad was absolutely tolerant.

He used to tell us a story about a couple who were arguing. The husband was very tolerant, but the wife had a lot to say to him. She wanted him to react and he was not reacting so she got really annoyed. She threw the water from the sink at him and demanded he react rather than being completely quiet, but he just stood up and walked away.

There has never been a time more favourable for people to dream and to desire to achieve. There is no substitute for hard work, but it is very important to have a deep desire and plan to acquire your share of success – you are not taking away from anyone, because there is an abundance there – you just need to take your piece.

My dad always encouraged me from an incredibly young age; he said do what you like to do. Even though he gave me advice, he always let me do what I wanted. I am now practising that with my girls, even though sometimes it is not easy.

To win these massive stakes you must capture the spirit of the great pioneers of the past, whose dreams have given to civilisation all that now has value. He talked about the discovery of America. He talked a lot about Henry Ford, as did Hill. They observed how Ford was a poor, uneducated man who dreamed of the horseless carriage. He just worked with ballsy pizzazz, without waiting for an opportunity to fail. Now, in the 21st century, cars are everywhere and the extension of Ford is Tesla, taking that human element away. The horses were taken by Ford and now Tesla is going to take away the human element with autonomous cars. More dreams are coming into effect.

I remember Dad telling me about the Wright brothers. He said they dreamed about a machine that could fly. They were two mechanics

and they said they could do it, while the rest of the world said it was impossible. Even though their flying machine took them a long time and the first version only flew for a few seconds, and even though there were sceptics, they thought they could fly across the Atlantic. Dad always said that if you have a deep desire and you want to do something, just go and do it. When it is done, those same observers will have a different view.

He always said we are not here to compete – if you really want competition, then compete with yourself, push yourself every day to make progress. That fits in very well with my research now, where you set a goal and then we say, as Earl Nightingale did, ‘success is a progressive realisation of a worthy goal’.

While I am writing *The Power of Learning from DAD*, I’m so pleased to connect the pieces of the jigsaw. It is making huge sense to me – what I learned in my formative years in Sri Lanka, in the United Kingdom, and then, after losing him, reflecting upon everything that he had spoken to us about.

Dad always talked to me about how the oak sleeps in the acorn, the bird waits in the egg, and because it is meant to happen, it will happen. You do not really need to do anything for the acorn to become the oak tree, but nature helps. He used to say you have to do certain things in a certain way every day. I read about that now and I would love to ask him whether he read these books that I am reading now.

He talked about a burning desire to do something. When he was with us, on the brink of the 21st century, he said the world no longer rejected ideas like it used to when he was young. Now, the acceptance

is there and if you come up with ideas, there is only a small minority who will say things are not going to work. There is an acceptance that you can think differently and bring new ideas into reality.

Remember, too, that many who succeed in life get off to a bad start and pass through heart-breaking struggles. The turning points in the lives of those who succeed usually come at the moment of some crisis, through which they are introduced to their other selves. I can absolutely relate to that. Dad went through various things and, in my own way, my life changed with losing him in that tragic accident on 23 July, 2006. I absolutely changed and over the past 14 years I have been through a gradual realisation of everything.

Dad talked about the renowned poet John Milton, and how he became successful and identified a lot of things in his life after becoming blind. Rather than just sitting thinking and doing nothing as a result of blindness, Milton continued to dream and translate his dreams into organised thought. My Dad talked a lot about Milton, and also about Edison, the world's greatest inventor. Edison was a telegraph operator who believed in more. One of my dad's early jobs was as a telegraph operator but he failed miserably on many occasions to tap into the genius that slept within his brain.

Dad would always say it is not the people that attend the top business schools and top universities that are creative. We are all creative, we all have the desire, but we have to train ourselves to deliver. The problem is, for lots of people, that does not make sense. How do you do it? Perhaps a lot of people have unconscious competence. Some people can play music without learning it, but some people have to learn music to play music.

The other thing Dad always used to say was, ‘Do not wish for anything, but instead be ready to receive it.’ That is another idea that Hill also spoke about. You are not ready for anything until you really believe you can do it. He talked about the state of mind to believe, not just to desire and hope.

He was incredibly open minded. He said that it is especially important because closed minds are not going to get anywhere. He said no more effort is required than to aim high, demand what you want and accept nothing less. A great poet, Jessie B Rittenhouse, once said that if you bargain in life for a penny, then a life will pay no more. That sums it up quite nicely. Dad always said that when we spoke in Tamil, which is one of the world’s oldest languages and I am translating that to English. Even though he studied in a number of languages, in the household in Sri Lanka we spoke Tamil. He said, ‘I bargained with life for a penny, and guess what, that is what I got.’ It is interesting that he clearly understood that.

There is one more story that I would like to share. When I was incredibly young, Dad used to recount a story, which probably has its origins in Hill’s book to which this chapter is indebted. There were two friends and one was gravely ill, but incredibly calm and strong. Fearing this may be his last opportunity, the man visited his sick friend in hospital as he was about to undergo a serious operation. He was so fragile the doctors feared for his life. As they wheeled him down to the operating theatre, the sick man just whispered feebly into his friend’s ear, ‘do not be disturbed, machan’, which is what they call a friend or buddy in Sri Lanka. Despite the nurses and doctors thinking he may not pull through, he did. He survived that operation through nothing

but his own desire to live. The doctors thought he had no chance, but he wanted to live. He would not have pulled through but for his refusal to accept the possibility of death.

My dad talked about the power of desire, backed by faith. When it comes to faith you have to be incredibly careful; I'm not necessarily talking about religious faith. I am talking about, and Dad believed in, the faith of believing in oneself. Now I have a different definition of faith, which I have taken from Clarence Smithson and which I would like to share here – the ability to see the invisible, believe in the incredible and receive what the masses think is impossible.

The opposite of faith is fear. Both are unknown and intangible – you can either have faith or fear. An example is that ill man going to the operating theatre. He had complete faith and believed he would come through. If that had started to shake, if he had started to think he was doomed, perhaps maybe he would have died.

There are so many medical surgeons and doctors that I have heard talk about peace of mind that leads a particular operation into success or failure. In fact, one of our good friends, Professor Nadey Hakim – who is a world-renowned surgeon specialising in transplant and obesity surgery in the United Kingdom – always says it is the state of mind, not just of the surgeon but also the patient, that leads to success. He talks about the importance of calming patients and telling them that everything is going to be fine, even though in some cases the surgeon might have a different view. It is important that emotions are put in harmony.

Through the power of nature, you can actually achieve anything

that you like. Nature wraps up in the impulse of strong desire something that recognises no such word as impossible and no such reality as a failure, Hill said. There is no failure, only temporary setbacks, and you need that to go deep into the psyche.

Am I practising this 100%? Not at all. I am just sharing this information, and I am learning again. I am greatly confident that by sharing this and reflecting on it, different ideas will come, and I am humbly confident that I am making progress and by making progress I can help everyone.

To wrap up this chapter, while I am talking about Dad, for me it is my dad. For some of the readers, the dad will represent desire, attitude and decision, and we will continue to look in more depth at those over the coming chapters.