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first

this
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photo iam Theckah

When I was little,
there was a grand piano
in our house.

It was impressive.
A thing of beauty.

Every single detail
was fascinating.

The keys.
The sounds.
Even the smells.

I was about 5 when I
was first allowed to play
it — and in those first few
seconds, I was hooked.

Throughout my childhood,
I continued to play. I never
had a lesson, never prac-
tised consistently, never
played in front of anyone,
never learned to read mu-
sic, and never played the
boring or tricky bits of the
songs I liked.

I learned to play through
an intermittent and incon-
sistent process of trial and
error — simply banging the
keys now and then to see
what happened.

I'd love to finish this story
with tales of how I became
a professional concert
pianist in my spare time,
but as you might expect,
I was never any good.

My piano story is the story
of unfulfilled potential,
being amateur and eventu-
ally quitting. No surprise
— what else did I expect?

But...

...and this is going to hurt
a little...

...you might be trying
to run your business like
I played the piano.

Lacking focus, consistency
and direction. Avoiding
the hard or boring work,
overlooking the foundati-
ons, and not seeking help
from people further down
the path.

It sounds harsh when
I write it out, but in my
experience, it's true.

And, just like in my piano
career, you won't see
progress, improvement,
or any real success with
this approach.

**BUT, GREAT BUSINESSES
DO GET BUILT.**

SO WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
ELTON JOHN AND ME?

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Or, more relevantly,

what's the difference

between a creative freelancer, entrepreneur
or business owner who merely survives and
one who truly thrives?



IT'S AN ATTITUDE, they are all 'Pro'

CLEAR CONSISTENT

Pro's are clear on the problem they solve, the value they offer and who they do their work for.

They are clear on their goals and the steps they need to take to reach them.

They take those steps, every day, without fail.

They have the commitment to do the work that matters and stick to a plan long enough to see results.

COMMITTED

When they do see results, they know how to analyse, regroup, reframe, and start again.

In the simplest terms, they are clear, consistent and committed.

Most people run a business without these three things, and, as a result, they don't get their desired results.

Pro results go to those who run their business like a Pro.

It's why I'm not a pianist. I wasn't Pro.

It's also why I am a writer, cyclist, dad, husband, mentor, coach, and business owner. I approach all these with a Pro attitude.

That's the only difference.

WHY I RIDE

Rewards.
Sacrifices.

Early starts.
Late finishes.

Getting up, dressed and out the door
even when I don't want to.

Working hard when the rest of the world is
only dreaming about it.

There's a fair bit of loneliness.

Pressing forward even when there is no
one watching or cheering me on.

No medals.

Just me versus the work,
the road,
the hill,
the challenge,
the weather.

It's about pressing on when every fibre
in my body is ready to stop.

It's about discomfort.
Leaning into it.

Exposing my limits, building my confidence
and reaching heights I never thought
I would.

And,
when I've finally worked hard enough, for
long enough, I am the best that I can be,
and that's all anybody could ask for.

Me versus me.

With only one winner.

This is why I ride,

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AND,
RUN MY OWN BUSINESS.

I CAN DIVIDE MY LIFE NEATLY INTO TWO PARTS

before

and after.

is
better
after

14 so, are you an amateur or a Pro?

HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?

The honest answer isn't going to satisfy you,
and it is...

YOU PROBABLY WON'T.

Let me explain.

I have a
headache.

I know I have
a headache,
but I don't
know why.

It could be dehydration,
too much caffeine, or not enough caffeine.
I might have been looking at a screen too long,
I might need glasses. It might be the after-effects of
covid, or I simply need more sleep.

Whatever 'it' is, I only know how I feel.

I CAN'T SAY 'I AM X'

I CAN ONLY SAY 'I FEEL Y'



how does it feel to be an amateur?

-

here are some of the key symptoms.

1. EVERYTHING FALLS ON YOU

— You take on all the roles, all the hats, all the time. And, when you finally get a break, you find yourself getting pulled back in to firefight and jump on the latest customer request.

2. YOU'RE WORKING LONGER HOURS

— Your week keeps getting longer. You are now working early mornings, into the evenings, on weekends, and worse, while you're on holiday.

3. YOU'RE NOT MAKING MORE MONEY

— Profit isn't growing. Instead, it has stayed the same, month on month (maybe year on year). Lot's of work without the relative payout.

4. YOU KEEP SWITCHING PRIORITIES

— Podcasts, blogs, ads, funnels, social media, the list is endless. You try each new idea in an attempt to kickstart your business, but you don't get the results you are looking for. The only thing that happens is you add another task to your already long to-do list.

5. YOU FIND YOURSELF WONDERING, 'Am I cut out for this?'

— Running a business is hard, but sometimes, the relentless uphill battle, makes you stop and ask, 'should it really be this hard?'

OR, TO PUT
IT ANOTHER
WAY: YOU
NEED HELP
WITH....

FINDING
NEW
CLIENTS.

MAKING
MORE
MONEY.

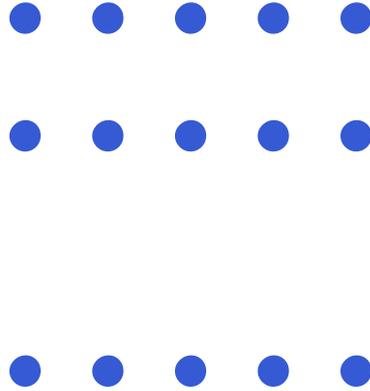
WORKING
LESS.

MAKING
DECISIONS.

LANDING
BIGGER
CLIENTS.

MANAGING
YOUR
MONEY.

FOCUSING
YOUR
EFFORTS.



DOES THIS RESONATE?

yes
no

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SO WHAT NOW?

We need to go back to basics
and fix the foundations.

SO WHERE DO WE START?

It starts
with you.

shift
mindset,
understand
customers,
establish
offer,
define
brand,
craft

message,
create
systems,
promote
brand,
close
sales,
deliver
more.



IT STARTS WITH YOU

Every owner, freelancer and entrepreneur needs to work on themselves first.

Why?

Because your business is a direct reflection of your character.

So, before you change your business, you need to change yourself.

This is why the first area we start with is you.

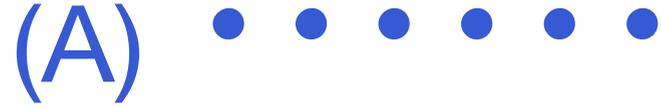
Your use of time.
Your habits and rituals.
Your mindset.

We call it turning 'Pro'.

And it is the unifying feature of all successful business owners.

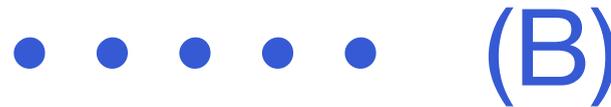
**ARE YOU READY TO BUILD A BETTER BUSINESS?
BECAUSE IT STARTS WITH A BETTER YOU!**

In its simplest form,
every journey is a journey
from where you are now



(A)

to where you want to be

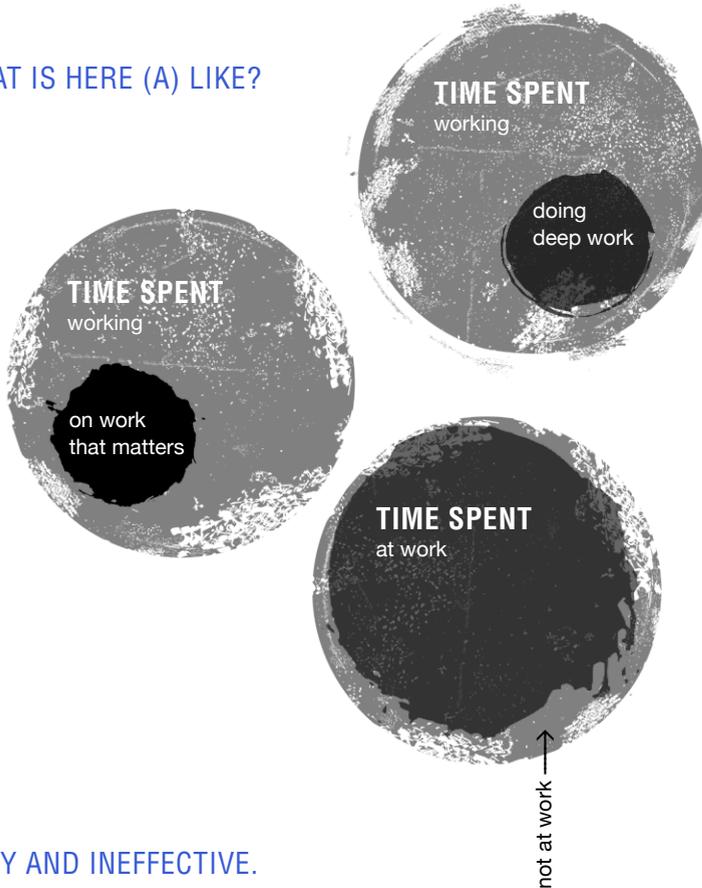


(B)

**so, let's start
your journey
with where
you are now.**

you are here (A)

WHAT IS HERE (A) LIKE?



BUSY AND INEFFECTIVE.

Work is hard, days are long, and results are slow. In response, you lean in, get your head down and work more. It's easy to see why - it's obvious, really - to get more, you need to work more; to get results quicker, you need to work harder. And unfortunately, this is the mindset that gets reinforced online.

This leads to longer hours, less time with the family, more stress, less sleep and burnout.

This isn't fun, it isn't effective, and it isn't sustainable.

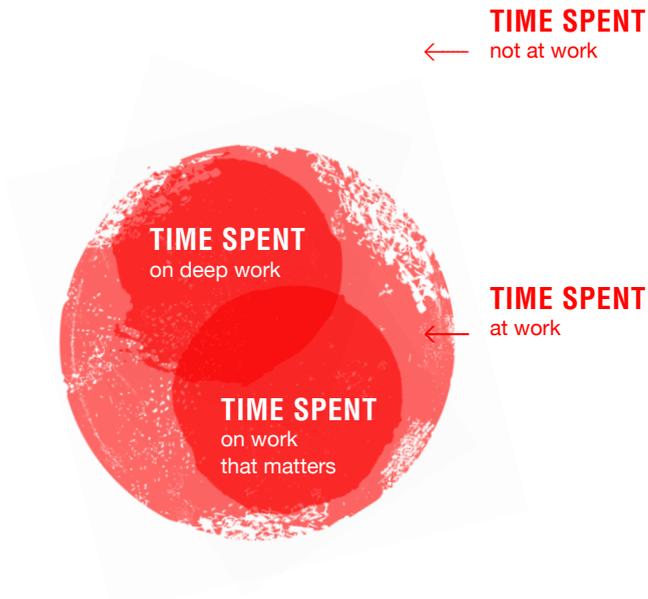
**SO WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?
WORK LESS AND ACHIEVE MORE.**

We don't need more time; we need to do less. We need to spend less time on what keeps us busy, more time on what makes an impact, and better time on what makes an impact.

This is the goal.

(B)

WHAT IS HERE (B) LIKE?



THIS SOUNDS GREAT.

And, I can tell you from first-hand experience.

THIS FEELS GREAT.

So, how do we get here?

how do we do less and achieve more?

FOCUS AND DISCIPLINE

1. FOCUS

We can only work on what matters if we know what matters.

2. DISCIPLINE

We can only do great work if we set up the conditions to do great work.

To repeat, we need to spend less time on what keeps us busy, more time on what makes an impact, and better time on what makes an impact.

Ok, but really how?

Small yet significant changes, implemented daily.

03. 3HRS A DAY

— your business needs less of your time than you think it does. If you can find a way to get 3hrs of deep work done every day, your business will be unrecognisable a year from now.

— what you spend time on and what matters are not the same thing. Work out what actually makes a difference and spend 80% of your time doing that.

HERE ARE 14 TO GET YOU STARTED

01. FLIP YOUR TIME

04. STAY FRESH

— sprint, rest, sprint, rest. The critical word here is 'rest'. Rest allows us to recover so we can take on the next challenge with a fresh mind and body.

— take control of your environment, routine and calendar. You need the physical and mental space to do your best work, or else you won't.

02. TAKE CONTROL

07. TIME BOX

— Parkinson's Law states that work expands to fill the time you allow. If that time is unlimited, the task can grow beyond all measure. So put a time limit on each task; when the time is done, so are you.

05. ONE THING

— stop multitasking. It might feel productive, but multitasking is the perfect example of shallow, busy, ineffective work. Say out loud, 'one thing at a time, one thing after another'.

08. NOT WORK

— schedule time for things that aren't work in exactly the same way as you would schedule those things that are. If you don't, the first thing you will lose is time for you.

06. TURN OFF THE PHONE

— a large team of people are currently dedicating their entire life's work to making your phone as addictive and distracting as possible. They have an unlimited budget and a whole host of dirty tricks to fall back on. So fight back in the most straightforward way you can - turn your phone off.

— the goal of a great business is to do great things, not many things. Before you add something to your business, ask yourself what you will stop doing first.

09. ONE IN, ONE OUT

11. SAY NO

— it's ok to say no. No, is a sign of focus.

— pointless tasks aren't even worth doing badly. Add a 'not-to-do' list to your planning and outsource anything that someone else could do better, faster or cheaper than you can.

10. DO LESS

— to do our best work, we must arrive at our desks ready to do our best work. Learn what gives you energy and what takes it away, and act accordingly.

12. TURN ON

Nothing here is groundbreaking.

quality
beats
quantity.

focus
beats
distraction.

IT IS SIMPLE.
BUT IT IS NOT EASY.

— leave your work at work.
Just as we turn on before
we start, we also have to
turn off after we finish. So,
whatever you need to do,
take time to switch off at the
end of the day.

— finish when you are done.
Some days you will have to
stay late — responsibility
has its price. But the impact,
not the duration of your
work, matters most. So,
when you achieve your goal
for the day, call it a day.

13.
TURN OFF

14.
FINISH

SO WHAT NOW?
READ THIS

I have to be honest with you; I'm not the first person to come up with the idea of Turning Pro. Steven Pressfield wrote an entire book on it; he even titled it Turning Pro.

Simple and to the point.

Steven states that everything we struggle with is because we are living our lives as amateurs.

The solution to every single one of our problems is to Turn Pro.

Turning Pro is free, but it's not without cost. Turning Pro demands sacrifice, like an interior odyssey, whose trials are survived only at great cost, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually.

And when we Turn Pro, we give up a life we may have become extremely comfortable with.

It hurts.

It's messy.

It's scary.

No one is born a Pro;
it needs to be learned.

Trained.

Grown.

Deliberately, purposefully, over time.

But, in return for our efforts, we find our power, will, voice, and self-respect. We become who we always were but had, until then, been afraid to be.

And, when we finally reach this mythical state, life gets very simple indeed.

WHAT WE GET WHEN WE TURN PRO IS, WE FIND OUR POWER. WE FIND OUR WILL AND OUR VOICE AND WE FIND OUR SELF-RESPECT. WE BECOME WHO WE ALWAYS WERE BUT HAD, UNTIL THEN, BEEN AFRAID TO EMBRACE._ Steven Presfield

I highly recommend you read Turning Pro.

From my own experience, I can cleanly divide my life into two sections: before turning Pro and after.

It's hard to explain — it wasn't an epiphany; I didn't reach enlightenment — I'm the same person with the same strengths and weaknesses, but everything has been different since I turned Pro.

Life and work are still hard, just more straightforward.

Simpler.
Calmer.

It's still a work in progress, but, hands down, the most significant change I ever made to my business was this change that I made to myself.

I wish I'd known about this book or had a mentor to guide me; the journey would have been much smoother.

IT'S DANGEROUS TO GO ALONE

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I couldn't do it on my own.

About 9 years ago I decided to get back into cycling. I knew I could do it by myself. I've been responsible for my training since I was 16, and I've had some pretty good results.

So, off I went.

A year later, I hadn't got very far. Metaphorically speaking. Literally, I had ridden over 10,000 km.

I'd made some steps forward. I was working things out, ironing out training rides, routes and nutrition, but it was all through trial and error, and that was making progress hard and slow.

Too hard and slow in fact.

A year after I started, I quit. 3 years ago, the same thoughts started to come back. I missed cycling, I wanted to try again, but I knew I couldn't make it on my own. I needed to invest in a coach.

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They've learned all the lessons I needed to learn, their knowledge and experience was for sale, so I hired one.

3 years later, I'm unrecognisable as a cyclist.

I'm not getting the call-up for the Tour de France any time soon, but the results are unquestionable. Could I have done it on my own? A stubborn part of me still says yes, but realistically, this fast, this far?

NOT A CHANCE.



I'm getting comfortable with this fact.

I won't be your first call when you have difficulty with your business.

If fact, the first thing you try won't involve a call at all. First, you'll try to solve all your problems on your own.

I understand. I'm the same. We are creative people. Entrepreneurial people. We make a living out of finding solutions to people's problems.

And after all, if we can do it so well for other people, then surely we can do it for ourselves.

But—and this is a big but—to solve our own problems, we need an objective opinion, someone who sees the problem

as it is, not as it appears to us. Unfortunately, we can never get enough distance between us and our business to view the situation objectively.

But even though it's impossible, we try anyway. When we try, we tend to use two methods.

First, trial and error, and second, learning stuff.

Neither of these work very well, and I have a long list of reasons why, but one important reason is worth mentioning here: neither trial and error nor books give us the outside perspective that our business truly needs.

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A faster, more effective, and more reliable option is option three. And that is, to ask for help.

Admit you have a problem and ask for that outside objective opinion. Have someone ask the tough questions and then not let you settle for the easy, lazy, answers. You are too close to the problem, you can't see the wood for the trees and you need to get out of the way so you can get the help you need.

It's what separates amateurs from Pros.

Amateurs ask as a last resort after all other options are exhausted.

Pros ask early and often.

The best ask before the problem exists at all.

So, here I am.

A creative mentor to creative entrepreneurs, ready to help; what will you ask me?

SERIOUSLY, SEND ME AN EMAIL AND ASK.

iain@iain.work

iain.work/this

**AND FINALLY,
WHAT IF I OFFERED
TO SHOW YOU HOW TO,**

- turn Pro.
- reframe your use of time.
- control your calendar.
- focus your day.
- prioritise effectively.
- work on what matters.
- be all in at work and all off at home.
- take control of your money.
- make better decisions.
- work as much or as little as you want.
- have calm and planned days.
- grow your business without simply working more.
- create the conditions to do your best work.
- work less, stress less and achieve more.

**WOULD YOU TAKE ME UP
ON THIS OFFER?**

attention and time

GOOD LUCK, AND LET ME KNOW HOW IT GOES.

And then you can build something purposefully (rather than accidentally).

Each small change feels unimportant at first but will compound over time into remarkable results.

And it's up to you to decide.

To decide what's important, to change what you want and to build the habits and rituals that serve and suit you.

And now is the best time to start.

If I could condense this down to its essential pieces, it would only be two words long.

TIME AND ATTENTION.

Are you spending it on what matters?

Are you letting others spend it for you?

Are you busy or effective?

As you notice your answers, you can make small adjustments.

So you can spend your time intentionally (rather than reactively), and you can give your attention wisely (rather than automatically).

TL;DR //



consistency /
commitment /
clarity /
consistency /
commitment /

fix
this
first