

Juice

Philip Grosset

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The Casa Pepe

“Don’t worry, it’s nothing serious. We’re just in the area speaking to people about the Casa Pepe. You been there yet?” The old lady stared back blankly, clearly not the frequent diner they were looking for. Paul shuffled self-consciously on the doorstep, trying to lean out of the rain as the confident young Geordie at his side slipped slickly into his pitch.

“Like a lot of your neighbours, I guess you love fine dining, yes?”

Should he join in? Paul had trailed Ray for the past hour, and thought he had picked up a smattering of the pitch. It was an interview, after all: perhaps he needed to push himself forward a little?

“Who’s he?”

The woman nodded towards Paul, knitting her brow in an expression of concern. Paul smiled weakly, but no words came. A cold rivulet of water trickled down the back of his neck. Ray leapt in, not missing a beat.

“Paul is my colleague. He’s just started in the business - I’m showing him the ropes. We’re expanding so much because everyone’s snapping up these VIP dining cards. Now, do you eat out occasionally?”

Without another word, the lady half shook her head, and started to close the door. For a horrible moment, Paul had visions of the pushy door to door salesman, bodily thrusting himself into the disappearing gap, the helpless old lady protesting weakly, but to no avail.

“Juice! Have a nice day now. Take care.” In the time it took for Paul to open his mouth to say goodbye, Ray had scribbled something on a piece of paper, sprinted down the path, along the pavement and up to the neighbouring doorstep. Paul scrambled after him, Ray already rapping on the next door. “Don’t waste your time with doorbells. Sometimes you can’t hear them, so you don’t know if it’s worked or not. You end up hanging around for nothing. Did it work? Shall I try again? Well, if they’re in, they’ll have heard that.”

For three, possibly five seconds, Ray waited; then, turning smartly, he trotted towards the next house. “Juice. I’ll add them to my callbacks. They’ll be out working - just the people we want.”

No answer at three houses in a row. Then, a frail man in a dressing gown, followed by a startled young woman, who threw constant nervous glances over her right shoulder. What was she looking at, wondered Paul? Was she minding a child, or was she being threatened by some unseen, menacing figure? Should he say something? There was something about the girl’s expression. Perhaps she was begging with her eyes for Paul to write down some offer for help that would allow her to respond wordlessly? Absently, he tapped his side pocket for a pen.

“It’s a brilliant job for keeping fit,” shouted Ray, already two doors away, as Paul realised with a start that he had been left standing in a split second daydream. “You’ll soon be able to give up all that sport.”

When Paul caught up, breathing heavily, Ray was in full flight with a bed-befuddled young man in his early twenties; a student, Paul guessed, or perhaps a night worker.

“Great, you’ve heard of it then?” Ray was enthusing. “Now how many times a month would you and your mates eat out? Once or twice, yeah?” Befuddled Man nodded carefully, as if the question were an important test of character. “Great, well this is for you. Now is it your mates or your partner that you normally go out with?”

“Well, er, I don’t really have a girlfriend at the minute. Mates. Mostly. But we haven’t been to the Casa Pepe.”

“Brilliant, that’s why we’re here! We don’t want to give away free food to people who already come. Now the beauty of the VIP dining card is that every time you eat out with your mates, *they* pay, while *you* eat for free. Sounds pretty good, doesn’t it?” Ray nodded encouragingly at the young man, before continuing. “Now for just nineteen ninety-five today, you receive six months of complimentary two for one dining. If you go out with a few mates, you’ll even get a free carafe of house wine. Do you prefer red, or white?”

“Um, red.”

“That’s great. Now these are flying today – shall I put you down for just the one, or are you wanting a couple for your mates as well?”

Although his awkwardness had not abated, Paul found himself drawn into the drama of the situation. The young man ate out occasionally, certainly often enough to justify the purchase price. He had friends, who might also make use of the card. Perhaps they could club together to share the cost, five pounds each in a shared house? The man in front of him, flicking a tousel of black hair from in front of his round-rimmed glasses, had a decision to make. Inadvertently, Paul found himself leaning forward slightly.

“Well, it sounds really good. I’ll definitely think about it.”

An anti-climax. Paul should have felt vaguely deflated, but instead he began to turn over the person in front of him. About his own age. The t-shirt of a band that Paul saw at Roundhay Park a couple of years ago. Inside the front door, which opened straight into the living room, a pile of abandoned books. Paul struggled to make out the titles. Something in French. A novel? A textbook? On closer inspection, the man looked a little old to be a full time student. Perhaps a post-grad? Or maybe the book belonged to a house mate?

Ray asked a few more questions, then chatted briefly about various town centre pubs. He pressed once more, but the young man was more confident in his decision this time. In the space of a few seconds, the situation had gone from dead

cert, to nothing. And yet Ray was smiling, and both men parted with a cheerful exchange, the young man even laughing at Ray's final joke. Paul felt himself become intrigued. By the young man. By Ray. By Ray's perma-smile. Why was he excited enough to sprint around the drizzly streets of Leeds, with such scanty evidence of reward?

"This is great," enthused Ray. "We're really crossing off the negatives this morning. You see, I don't expect to make a sale during the day. Every now and again perhaps. But I'm building up lots of positive callbacks for tea time." He indicated a series of smudged circles on a crowded piece of paper. "These'll all be out working, and they're the people we want. Doing all this leg work during the day means I'll have enough time to get back to them all. It's simple, really. See a lot of people, you'll find your sales."

"Don't you get nervous?" wondered Paul, aloud to himself, as Ray had already snicked open the metal gate, and was striding up the concrete path of the neighbouring terrace.

"You get to meet a lot of people, and make good money... Hi, it's nothing serious. We're just giving away some free food for the Casa Pepe. Do you like free food?"

Struggling to catch up without an ostentatious display of effort, Paul started at the bleary vision in front of him at the next door. The man looked to be in his late thirties, early forties, wild tufts of greying hair competing for the space left to them by

the single jet-black eyebrow. He had a paring knife in his left hand; a streak of blood was oozing along the index finger of his right. Presumably, he was in the process of peeling his latest victim. Paul hoped that Ray would wrap things up quickly so they could run on to the next door.

“Come in,” deadpanned the man, “I’m in the middle of summat, but I can give you a minute.” What could Ray be thinking? Smiling breezily, Ray brushed past the man, into the front room. The man raised his eyebrow at Paul, creasing his brow into a dozen furrows; the fact that he obviously fancied his odds against two able-bodied men did little to allay Paul’s fears. Nevertheless, something drew him in. And just like that, Paul crossed the line between shuffling nervously outside on the doorstep, to standing miraculously on the patterned nylon carpet of the front room of a complete stranger. Soothed by the disarming whiff of cooking smells, Paul felt foolish.

“Now then, pal,” nodded the stranger, offering, then withdrawing the bloodied hand. “I go up the Casa Pepe now and again. I were thinking of going this weekend. So what you offering?” he continued, fixing Paul with an attentive expression. Paul felt his cheeks burn and his stomach turn over; his body felt by turns weightless, then drawn by an invisible g-force. He wanted to open his mouth, to explain everything, but he couldn’t remember how. Yet again, Ray was on hand.

“What I like to do,” called Ray from the kitchen corner that adjoined the living room, “is to add a drop of ketchup. It really peeps up mince and taties. Have you tried it?”

The tide receded, leaving Paul floundering on the fireplace rug. Paul could hear the sound of rattling and cupboard rummaging from the kitchen as the two men continued the conversation. Laughter emerged, mixed with the sound of chopping and a running tap. A moment or two later, they returned, smiling at some shared quip.

“Well Gerry here likes a spot of fine dining,” explained Ray, extending an avuncular arm around Gerry’s shoulder as he steered him back into the living room. “And he’s in a bit of trouble with the missus, so he could do with a VIP dining card to get him out of trouble. Now the way it works, Gerry, is that when you and Jacqui dine out at the Casa Pepe, you pay for your main meal, but Jacqui eats for free. Now you can do that as often as you like for the next six months, up to thirty times. Slip the card to the waiter on your way in, and she doesn’t even have to know about it. Now that’s just nineteen ninety-five today for all that free dining. How would you like to pay? Cash or cheque? Most of your neighbours have been paying by cash, but it’s up to you.”

To Paul’s astonishment, Gerry crossed the room to the mantelpiece, lifted the lid of a cream pottery pot pourri dish, and returned, unfolding a twenty pound note.

Ray scribbled a few pen marks on the corner of an A4 colour printed card, then tore along the perforated strip, handing the large portion to Gerry. “You just need to remember to take this with you, and to let the waiters know when you give your order. I hope Jacqui enjoys her cannelloni. I tell you what Gerry. Do you think I could just borrow your loo before we go?”

Gerry beckoned to the stairs in the far corner of the room, then turned his gaze back to Paul, as Ray's heavy footfalls receded and the bathroom door clicked open.

"Tough game this," observed Gerry. "Do you get many people tell you to fuck off?"

"I, er, don't really know. Not today."

"Spect you do. Nowt against you mind. But you must get a lot of folk round here tell you to fuck off. A lot of ignorant people."

Paul managed a watery smile, conscious not only of Gerry's stare, but of the muffled sound of urination from above. A brief hawking sound, then the flush of a toilet.

"So, do you work nights?" managed Paul.

"I wish. Just lost me job on Tuesday. That's why I'm in the dog house with our lass. We'll need to save a bit of cash now."

"So I guess the VIP dining card will come in handy," suggested Paul, emboldened by his success at breaking the ice.

Scrutinising the card afresh, Gerry cocked his head on one side, as if struggling with an intricate mental calculation, but before the frown could finish forming across his brow, Ray bustled back into the room; with a few final words of departure, he escorted Paul out of the front door and into the comparative bright of the street.

“Juice. You’re very lucky. You don’t normally make a sale in the day, so that’s a bonus.” Ray stopped dead in his tracks, causing Paul to bundle into the back of him. “It’s a good start, but I don’t want you thinking that it’s too easy. Never prejudge a person, never prejudge your territory. That’s how we got that sale. But the way you get real success is by working hard for eight hours in the field, not by getting lucky a few times in the morning. I’m looking for someone who can work hard, but also someone I can trust. Someone to help me build a crew of people, but someone who is ambitious enough to run their own business too. Can I trust you, Paul?”

Obediently, Paul nodded. For almost the first time in two hours, Ray had stopped moving; he looked up at Paul and locked eyes. Ray’s hair, soaked by the drizzle, clumped together like liquorice laces. The puppy like enthusiasm was gone for a moment, those heavy lidded eyes now almost mournful as they scrutinised Paul for any surface weakness.

“Good, because there’s much more to this than the selling. You see, this part of the job is a test. A test to see if you’re ready for the next stage. Anyone can sell, but I need people who want to go on to the next level. You’ve given me plenty to

think about. I can see you're a sharp guy." Just for an instant, Ray's tone hardened, his next question a challenge. "Are you ambitious? I need to know for sure Paul, because I haven't got time to waste on the wrong guy." Ray let his breath out slowly, allowing his cheeks to puff out; widening his eyes still further he let the silence do its work.

Again Paul nodded, stung into action, managing a few affirmative monosyllables.

A relaxing of the features, that easy smile again. "Good. That's all I need for now, Paul. Look, we're pretty much at the bus stop. You want to go down to the corner of Hudson Road and pick up any bus back into town. Here's a few quid for your fare." Ray reached into his pocket, and pressed the coins into Paul's palm, with the demeanour of an indulgent uncle. "I'll give you a ring this evening, and we'll have a proper chat then."

With a shake of the hand and a smile, Ray turned and strode off; in a few more seconds, he was round the corner of Clifton Street, leaving Paul gazing at nothing. With the distant sound of door knocking carrying on the breeze, Paul ambled the hundred yards to the bus stop, deep in thought. What had the advert said? '*A unique business opportunity.*' After dozens of applications and fruitless false leads, Paul was still reeling from the sudden change of pace. Calling the number, he had spoken to a highly excitable young woman who had insisted he come straight in for an interview and field assessment the following morning. In the background, the sound of baying and bell ringing, Liz's voice drifting in and out. No time to lose. New trainee

managers needed urgently for opportunities across the Leeds area. Big rewards for ambitious and hard working people.

And what was he to make of his morning? Ricocheting from the stifled heat of the interview office, out into the tightly packed terraces of Harehills, Paul had felt incredibly uncomfortable, bracing himself as each new door opened. All the same, he had been caught up in the excitement of that last house, and by Ray's enigmatic excitement. Once he had started talking to Gerry, he had felt an unfamiliar loss of inhibition. Paul was not used to talking to complete strangers, but there had definitely been something there, some release of adrenaline. Ray had said something about running a business, building a crew, starting an office. All these appealed in an abstract way.

He had also said something about making money.

To the jobless, about to be homeless Paul, this had a very concrete appeal. Absently, he hailed the approaching bus, and hopped aboard, riding the rattling surf of the traffic back to town. What was Ray's secret? Without wanting to commit too far, Paul knew then that he would have to find out.

And why did he keep saying 'juice'?

2

Seven fifteen. The last door of the night, fifteen minutes before the bus: the sales already in the bag, bar one. Ray hopped up the final step and swung his bag off his shoulder. As he shuffled against the cold, listening to the sound of a flushing toilet, Ray finally allowed his mind to wander. All afternoon, he had felt his powers resurgent, tingling with the positive thinking that had lifted him up to such dizzying heights six brief months ago. Any lingering memories of his month-long sales drought were firmly banished: ten sales on Tuesday, high rolling the office, the whole world queuing to ask how he'd done it. The gift of the gab restored, and self-confidence sky high again. He'd won the right to take out the interview prospect, and he'd even dropped a sale in front of him.

Ray had a tingle about Paul. Paul. Ray's new rock. He had built them up before, and he would do it again this time, take his new recruit and scaffold his confidence sky high. Using the visualisation techniques he had been working on, Ray could see himself holding court in the centre of the office, a blinding sun, orbited by his crew of twenty, ready to break free of the Leeds office and strike out for Newcastle. In a few brief hours, Ray could see himself ringing the bell, telling everyone how he had worked his territory to perfection. And then the triumphant phone call to Paul. *Hi Paul, it's Ray. I'm a winner today. Join me, and together we'll build a crew that will make us both rich.*

He was teetering on the edge of greatness.

* * *

“Why don’t you step in? I’ve just opened a bottle. I’m sure you’ll have a drink before getting down to business?” Raising an eyebrow, the raven-haired beauty on the doorstep stepped aside and wafted a welcoming arm.

“Champion, thanks very much.”

“Is dry alright? I’m Tracy by the way.”

Taking his cue, Ray threw himself back into the velour settee. “Hello Tracy. Ray. Ray Ward. Nice place you’ve got here. The blue and orange go really well together.”

“It’s not much, but it’s cosy. Do you like being cosy, Ray?” Tracy had finished pouring, and drew her chair a little closer to Ray.

Taking the glass that was proffered him, Ray gulped and nodded appreciatively. “I like a girl who drinks cider. Most ciders are too sweet, but this is a really good one.”

“It’s nice with Twiglets. I could feed them to you.” Tracy perched herself on the arm of the settee.

“Aye, well maybe later on, like.”

“You must get very cold in your line of work Ray, wandering those cold, hard streets all day. And your hands - they must be red raw from all that knocking.” Tracy set her glass on the lino, inched a little closer and took hold of Ray’s free hand with an expert touch.

“That’s very nice. Thank you. Watch your glass on the floor, mind. You’re very good at that, aren’t you?”

“I’m qualified in massage.”

“Aye, I can tell. Tell you what Tracy, are you hungry?”

“Shall I get the Twiglets?”

“Well, I was wondering more if you like to eat out occasionally?”

Tracy slipped down the side of the settee, into Ray’s lap. “Well, I do like to eat out now and again. Why, are you asking?”

Ray flicked a strand of Tracy’s hair out of his eyes. “Well it’s just that a lot of your neighbours have been going for one of our exclusive VIP dining offers today.” He felt an exploratory warm tongue in his ear. “Now, you like Italian cooking, yes?”

Without drawing breath, Tracy grunted her acknowledgement.

Ray felt swift fingers remove his tie and unravel his shirt buttons. “And have you been up the Casa Pepe yet, Tracy?”

“Nmmmh.”

“Well that’s great, you’re just the kind of person we’re looking for. Now when you go out for a meal, who is it you’d normally take with you?”

“Nnnffmmn.”

“Right, so the way it works, is for just nineteen ninety-five today, one of you pays, and one of you eats for free - that’s every time you go, for the next six months. Sounds pretty good, doesn’t it?”

Ray was now prone on the settee, shirt fully unbuttoned, trousers round his knees. With one swift movement, Tracy turned her upper garments inside out and threw them to one side, upsetting the half-drunk glass of cider. She bestraddled Ray, taking his shoulders firmly in both hands.

“Now there *is* a catch.” Ray paused for maximum effect.

“Yes! Yes!”

“But don’t worry!” Quickly, Ray defused his negative. “The catch is, you have to go *once* to get your money back. After that, every time you go, you eat your main meal for free and your partner pays. Did you say you had a partner?”

In reply, Tracy thrust her head back.

“Well that’s great. Now these have been going pretty fast, so I’m afraid you’ll have to decide today. Most of your neighbours have been picking up theirs with cash. How would you like to pay for yours?”

“Now! Now! Now!”

“Well, just give us a minute.” Trailing his right hand along the lino, Ray felt for his document wallet and the pen in his top jacket pocket.

Tracy threw herself back with a final judder, then lurched forwards, spent.

“Do you mind if I just rest on your back a minute, Tracy? It’s just that I need a flattish surface to write on. Thanks very much.” Tearing the stub off, Ray flicked the VIP dining card onto the glass coffee table. “I’ve written my name on the card as well, just in case you have any other questions, like. You know how you always remember something right after you finish a conversation?”

Tracy’s breathing was slowing, returning to normal.

“Would you like us to help you wash up, Tracy?”

“Wash up?”

“Aye, you know, the cider glasses and that.”

“Oh, no, that’s alright. You don’t need to be going just yet, do you?”

“Well, I don’t really like to rush off after we’ve had such a nice chat and that, but I do need to be thinking about making my bus. Now did you manage to find that twenty pound?”

On autopilot, Tracy pulled her jeans back on, and unscrewed her t-shirt. Crossing the room, she fumbled in her purse and returned with two scrunpled notes.

“Brilliant! There’s your five pence, and that’s us square.”

“Will I see you again?”

“I expect so. Or one of my guys. We go round most places every six months, and we do like to make sure we see every single person. Unless you’re on holiday or something.”

“Right.”

Once more immaculate, Ray smoothed back the gelled hair above his ears and gathered his belongings. As Tracy swept up the broken glass, Ray crossed to the front door, then hesitated. “Tracy? I feel cheeky for asking – you’ve already done so much. Would you mind if I just used your loo? You can get caught short when you’re walking around all day.”

* * *

Back on the pavement, Ray checked his watch. Seven twenty-five. Ten sales. Five minutes to catch his bus. Juice by that.

Back in the office, Dean needed help. He had lost that positive mental attitude that had served him so well for so long. He had built this office from scratch, on the back of his own hard work, but now he could sense himself being ousted from his position by younger bucks. Thrusting, self confident Scott, promoted by Dean barely a year ago, was threatening to steal Dean's hard won limelight.

Four years ago, Dean was a new merchandiser starting out in the business, the office hotshot, breaking records and embarrassing those several years his senior. He could work the most unforgiving territory: council estates, tower blocks, leafy snobby suburbs. No pitch was too tricky. He never prejudged his territory, never wrote off a potential punter.

His mind wandered back to the Bengal Tiger promotion in Harehills. Two main meals for the price of one (cheapest eats free). A dive of a place even before the unfortunate incident; mix and match wallpaper, contrasted with orange swirl carpet. Dean knew for a fact that the waiters spat in the food. He knew because one of the waiters told him so at the end of the meal when Dean had refused to pay the twenty percent service charge. With hindsight, a justified act on his part, he felt. One of Dean's friends had a friend who had eaten there and swore blind they had found an eyeball in the sag aloo. Dean could believe it too; the friend of this friend was a very reliable source.

The Bengal Tiger burnt down. There were rumours that the Inland Revenue had been called in and the management felt the game was up. The Metro had published an allegation, quickly retracted, that the restaurant had failed a food inspection immediately before the fire and was under threat of closure. Either way, the fire could not have come at a more opportune time. From the dirtiest of rumours came a clean start, and with it the grand re-launch.

RPJ Promotions were called in, and a tailor made proposition was put together: a limited-run, one time only offer of an exclusive VIP dining club card. Dean remembered visiting the restaurant for the launch of the promotion, and being surprised at how little changed the place was. Luckily, some foresighted soul had stockpiled purple and yellow wallpaper and orange swirl carpet; not for the Bengal Tiger a change of image. This didn't bode well.

And then the calamity.

The Leeds Rhinos were invited to an exclusive opening night as VIP guests, together with selected local dignitaries and members of the press. Unfortunately, nobody pointed out the importance of the occasion to the house waiters, who evidently continued to spit into the food with abandon. Although no eyeballs were discovered, a mass case of griping stomach cramps followed twelve to thirteen hours later. The Rhinos were unable to field a full team the following day, resorting to groundskeepers, able-bodied spectators and a hot-dog vendor. After a sound thrashing, their season never really recovered. Two headlines in particular stood out in Monday's Metro: "*Griping Guts Rumble Rhinos*" and "*Rhinos Mauled By Tiger.*"

The restaurant featured heavily in both the front and back pages – a feat beyond imagining the week before. Unfortunately, its proximity to such words as ‘diarrhoea,’ ‘salmonella,’ and ‘safety concerns’ cast an ill omen over the launch of the campaign. On the day that Dean and his fellow merchandisers hit the street, the citizens of Leeds were reading about the day the Rhinos nearly died at the hands of the Bengal Tiger.

None of this phased Dean; it was just another negative to turn around, to be tackled head on.

“Is that the restaurant in the paper?”

“Absolutely, everyone’s talking about it!”

“I don’t want food poisoning.”

“Well now’s the best time to go! There’s no way they’ll poison you after all the publicity they’ve had.”

“They ruined the Rhinos match.”

“Well get your own back, and fleece them with one of these cards.”

Dean was invincible. The more hostility he encountered, the more he fed off it. During that campaign, he grew his fledgling crew from two people to eight. Whilst the rest of the office languished, Dean and his crew flourished, driven by his inspirational leadership. Seacroft, Gipton, Chapel Allerton. One after another they

set up their defences and Dean laid siege to them, lighting fires under their foundations, undermining the city walls. One by one, they fell, signing truces on the back of Bengal Tiger VIP dining cards.

Merchandiser of the Year (Northern Area) had followed soon after, and with it, talk of Dean's imminent move up to management. When the previous manager left under a cloud, he found himself in pole position. His crew, by then numbering fifteen, were bankrolling the office, and Dean could sense victory. It was in the air as he power-walked the crisp April streets. It was in the metallic tinkle of the door knockers, the barking of dogs, the caw of crows. Everywhere he went, he was greeted by a smile. Those who didn't buy from him were apologetic, wistful even; his powers truly knew no bounds. Those who did buy (and they numbered many) were grateful, aware of the presence of greatness. His coronation was inevitable: his reward, the keys to the third floor offices at 10b Kirkgate and a six-month rolling lease.

"This office," he never tired of telling his crew, "was not built by selling VIP dining cards, and it's not paid for by money. Our success comes from the manufacture and sale of Positive Mental Attitude."

The source of Dean's Positive Mental Attitude, like Samson's locks, was The Power of You. Dr Zeus Elastine's seminal work on positive thinking had inspired Dean through the cold, lonely winter days of merchandising, up the ladder of crew building, and along the travelator of management. A recipe for life, success and all things in between. It had taught him everything he needed to know about looking and

thinking sharp, building confidence, turning negatives, paying effective compliments and drawing the admiration of others. He badly needed its help now.

Fumbling along the solitary shelf, Dean's finger ran across the copies of Young Business Today, until he came to the volume that, like King Arthur, would return to help him in this, his hour of need.

Over 12 million
copies sold
worldwide!

Dr Zeus Elastine

The Power of

YOU

Learn how to release the true power inside yourself. Achieve wealth, happiness and respect. Set your goals and go beyond them!



**Revised
Edition!**

Preface

You already have some of the most important attributes of any successful person. Inside yourself, you have an amazing power. You will be aware of some of that power. Maybe you have a trophy cabinet full of sporting cups, or salesman of the year awards. Maybe you just made the final payment on that station wagon, or bench-pressed your own bodyweight for the first time. However, most of the power, most of the *real* power inside you, is locked away. I'll say that again. *Most of the real power inside you is locked away.* That's where this book comes in. You have already shown one important quality - by reading these words, you have shown the desire to release that power. Your mind is the doorway: this book is the key.

Over the last thirty years, I have coached thousands of people to success. With my help, many of them have learned how to release their full potential, and can now be found running our large multi-national businesses, or holding high public office. Modesty, and space, prevents me from printing their many testimonials here.

And yet, most of these guys are no different to many of you. They carry a few pounds, suffer from male pattern baldness, or have feet which are different shoe sizes. We all have imperfections. The key to the successful person is to see *and feel* beyond these minor blemishes. These people are not held back by petty thinking or point scoring; they have developed their powers of positive thinking to an extraordinary degree. So why don't you join them? Over the years, numerous publishers have asked me to distil what I teach into a single manual for success. I never felt ready to

do this, until now. Take full advantage of it, and follow in the footsteps of achievement: anyone with the right attitude can do it. This book will show you how.

A final word. Although this book contains examples from lots of people, it is really about one person. A very important person. You. The Power of YOU.

Dr Zeus Elastine

Portland, Oregon

March 1985

Richard turned to the centre pages of the local paper, where his eye was drawn to a report on a caravan fire. There was a picture of the interior of a burning caravan, with the simple headline: “Local Caravan Burns,” captioned by “Arson a possibility.” Richard wrinkled his nose, lowered his newspaper, and realised to his surprise that the caravan was his, and that it was on fire.

Draining his glass, Richard leapt into action. He wasn't sure how long the fire had been burning, but it looked fairly well established. Its epicentre was on and around the galley stove, more particularly a blackened saucepan, of medium size, no lid.

He had to act fast.

Somewhere at the back of Richard's mind, he recalled a long distant Fire Officer training course. What was it for a kitchen fire? Sand? Foam? Would water make it worse? The course notes were probably filed away somewhere, if only he could remember. He decided to start by moving potentially flammable objects away from the flames. A bottle of Teachers, two bottles of Beefeater gin, a duty free only carton of Superkings, a selection of lighters, three Bells miniatures and a four pack of cider. Cider probably wasn't flammable, but it was better to be safe than sorry. As an opening gambit, Richard grabbed a vase of withered flowers from the counter edge, up-ending it, flowers and all, onto the blaze. The flowers frazzled immediately, but

the foul-smelling brackish water hissed, briefly dousing the flames and generating a mushroom cloud of superheated steam.

Encouraging.

In the brief breathing space afforded to him, Richard searched his memory for clues. He was fairly confident he hadn't started the fire himself, and he had appeared to be alone in the caravan. Was someone trying to kill him? If so, then perhaps the assailant was still concealed somewhere; there were potentially two fronts on which this battle would have to be fought.

The caravan was approximately fifteen feet long. Richard had been sitting at the rear, and in his haste to get to his feet had snapped the supporting leg of the fold-out table. The broken table lay at his feet, though with a few minor repairs was still serviceable. Ahead of him, looking towards the entrance to the caravan lay the narrow central galley. To the right, a three quarter height Formica wood door into the wardrobe, followed by the entrance to the chemical toilet. To the left (working back from the front), the outside door, the sink (with built-in manual foot pump for water), and the stove top (which was on fire). This, Richard realised, gave him a predicament. The water lay beyond the fire, and the size of the flames made access uncertain.

Was there a noise coming from the toilet cubicle? If so, then the mystery assailant was as trapped as Richard was. "I hope you're satisfied, you coward!" Richard would deal with him later.

Taking a gamble, Richard pulled off one of the cans of cider from its plastic hoop, and shook it vigorously before cracking it open, using it as a makeshift fire extinguisher. It worked; with swift action, he was confident he could turn the tide. After the third can, Richard paused, pleased with his progress. Being in such close proximity to the fire had left him with a scorching sensation on his forehead and ear tips, and a parched throat. He took a long swig from the final can, pouring the dregs onto the fire, which by now was beginning to sputter back into life. However, it had at least abated sufficiently for Richard to ease his way past, mindful of turning his back to the potential stranger in the toilet. Incongruously, he felt a fleeting, powerful desire for a cigarette.

What he needed now (quite urgently) was a receptacle for water. The only option within reach was a small plastic teacup: this would have to do. Richard stamped down hard on the foot pump, sending a jet of water spurting out the tap, into and straight out of the cup again, soaking his neck. *More slowly, nice and steady. Get into a rhythm and keep it going.* Unfortunately, the fire had now progressed backwards to the wall of the caravan, and upwards to the overhead cupboards and ceiling. Richard's biggest problem now was neither the heat, nor the flames, but the choking, acrid smoke. Still he persevered, tipping cup-load after cup-load of lukewarm water in the general direction of the black smeech. Finally, he had to concede defeat, and grabbed blindly for anything that might be rescued; finding a stray blanket, he fumbled an assortment of hard and soft objects into it and then gathered the corners together. Richard's lungs were now bursting. Holding his breath was useless, merely filling his lungs with the polluted air. In a final act of self-

preservation, he shouldered his way out of the door, cradling the blanket containing his earthly possessions.

A knot of people emerged out of the circle of light created by the blaze; Richard felt himself grabbed roughly by the shoulders and hurled to the ground.

“Roll him, roll him!” shrieked a woman from behind his left ear. “His jacket’s on fire!” Richard felt a sharp searing pain in his lower back, then a wrenching in his right shoulder, the taste of mud. “Drag him, quickly!”

All Richard could think about now were the corners of the blanket, which he still had a precarious hold of. He felt grass, stones, then smooth, hard path as his invisible abductors dragged him roughly along the ground, steely fingers grasping him under the armpits. It seemed easier to acquiesce.

“Are you alright?” They were talking to him. The sound was slightly muffled. He raised his head, with considerable effort. “Is there anyone else in there?” Richard wondered whether the arsonist had managed to escape. He paused in a second of moral indecision, then shook his head.

What followed next played out in slow motion. The caravan was engulfed in flames, licking out and around the windows, door and skylight; the next moment, there was a thunderous explosion, a flash of light and a powerful shockwave. Somebody screamed. A silence descended, followed by the heavy patter of clods of earth.

The caravan had been all but destroyed, leaving a tangled black wire frame, still pulsing with embers.

With a half-cry of panic, Richard looked around, and saw the reassuring sight of his Astra, parked outside the caravan park clubhouse. It was no more than twenty yards away. The now-shadowy figures who had dragged him here seemed temporarily distracted; perhaps now would be a safe time to effect an escape? Lurching to his feet, Richard struggled forwards in a stooped lumber, dragging the blanket behind him. Pulling open the unlocked door, Richard threw the blanket into the car, and fell into the driver's seat. The keys were already in the ignition, and started the engine at the third attempt. From there, his reptilian brain took control.

Gears, accelerator, steering wheel. A scraping of metal from the passenger side. Keep going, don't stop for them.

Hard right, brake.

A rattling from the front wheel arch. The suspension vibrating up through the seat. Why is it so dark?

Mirror, signal, manoeuvre.

Pulling to the left... steer right, right, right. It's still dark. Tyres rumbling, wheel kicking back. Accelerate out of trouble.

Flick the headlights on.

What's that signpost? Slow down, slow down. Make the turning. A bit of handbrake should do it. Out of trouble now. No lights behind.

Pull up here a minute, think things through.

Richard found himself washed up in a remote lay-by, cold air flowing in through the open window. He took a deep breath as an unsettling feeling stole across him, the clarity of the past moments already blurring at the edges. The contents of the blanket had spilled over the passenger seat. The Bells miniatures, a bottle of wine, a Leeds street map, a tube of love hearts, a pair of pants and a sock. Not much to show for a lifetime of accumulation.

With a pang, Richard realised that there were tears streaming down his cheek, and that they were coming from his eyes. He remembered a fire, an explosion of sorts. He had been attacked, hadn't he, suffered a close call? And there had been raised voices, perhaps the same people who had started the fire? He had been in trouble - he knew that much - but he was safe now.

A dirty shaft of light was beginning to poke itself above the horizon. In the pre-dawn gloom, Richard felt around the front of the car, searching for anything to eat. Finding nothing else, he devoured the love hearts greedily, collecting the stray crumbs with a moistened finger end. It was then that his eyes fell on the opened and

folded newspaper. On closer inspection, it was the sales vacancy section of Yorkshire Jobs and Careers; an otherwise inconspicuous advert had been circled in thick red marker.

Be your own boss. Full training given, a unique opportunity. It was a Leeds number.

As the gloom outside the car lifted, Richard knew that this opportunity had been gifted him. He wasn't beaten just yet. Inside, there was still a spark that burned, just waiting to be fanned back into life. The new day would bring a new opportunity. A new job. New prospects. Old routines.

It was still far too early to act, and this small flicker of excitement had drained Richard of all his remaining energy. He pulled the blanket towards him, took a small night cap, and closed his eyes.

Kate was closing in, her urgency bursting at the seams. She was in no mood to take a no: today she could sell anywhere to anyone, and this well to do Victorian semi on Lidgett Drive would certainly not be the exception. An insurance executive, or an IT manager. Maybe even a young doctor. Expensive looking navy suit, a late plate BMW convertible parked jauntily out the front of the house. A dead cert.

“So it’s great, yeah? Is it just the one you want, or do you want to pick up a couple as presents?”

The dead cert nodded his head a notch, approvingly. “Nice move. I like your style. Go for the multiple close, make it feel like I’ve got to say yes to at least one. The thing is... er?”

“Kate.”

“Kate. I’ve seen a few of these deals over the last few months, and I’ll admit it does look attractive. A pretty good business too, I should think, for whoever’s back in your office.”

Kate took her opportunity to gush enthusiastically. “That’ll be me in a month or two. Actually, I already run my own business, but soon I’m going to run my own office. It’s just such a good deal that everyone wants these VIP dining cards. When were you thinking of using yours?” Making eye contact expectantly, Kate was met

with a relaxed laugh and the trace of a smile. For reasons she couldn't pinpoint, she felt the initiative shift a little.

“Good girl. Keep it dangling. You need to relax a bit though, if you don't mind a spot of advice. Slow down – you already know I'm interested. If it helps, I'll tell you now that I'm going to buy one. I just want to find out a little more, that's all.”

“I'm sure you know the Casa Pepe's got a great reputation.”

“No. Not about the restaurant. I couldn't care less about it, to be honest. About the business. Come in, why don't you?”

Kate accepted the beckoning gesture, and shuffled into the tiled hallway. Opened packing cases were strewn at the foot of the stairs, tester patches of bright paint emblazoned across the white walls. “So, you're moving in then?” observed Kate, immediately irritated by the stupidity of her question, thwarting her sudden urge to impress.

She was met by that disarming smile again. “Are you going to spill the beans then, Kate? Give me the low down on how this works. The card costs me twenty pounds, yes?”

“Nineteen pounds ninety-five.” Kate felt the tips of her ears flush red.

“And you get? Three pounds? Four pounds?”

“Five pounds.”

“Not too bad. Your manager gets the rest?”

“It doesn’t work quite like that. You see, this business is a unique opportunity.” Kate rediscovered her zeal. “My manager gets the same amount that I do, on every card that’s sold by his entire crew. The rest gets shared by his manager, and his manager – all the way up the company.”

“Sounds a bit like a pyramid scheme to me.”

“You sound like my dad. It’s not a pyramid scheme because no one ever asks you for your own money. I’m building my own crew at the moment, and when we meet our sales target, I’ll get promoted and run my own office. Then I get to keep some of the money that my guys make, and pass the rest on up. It’s simple, really. Anyone could do it – it’s just that most don’t make it because it’s a lot of hard work.”

“You strike me as the kind of person who’ll keep going till she gets what she wants. What about outgoings? Are you on commission only?”

Kate trotted out the standard response that she had worn smooth on concerned family and friends. “I prefer to think of myself as running my own business. Just like the boss of any business, the money I make depends on how successful I am.

Nobody's going to give me a hand out, or stop me making as much money as I want to. I get up in the morning and I decide for myself how much I'm going to earn."

"Good attitude. I'm sure you'll go far, Kate. Sounds like you've got it made. Lots of cash, next to no overheads – the dream business. Speaking of cash, I'll get you that twenty."

Trying hard not to react to the bundle of notes produced without flourish from a trouser pocket, Kate attempted small talk. "Are you in sales yourself then?"

"I've sold a few things in my time. Bought and sold. I think this one's genuine."

Kate laughed effusively as she accepted the proffered note, cursing her inadvertent snort. "You know, if you ever fancied finding out more, you could come into the office. There's good money to be made if you've got the right attitude."

That smile. Warm. Indulgent.

"Not that it looks like you're doing too badly. I'll write Liz's number on the back of your card. She's our office manager – just mention my name. I mean, just if you were ever interested, that's all." Sensing a waning of attention, Kate took her cue, digging a pen from her back pocket and resting the card on the side of her document wallet. "Just a tiny bit of paperwork to fill in now - I won't keep you much longer. What name should I put on your card?"

“I feel like we should be on first name terms, Kate. It’s Nathan. Nathan Sparrow.”

Deliberately, with careful concentration, Kate printed the name with large, looping letters. Nathan answered his mobile, and with the beginnings of a terse exchange and a hand gesture to Kate, the sale was completed.