

Introduction

Hi, My Name is Zach

“Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing about.” -Benjamin Franklin, Founding Father.

“Why not write a book ... everyone else is!” - Zach Getson, Mediocre ~~Athlete~~ Rugby Player.

Hi, my name is Zach Getson, and you're reading my book! How great. Some people call me Hashtag, some call me Getson or Jew, but you call me pretty much anything you want.

I've been blessed with many great teachers, many great experiences, and the fixation on self-analysis to both paralyze myself in fear and help me grow spiritually. I may not have achieved much - but I've certainly thought more about it than most.

I've been playing rugby for 13 years. Though, if you don't know me, you won't recognize my name. I've never played professionally, and I never will. I'm better than average – but what a low bar. For a long time I self-identified as a lazy underachiever – but this book is meant to help me change that.

So, despite you not recognizing my name, I decided to write a book about rugby. Of course, it's not really about rugby. It's about the lessons you can learn through rugby by challenging yourself, opening yourself up to others and opportunities, and learning to commit to something that you might fail at.

I mean it when I say that rugby has been the most influential thing in my life – behind my family. Almost everything I take pride in took root because of rugby. My parents might have sown the seeds, but rugby watered them and helped them grow.

In this book, I'll tell you stories from my rugby career and the lessons that I learned. I'll focus on how they played out on the rugby field and how they made me a better person off the field.

Though it feels vain to think my ideas are worth sharing, I also recognize most ideas are worth sharing. The question is really if it's worth reading for you.

Who Is This Book For?

I always hear that you write your book for one person. In this case, that person is me. Or at least parts of me. It's the insecure kid who felt like he was on the outside of every friend group. Or the struggling athlete who wasn't nearly as gifted as his peers but fell in love with the grind and slowly started passing them. Or, just the young man who loves to better himself and is a student of everyone he meets.

That's who I wrote it for, but I also don't believe that's the only person it's good for. You don't need to play rugby to learn something from this book. You don't even need to play a sport.

There are only two qualities that I believe matter. The first is a commitment to growth and a willingness to learn from every situation and person. The second is the belief that you're responsible for your state. Results are variable; environment and luck come into play. You still must believe that you're in control of how you act and react.

If you don't have those two traits, this book may not be for you, and I hope you're reading this section after you've already purchased it. I'll still take your money.

Disclaimer:

There's no real good reason for you to listen to anything I have to say.

I'm a mediocre rugby player. I'm unathletic and functionally blind. I'm only 28. I'm a suburban Jew with successful parents. I slacked my way through school. I haven't struggled for much. I've got commitment issues, a poor self-image, and I own a mirror that says "You Ugly Fat Fuck" on it in big block letters. But, I believe that "naturals" don't make as good teachers as those who struggled to get 75% as good as the natural. The strugglers know the pitfalls and challenges better. They had to study to learn what the natural knew innately.

I also think listening to non-conventional voices of wisdom can be powerful because so many lessons come from experiences, and no one person can experience everything. Finding the right person who's gone through the right experience can be an immense shortcut to your own lessons and save you the struggle of going through that experience.

There are plenty of better experts out there. People with more experience, more success, and more insights. I won't claim to be able to teach you how to play rugby better than Waisale Serevi. Nor will I claim to have a better grasp on life's great questions than Kierkegaard or Socrates.

The hubris in me says you should listen to me anyway. Because you never know what lesson or story is going to be the one that resonates with you.

My day job is marketing, and a key lesson in marketing is the success of an offer depends on talking to the right audience and at the right time in their lifecycle.

Only when you have the right audience and timing does the message matter.

A lesson can be heard a thousand times, but it will only be learned when it's painful enough or important enough for you to listen.

Hopefully, one of these stories resonates with you, and you get at least one takeaway from this book.

If all you do is laugh a little, I'll be happy. If you take one lesson or distinction from this that helps you even once ... I'll be ecstatic.

I'm hoping that one of these chapters will be a great callback to something you already knew but forgot somewhere in the struggles of existence.

Take what you resonate with and leave what you don't.

You don't have to agree with everything I say, but you might still find a nugget of wisdom if you're willing to listen with open ears. It's often the things we don't want to hear that have the most impact.

My ILLUSTRIOUS Rugby Career

As I write the first draft of this intro, I'm on a plane to Aspen to play at a popular rugby tournament called Ruggerfest. I'll be playing against the American Raptors with a bunch of former all-stars in other sports, and the Gentlemen of Aspen with a bunch of Major League Rugby talent.

Last week I made the 2022 Maccabi USA Rugby side at (what feels like) the ripe old age of 28. I was one of 8 selected after only the first tryouts - though the final roster will be ~30 players.

I did cry. Not hard!! But a few tears might have snuck down my unsuspecting cheeks.

My name was called first - because I played Loosehead Prop, which is #1 on the roster, but still ... first! The voices of assent and love and support were powerful. So many players came up to congratulate me. On my way home, I told my family, girlfriend, and friends, who were all jubilant. My dad cried as well. Clearly, it's his fault I'm a crier.

Much of what made this so meaningful to me and others was my journey to this roster spot.

To understand that journey, it's necessary to understand a little about me as an athlete. Though I use that term loosely.

- In elementary school, I was the goalie because I was fat, unathletic, and uninterested. Even worse, I didn't play. I warmed the bench and held the orange slices and Capri Suns for the other kids.
- In middle school, I was third-string B-team on the 8th-grade football team. I didn't even make the basketball team. The head football coach made me say, "Would you like a cup of tea guvna" before putting me in. He thought my inability to say the letter 'R' made me sound British. And, if he was going to HAVE to play me because it was mandated, he might as well get some joy out of it.
- My dad used to describe me as having a "burst of slowness" because I looked like I was running at full speed, but players would be passing me at a light jog. I ran a 6.2-second 40-yard dash my freshman year of high school. I only weighed 200 pounds. To put that in perspective, a running back at that weight might run a sub-4.3-second 40-yard dash.

I didn't excel in any sport until I found rugby. Even then, it started with the then captain of the team screaming at me:

Don't talk to me until you can speak fucking English, ruh ruh retard.

All because I was trying to learn how to play the game. Thanks, Caleb.

Unfortunately, while I started to get good at rugby, my body wasn't *necessarily* meant to be playing that physical of a sport.

I've fractured my orbital bone, had 3 ACL surgeries, lacerated my spleen, broken my nose more times than I can count, and split my eye open on 4 separate occasions. I've pulled muscles, partially-tore ligaments, dislocated ribs, and more. I've also been flattened so hard I thought I lost my glasses ... which I don't wear when I play.

My dad always used to joke that Jews own the teams; they don't play for them. Which isn't entirely off base...

The list of elite Jewish athletes is a thin book - but an illustrious one nonetheless.

Despite struggling as an athlete for my entire life and having so many injuries, I've also received several accolades.

- In my senior year of high school (playing with a torn ACL), I made the North Texas Rattlers' All-State team.
- I went to D1-A nationals in collegiate 7s with Auburn after winning the SCRCs. I also won Most-Improved my freshman year.
- In 2015, I played in Chile with Maccabi USA and brought home a Gold and a Silver medal. Though I also tore my ACL for the third time.
- I was co-captain in high school, pack-captain in college, and vice-captain for the Chile squad (before my injury).
- I'm currently vice-president of the Dallas Harlequins. We have a D1 men's, D3 men's, D1 women's, a high school team, and an Old Boys team.
- And most recently, making the Maccabi USA side headed to Israel in 2022

I'll be honest. I'm still not very athletic, and my career is far from the best. But, it's better than most, and I did it without the genetic gifts that many high-level athletes claim. Today,

my 40 time is a little better, my fitness is at least average, and I've gotten significantly stronger than that third-string B-team football player.

Most importantly, I'm reaching new heights after three of a surgery that makes most players quit after their first.

I've had setback after setback, and I managed to reach a goal that's been important to me since 2012.

Along the way, I've learned a lot of lessons about myself, relationships, and life. And I thought, well, I need to raise money for Israel - because shit's expensive - and I'm a better writer than an athlete... So, let's try this out.

Before I jump into the lessons and some funny (at least to me) stories, the imposter syndrome in me needs to add another disclaimer.

Everything has been said by somebody. I won't pretend that any of these lessons are new. Many of them can come off as trite or cliché - because they're oft overused and overvalued. But clichés are used because there are aspects of truth in them. And these ideas may be new to you or packaged better for you. I also won't pretend that adopting any one of these lessons will radically change your life. I can't guarantee success or happiness, or even progress. They're tools, that if you truly want to improve your life, can make it easier or more successful. But only maybe! You never know!

I'm a great salesperson.

With that, here are some life lessons from a mediocre rugby player.

I hope you enjoy the ride. I did!

Chapter One

What do you want from life?

“He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how.” – Friedrich Nietzsche

Rugby impacted me so deeply for many reasons. It gave me a space where I felt safe and accepted. It challenged me. I could see how my effort was translating to better results.

Most importantly, it gave me direction, purpose, and identity.

I spend a lot of this chapter focused on negatives, so I’m going to start with some context before I throw a whole lot of *blegh* at you.

Today, I go to the gym for 2 hours almost every day. I track my workouts and sleep and try to improve both based on those metrics. I’ve regimented my supplementation routine. I read books that challenge me, and I spend much more of my time reading than watching TV or social media. I write heartfelt letters to people I care about, and I do my best to improve myself in some way, shape, or form every. Single. Fucking. Day.

I know, ladies, I get it, but I’m going to need you to calm down. I have a girlfriend. He's and they's, you too. Don't think I don't see you.

If you’ve known me for some time, you know how impressive that shift is.

I’ve struggled my whole life with self-loathing, laziness, and lack of purpose. What was I put here on this earth to do, and why me? Why were responsibilities thrust on me?! I didn’t ask to be born. I’m not good enough, smart enough, pretty enough, or likable enough.

I lacked purpose and I lacked identity.

Without going through this chapter, you already know how vital identity and purpose are. I don't have to tell you. Regardless, it's an important starting point for the rest of the book.

Because I lacked purpose, I couldn't get myself to try in school, date someone or put much effort into anything. I was meandering through life without committing to anything.

My logic, however shitty, was that if I didn't try, then I couldn't be judged for underperformance. And, if life made the decisions for me, then they weren't my fault. I felt dumber than my brother, so of course, I couldn't try in school and be compared to him. I had to be the underachieving, lazy, smart kid everyone hates because then I wasn't competing with him. If I did well, it was because I was brilliant! If I did poorly, it was because I didn't try, and I would have aced it if I did try. A thin facade, but one that got me the positive attention I wanted. I had "tricked" people into thinking I was smart.

I did the same thing with women. I couldn't be rejected if I never committed!! What's crazy is that I did have women interested in me despite being a fat Jewish kid with a speech impediment and a gifted kid complex. But, I ruined my long-term chances with them all by keeping them at arm's length. Then, I used the relationships failing as proof that I had made the right decision!

Genius!!

It's childish, and I'm not proud of it now. But at the time, it was my entire identity.

It permeated through school, sports, and relationships. Until one fateful day, a guy who played football with me asked if I could fill in the coming weekend for a rugby game. His name was Phillip Hanson, and his legs looked like tree trunks. That's not relevant, but I had to let you know. Ankles? He's never heard of them. Trunks. I call him Groot.

Alright, back to the story. So, at football practice one day, he says:

"We only have 14 players, and we need 15 to play. Are you in?"

Phil also told me that a rugby player on our team fractured another player's skull the week before. I still said yes. I don't know what got into me.

In my first game, I broke my nose in the first scrum and got hit harder than I ever did in football. I ran around that field like a child lost in a Wal-Mart electronics section on Black Friday.

And yet, something clicked, which was new for me.

I gave up on most sports pretty quickly. I tried soccer, baseball, tennis, and basketball, and the closest I got to okay at any of them was tennis. Even then, as kids started to develop speed, I fell behind.

I stuck with football despite never being very good. Or, rather, being affirmatively bad. A joke, one might say.

Every moment I spent on a football field was a struggle. It never came naturally. But, my dad had played college football, and though he never forced me, I felt required to play.

Playing Texas 5-A football was a big deal back in 2009. My high school had two indoor facilities, a weight room that rivals many colleges, and the same turf that the Dallas Cowboys use. Several players on my team went to D1 schools, and a few even went pro. Jaxon Shipley, Solomon Thomas, Cam McDaniel, Onyeka Omoile, and more. I played with and against too many 4 and 5-star recruits. And they all loved head-to-head contact for some ungodly reason. A scarred-up helmet was a sign of a job well done.

Need a new helmet? Good job, kid! Here's a scholarship!

But, despite me being a bit of a bitch when it came to contact in football, rugby clicked.

It was love at first sight.

And in an instant, my life trajectory, my character, and my identity changed. I wanted to play rugby. And I wanted to be good. Except, I didn't want to just be good, I wanted to be great.

It was the first time I decided that committing fully to something was worth the risk of failure.

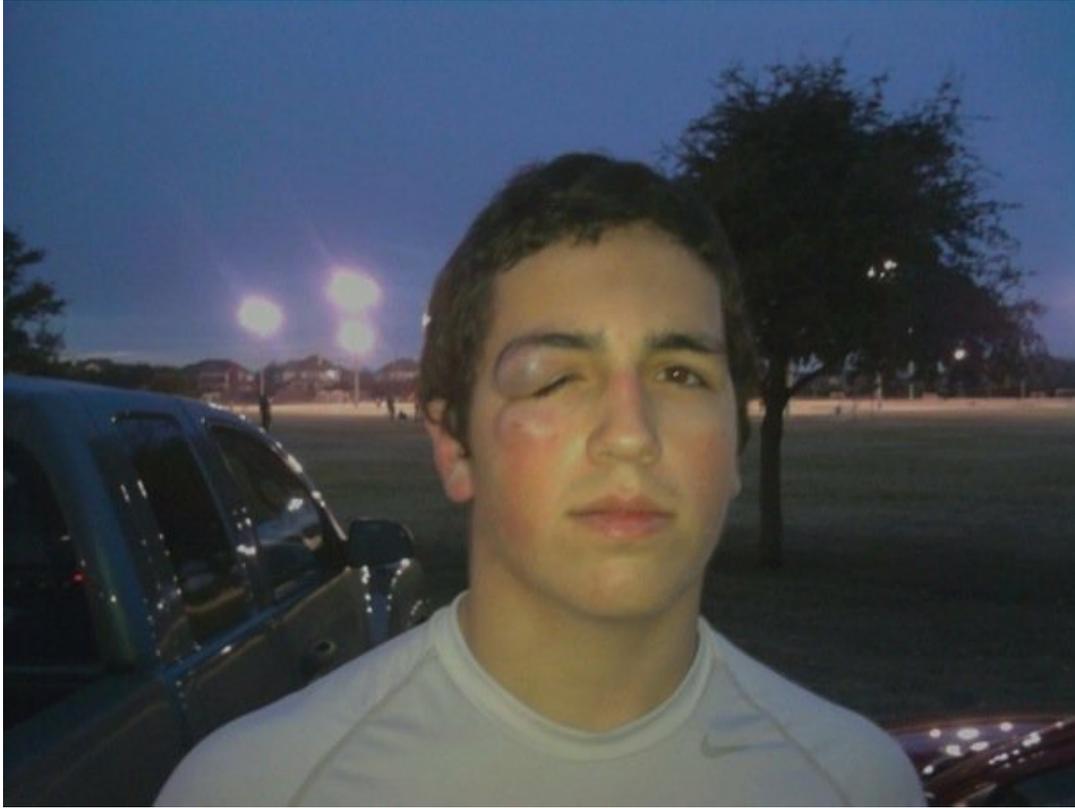
"Dude, sucking at sumthin' is the first step towards being sorta good at something." -

Jake The Dog

I'm not gonna lie to you and tell you that I was good from the jump. But I was certainly better from the beginning than I ever was in football.

As a result, I started taking my workouts more seriously in football. I started going to the gym outside of football. I started taking supplements and paying attention to my eating, and over time I went from one of the weakest on the team to one of the strongest. I became competitive, and when I noticed someone doing one more rep than me, or 5 more pounds than me, I refused to lose. Put on 10 pounds! I'm going for 11.

And where I used to be a wimp, I was recognized by the offensive line coach for toughness. I got the recognition because I practiced and played with a fractured orbital bone - which is funny considering my previous comment on head-to-head contact. How'd I fracture my orbital bone, you ask? Playing rugby, of course. The week prior, I'd gone in to make a tackle at the same time someone else did, and the crown of that man's head hit me in the eye. Within seconds it looked like this.



Within days it looked like this.



And, despite hating head-to-head contact in football, I realized the pain wasn't that bad. I drove home, didn't freak out, and though my eye ended up closing shut for a few days, I continued to put in the work and never considered quitting rugby.

I also never considered quitting rugby after 3 ACL surgeries, 10ish broken noses, a lacerated spleen, a torn ankle ligament, and more.

The difference a purpose and identity made.

Applying It To Real Life

Life can be overwhelming - and even more so when you're unsure of the meaning or purpose of it all. I don't have the answers to life's big questions - and I don't think anyone does - but we can make up some answers to life's more minor questions.

There's a lot of pressure put on us from a young age to know what we want to do and who we want to be. I'm certainly not saying you need to know and stick to it. But there's a reason people can't help but label themselves. Labels become an identity, and identity becomes security.

When you know who you are - and who you're becoming - the activities you need to do to reach that goal become much more natural.

The language behind that is powerful too. It's not "I want to be a good rugby player"; it's "I am a good rugby player." Then, when you're evaluating the activities you take part in, you can ask yourself, "are these the activities a good rugby player would do?"

The beauty is that you can create your own meaning and your own purpose in life. It doesn't need to come from me, society, or the people around you.

My infatuation with purpose and progress isn't from a utility standpoint. I don't care if who you want to be or what you want to do makes the world a better place. Though that would be great.

I care about you living the best life you can - for you. What do you want for and from your life? What do you have to do, and who do you have to become to make that life a reality?

When you get dialed in on the answers to those questions, life becomes much easier, and mistakes become part of the journey instead of life-rending setbacks.

While rugby helped me find my initial identity, my identity has evolved since then. It was just the first domino.

I know that I care about my fitness and strength and making sure the people around me know that I love them. I know I want to help people and that my professional success is secondary to many of my life's goals.

I identify as a rugby player, a weightlifter, a marketer, a Jewish man, and more.

Every year I do an annual plan where I evaluate how well I achieved my goals from the previous year, and how I want them to change in the coming years. I look at myself from the lenses of: physical, professional, emotional, relational, and mental.

That exercise gives me the chance to measure backward, appreciate the progress, and course correct for my long-term goals. It's also a good reminder of one of my favorite Bill Gates quotes

Most people overestimate what they can do in one year and underestimate what they can do in ten years – Bill Gates

Key Insights:

- Life is harder without goals
- Your goals don't have to be "valid" by anyone's judgement except your own
- Instead of focusing on what habits you want to create, focus on what identity you want to have, and the habits will follow
- Measure backwards or you'll spend your whole life focusing on what you don't have

Action Item:

Ask yourself who you want to be 25 years from now. Think about who you'll have to be, and what you'll have to do over the next year, 5 years, 10 years, and 20 years to be that

person. Build a list of traits, goals, and habits. Write it out in as much detail as you're comfortable – maybe even putting into sections like I mentioned above.

Keep that list accessible and go back to it as much as possible.

Does this count as one action item? It feels like a lot. Sorry. :D

Chapter Seven

How do you handle setbacks?

We're on the bus to the field about 45 minutes outside of Santiago, Chile. It's the second of many games I'll be playing with the Maccabi USA rugby side. The field is right at the base of the Andes mountains and is gorgeous. It's also scorched and patchy. Ooh, foreshadowing.

Our coach, Aaron Loring Davis, comes and sits next to me while a pump-up song is playing in my ear and asks if I'm willing to be the team's vice-captain. I nervously said yes, talked about the responsibilities, and got ready for our game against Argentina.

It's also the first game that my parents will be at.

During warmups, I'm all too aware of their presence and want to make sure I play well.

Before a game, I'm all nerves. I spend several brain cycles trying to get myself in the right level of "calm" vs. "excited & ready." I alternate between songs like "Can't Be Touched" by Roy Jones Jr. and sad songs from musicals. I need to puke from the moment I wake up until the moment that the ball is traveling through the air on that first kick. Then it all washes away. The adrenaline and joy of playing rugby take its place, and I'm only focused on my current job and my next job.

Argentina is taking it to us in the first half of the game. They're a hard-hitting team with a fast pace, and we're struggling to keep up. I go from tackle to tackle and ruck to ruck, trying to fill in the gaps. I have a few runs with offloads to keep the ball alive, but I am focused on support.

At some point, one of their forwards gets a breakaway, and I take chase. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees me coming on his left, plants his right leg, and delivers a blow backward into me. For whatever reason, my knee buckled, and I hit the deck. I don't scream, I don't roll on the ground, I lay there in silence and dread ... because I know exactly what happened.

"Coach, I tore my ACL," I whisper after he runs up to me.

"You look fine? How do you know?"

"I've done this twice ... now three times. Trust me, it's torn."

He stares at me as I walk off the field unassisted, still in shock, not even limping.

In some form of cosmic humor, the date is also December 31st, 2015. It's New Year's Eve, and we're scheduled to climb a mountain in Valparaiso.

Can't miss that!

Up until this point, I'd been in tournament mode. I wasn't joking around; I was here to win. Don't get me wrong - I wasn't being overly serious - but I was dialed in. I was able to "turn it on" when necessary, and even when I wasn't "on," I was preparing to be.

The combination of tearing my ACL (again), New Year's Eve, and a loss to Argentina meant I was ready to p - a - r - t - y.

I won't go into all the details of the drunken debauchery. Suffice to say, my teammates were not only confident that I hadn't torn my ACL, but they couldn't believe I survived the whole night.

Highlights include Kangaroo Court, yellow thongs, taking strange meat off a shopping cart, and pisco sours. Do with that what you will.

My knee looked like a grapefruit the following day, and now everyone believed me.

I was supportive during the rest of the tournament, but I was spiraling. Humor has always been a coping mechanism, but it was like I was a different person. I couldn't take anything seriously, let alone myself, and I was doing my best to put on a brave face.

It wasn't until I got home that my world truly started to crater.

Two weeks before Chile, I graduated from Auburn with two undergraduate degrees.

When I returned from Chile, my world was radically different from before Chile. I couldn't play rugby anymore, and it felt like I never would again. I mean, it was my THIRD knee surgery. What type of idiot would continue to play after that (hint hint: it's me). I had lost my support group at Auburn and was now what felt like a faceless member of the workforce. And I was not only working for my dad, but I was also living at home, so it felt like I was subject to his scrutiny and judgment 24/7.

My dad's a great man, but he's also a notoriously tough critic who is always focused on what comes next, how something could be better, and he loved the phrase "you suck less!".

I handled this change poorly. I ate my emotions, and what feelings I couldn't eat came out as anger. After years of never raising my voice, getting in a fight, or losing my cool, I was so angry at the world, myself, and my situation that I ripped my closet door off its hinges, punched a hole in my wall, and smashed my phone into pieces. Not all in one day... it was a pattern of anger for a long time.

I remember being in Orlando, at Disney World - the happiest place on earth - for a marketing conference. I was sharing a room with my dad, and we were working on an important project for his company's launch

After weeks of crazy hours, countless revisions, and trying to multitask while at this conference, my emotions were too much to handle. While I was trying to meet an insane deadline, my dad kept asking me to talk about the project and other projects, as well as what I'd taken from the conference during the day. I lost it. How could he not see I was at the end of my rope after I gave him so many not-so-subtle clues?

I screamed at my dad and had to spend over an hour walking outside to calm down to the point that I could share a space with him.

I realized something had to give and moved out ahead of schedule. I had intended to stay for at least a year to pay off my school debts and start adulthood with some financial security. But my mental health is worth infinitely more than that.

Even when I moved out, my emotional state was still in tatters... because no matter where you go, you're always there with you. I hadn't changed even if my location had.

I became asocial and isolated. I slacked at work and in the gym. I didn't have any emotional bandwidth for the people who could still tolerate me at that point. I was seeing a wonderful girl at the time who had been my rock through the worst period of my life, and I could give her nothing in return. I remember sitting on the edge of my couch, crying into her chest and feeling like a failure.

I hated existence, and nothing felt worth it. I was disappointing my dad, my friends, and ultimately, I was disappointing myself.

Luckily, this was my "rock bottom."

After a long time of being stuck, I finally had an epiphany.

I was in control - and I was the one who was continuing to dwell on all the reasons I could find to be sad.

It was frustrating ... because what a germane epiphany. I'd heard that before. I knew it. But, lessons only matter when they're internalized.

At work, I focused on the lack of freedom and time I'd come to enjoy while in college. When it came to my relationship, I dwelled on what I thought I wasn't getting (through my own selfish lens of what love was supposed to be). And, most of all, I was stuck on my now missing rugby identity. Instead of focusing energy on all the blessings I still had, and all the things I excelled in, I was focused on all the holes that are inevitable as life changes and grows around us.

I should have focused on what I could control and all the great people and opportunities around me. Dan Sullivan, who created Strategic Coach, calls this the Gap and the Gain. The gain is all the opportunities, the blessings, and the potential future. The gap is all the things you lack or could have done differently. I was focused solely on the gap. Benjamin Hardy wrote a great book with Dan Sullivan called the Gap and the Gain. I recommend it. My dad is also one of the case studies in the book, and I got to help him write that section. So, I'll admit bias.

Applying This To Real Life

At the Genius Network Annual Event in 2021, I was unexpectedly called to join a panel. The panel was tasked to give their best business lesson in under 3 minutes. I wasn't called up to the panel until everyone had already gone, so I wasn't prepared. Luckily, the idea I shared was a massive hit.

In Judaism, there's a ritual I like called "Sitting Shiva." It's essentially the mourning period after they're buried. For seven days, you stay at home and mourn, as do those around you. Extended family and friends offer support and often give food and more.

It formalizes the natural way we confront and overcome grief and, for me, symbolizes much more.

Part of what I love about the idea is that it gives us time to be greedy and self-centered.

I miss this person. I can't believe they left me here alone. We were supposed to get through this together.

But it also reminds us that, if you're a believer, they're in a better place. And, if you're not, they're still out of pain. They're at peace. They're not sad they're dead because they don't have that capacity. It sounds crass - but it's an important realization.

If death is, I am not. If I am, death is not. - Epicurus

The concept of shiva translates well to many different situations.

It's a reminder that there's a "right" amount of time to grieve something, and the purpose of grief is catharsis; to move forward. You have to overcome suffering and come to terms with life, you can't deny it, and you can't wallow in it. I mean, you can ... it's just not a good use of your time.

It doesn't have to be a set time. There is no concrete timeline of healing. But it is helpful to set bounds. If someone cuts me off on the street and doesn't use a blinker, I don't care that my first instinct is to growl out a "fuck you!". If a friend is 30 minutes late for dinner, I can be a little bit upset. I can acknowledge the frustration and pain of those events. But, that person who cut me off spent maybe 1-second thinking about me, if that. The actual event lasted less than 5 seconds. What sense does it make to let that ruin my day?

During the panel, I mentioned business as well. If something goes wrong, a deal doesn't close, or a coworker fucks something important up. It's okay to be angry. But, what are your next steps, and how can you focus on moving forward instead of wading in the sea of anger?

The friend scenario depends more on context, but let us assume you pick your friends well, and they've been there for you countless times. You can spend some of the night sulking if you really want - though I'd argue you shouldn't. But, if you were to ruin the friendship over that, would

that be a fair use of emotional energy? Would that be a reasonable response? No. The time doesn't suit the crime.

I want to hit so many vital sub-points, but they're not all relevant to the chapter, so, pardon me as I cram them in.

I rarely feel guilt for a primary emotion. The emotion that comes out immediately after something happens. I do, however, want to control the secondary emotion and the actions I take based on that emotion. It's okay to think hypocritical thoughts, to covet something for a brief second. It's not okay to act on those feelings, nor to make them a pattern.

When somebody hurts me - or when I let myself get hurt from somebody's actions - I like the idea of forgiving but not forgetting. Anger, holding a grudge, or ruminating on the situation over and over again, doesn't actually punish the person you believe hurt you. Those patterns do injure you.

These both go back to the idea of sitting shiva.

What in your life are you still grieving, and are you working toward catharsis? The journey can be as long as it needs to be, but you won't get anywhere without a direction in mind.

Key Takeaways

- It's okay to grieve for as long as you need, but the goal should be to move forward.
- You don't need to feel guilt for a negative emotion or thought - only for acting on it or letting it last too long. Even then, guilt is the wrong word.
- Loss is inevitable; it's easier to prepare for it than pretend it doesn't exist.