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# Get Started

## Put Your Shirt Back On!

**S**o, there I was on mile three of a ten-mile run—a marathon-training run to be exact. After *thinking about* running a marathon for the past five years, I finally committed to *doing it*.

At noon on a Tuesday in May, I was “squeezing in” a run between my appointments. On this 80-degree day running on the streets of Hermosa Beach in L.A., I was sweating like crazy but feeling unbelievably energized. I thought, “For a health grunt, I’m sure raising my game to greatness! I think I’ll kill two birds with one stone. I’ll take off my shirt and get a tan.”

But another voice said, “*Do I really want to take off my shirt? I mean, I’m definitely dropping the pounds but I’m sure not there yet. Here I am, surrounded by all these beautiful people with six-pack abs, bronzed bodies, and perfect smiles. And they’re running, rollerblading, playing volleyball, surfing, and sunning. Geez, doesn’t anybody work around here? Maybe I’ll keep my shirt on after all.*”

## From *Grunt* to GREATNESS!

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My affirming voice cut in. “No, darn it. I want a tan and I’m hot! So what if I don’t look like them. Who cares? I am running ten miles. I am a successful businessman and a coach. People really like me. I love myself, and I deserve to have my shirt off and get a tan if I want to!”

*“Don’t be ridiculous, Mike. Maybe in a few more weeks. For sure when you’re down another ten pounds.”*

“For crying out loud, Mike . . . take off the damn shirt. Do you realize how long you’ve been dreaming of the day when you would feel comfortable in public without a shirt?”

Off came the shirt.



## Chapter 1 — Get Started

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My thoughts kept racing. I affirmed, “I made the decision and good for me. I’m going to get a nice tan.”

Mile six. *“How can I possibly think I’m a stud? There sure are lots of people around. I wonder what my love handles look like from the back.”*

Mile eight. “ROCK ON, Mike! You have never run this far before. YES! And you are bronzing!”

*“My shirt looks like a damn skirt the way it’s tucked into my shorts. Maybe I should just carry it.”*

“Geez, Mike, who cares? And nobody’s watching you anyway. They’re too focused on themselves.”

I was running with a headset on, cranking Green Day to get myself fired up. Yes, I was in the zone: focused, controlled, concentrated on my breathing, pace, and water intake.

Suddenly I felt the presence of a car right next to me moving at my pace. It was so close, I could have reached out and touched it.

*“How long has it been there?”*

Still running with my shirt tucked into the back of my shorts, I whipped off my headset and glanced into the car. There were four of them . . . all teenagers. The kid in the front passenger seat—his arm resting on the open win-

dow, wise guy smirk on his face—leaned out the window and yelled,

“HEY, DUDE! PUT YOUR SHIRT BACK ON!”

As these hecklers sped away laughing, I was utterly and completely blown away. My thoughts raced faster than ever. “Think positive, Mike. They’re just kids. They say that to everybody. Keep your shirt off. You are the man.”

*“Ah jeez, you shouldn’t have taken the damn thing off in the first place. You want a tan? Get it in a booth! Or go run where nobody can see you. I gotta get out of L.A. I’m sick of it here, and I’m still fat.”*

“No, Mike . . . you’re making it happen. You’re training for a marathon, which is a metaphor for greatness. You’re on the path. You’re growing from grunt to greatness. So here’s my new mantra: **My body has improved and I want it better. I’m working on it and I love myself right now.**”



Can you relate to the self-talk in this story? I bet you can, for you have both grunt *and* greatness within you. I challenge you to love yourself as you pursue your potential in every area of your life. Don’t ever postpone self-love for your arrival at the end of the run.

### **Defining “Grunt” and “Greatness”**

Let me be clear. The term “grunt” in this book has nothing to do with the military or being the “low man on the totem pole” who runs errands for the boss.

Being a grunt is three things.

First, **it’s a state of mind**. It represents the negative thoughts and feelings *we all struggle with* to varying degrees, no matter what we’ve accomplished in life. These thoughts include insecurity, fear, mediocrity, doubt, guilt, and shame.

Second, **it means settling for less than what we are capable of**. It’s when we don’t strive for our goals and dreams because of our negative thoughts and feelings.

Third, **it’s *the physical manifestation of our negative thoughts and feelings***. It’s not being as happy and at peace as we can and want to be. It’s settling for jobs we can’t stand, not having as much money as we’d like, or not being the kind of parents we want to be. In general, we aren’t able to experience the kind of life we want and can achieve.

While coaching thousands of clients over the years, I have learned that it is common to have the negative thoughts, feelings, and actions of a grunt. *Most of us want more out of life than we have.*

## From *Grunt* to GREATNESS!

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If that describes you, know that you're *not alone!* In fact, you keep good company since almost every single person in the world—even those who appear successful—is part grunt.

I want to emphasize this: ***Everybody struggles with much of what you struggle with. And many people struggle with everything that you struggle with.***

Read that paragraph again, because your frustration might stem from believing you're the only one who struggles with “grunt” traits. Letting go of this debilitating notion will put you on the path to greatness.

### ***How do you define greatness?***

Have you ever taken time to think deeply about how you *define* success and then how you *achieve* it?

Research shows that most people spend more time creating their grocery lists than thinking about what they want out of their lives.

During my seven years as a personal development coach, I have asked hundreds of people to articulate what success, or greatness, means to them. The list below represents a compilation of answers from the overwhelming majority:

- Happiness
- Financial freedom

- Being in love
- Happy, healthy, and rich
- Peacefulness
- Living God's will

Isn't it interesting that not one person expressed the definition of success by including ALL of these elements? Because we don't focus on all of these areas, we sell ourselves short before we ever embark on our pursuit of greatness.

I believe the following definition beautifully captures the concept of greatness and all its dimensions. After reviewing my definition, please think deeply about how *you* define greatness.

**Greatness: To enjoy peace of mind and happiness by loving yourself now, and pursuing balanced personal potential in each area of your life.**

Each facet of this definition is critically important. Removing any one of these elements would render greatness flat and incomplete. Let me explain these elements further.

### ***Peace of Mind and Happiness***

When we really get down to it, most of us want *to be at peace with ourselves* and *to be happy*. Is there really anything else?

## From *Grunt* to GREATNESS!

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Sure, we might want a great career, more money, a wonderful love life, optimal health, and more. But isn't our desire for these things based on believing they will make us happier? And don't you know people who have these things, yet are discontented and unhappy? Sure you do! Would you consider these people successful? I bet not. Yet having "only" peace of mind and happiness is not enough, as the additional elements of our definition suggest.

### ***Loving Yourself Now***

Self-love (accepting yourself as you are now) is a critical dimension to this definition of greatness. It also ties to peace and happiness.

Can you be fully happy if you don't love yourself? I believe self-love is partly derived from being able to laugh at yourself in spite of your flaws (and this book is designed to help you do that). And, let me be blunt. **If you do not have the courage to pursue your personal potential, you will never fully love and respect yourself.**

### ***Pursuing***

Notice this element of the definition of greatness doesn't say "achieving" or "attaining." It implies that you will experience inner peace, happiness, and self-love when you *dedicate yourself to pursuing* a worthwhile goal, not only when you achieve it.