

Igniting your Potential

Igniting Your *Potential*

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4 Ace Productions

Igniting your Potential

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Igniting your Potential

DEDICATION

In this book, I talk a lot about individual achievement and taking responsibility for your accomplishments. Since this is aimed at middle school students, I have not included within the book, one very essential ingredient to **success**. However, I would be remiss if I did not share the importance of having people in your life who believe in you and cheer you on. Having a life partner who understands, believes and loves you is essential to any lasting success in life. Because without that person what good is a successful life? In the end, it comes down to who you enjoy a successful life with. In the case of middle school students, those people are your family!

I am blessed to have my wife Kelly by my side for over 30 years. She has supported me through it all and has always pushed me when I needed it. Because of her honesty, encouragement, wonderful insights and “go for it” attitude, this journey has been a joy and I cannot imagine accomplishing what I have without her. Sure, there have

Igniting your Potential

been some minor bumps along the way, but I always have the security of knowing she will be with me through thick and thin. ***Thank you*** for being everything to me.

All My Love,

Brian

Igniting your Potential

WHAT DO THESE JOBS HAVE IN COMMON?

Here are the jobs: Magician, Educational Speaker, Entrepreneur, Writer, Firefighter/EMT, Director of Education, Marketing Expert and Childcare Counselor. What is the common thread? They are all jobs/careers I have pursued over the past 30 + years. While working in these areas, I have learned many important lessons (some the easy way, but most of them the hard way).

My name is Brian Richards and I am writing this book with only one goal in mind. To help middle school students get ready for high school, college and life! I have been very fortunate over the years to encounter many wise people who shared with me, important life-changing lessons. Some of these people I have had personal relationships with, others I have sought out their knowledge, shared freely, while others I have purchased their expertise through consultations.

We live in very exciting times with information *literally* at

Igniting your Potential

our fingertips. You can do anything you desire in life, but it takes wisdom and knowledge. I will share with you some foundational concepts to help you acquire this information at lightning speed.

*I will do this by **Igniting Your Potential!***

Igniting your Potential

WHAT IS IGNITING YOUR POTENTIAL?

This book is my way of whispering in your ear important concepts that can literally change your life. I had to overcome adversity at a very young age. My mother passed away when I was only 6 years old. That was a hard thing to deal with at such a young age. Some of you who are reading this book can personally identify with this situation, but the majority of you probably cannot. Suffice it to say that it is true, time does heal all wounds, but the scar remains.

Because of this turn of events in my life, I was raised in a one-parent household. My father was a fun-loving person who loved to laugh at himself. Therefore, at a very young age, I learned the importance of not taking yourself too seriously. However, behind the laughter was a tremendous amount of pain and doubt; instead of taking on the challenges in life, my Dad turned to alcohol.

Because of this, I was left alone quite a lot, to take care of my younger brother. As a result, I did not have a typical childhood. I did not get to play sports or spend time with

Igniting your Potential

friends; I spent time at home watching my little brother, feeding him and entertaining him and as a result entertaining me.

Dad would often come home too drunk to do anything with us and then I would turn my attention to taking care of my Father. Nevertheless, you know what? In spite of his alcoholism, my father was a wise man. When he did not drink, he would share wonderful words of wisdom with me. We had many late night talks, which helped me realize who I am and what is important in life. Also, at critical moments in my life, he would write letters that shared important advice that I still refer to today (yes, I saved those letters). The fact is, despite his tough fight with an addictive disease, my father prepared me for the world. Most importantly, I never doubted his love for me!

Igniting Your Potential is my way to share that wisdom and the advice of countless others that I have come in contact with over the years. One of the keys to overcoming adversity is to always remember, “the past is in the past’. There is nothing you can do to change it!

Igniting your Potential

However, from this moment forward, you are in control to make changes, to create the life that you want it to be. I hope that you heed this advice and use it to make a difference in your life, and in doing so, make a difference in the world.

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

The best way to read this book is one-step at a time. The book is broken into three major components called the, “Triangle of Potentiality”. Each section is discussed and illustrated with examples. Then each section is followed with exercises for you to do. Do not take these exercises lightly; they will be a great help in clarifying each of the sections.

My suggestion is to spend a week on each section, for a total time commitment of three weeks. If an area takes longer, that is ok. After all, each of these areas are lifelong ventures that you will continue to work on and modify as you go through life.

If you attended my program, this book is a wonderful addition to reinforce the messages in a concrete way. This book is intended to be a reference guide to help energize you to reach your full potential. If you are in middle school,

Igniting your Potential

I know that some of this advice may be beyond your reach right now, but I will make a promise to you; in the very near future, this information will be **extremely helpful** and **valuable** to **you** and **your future**.

I ask you to read this book with an open mind and try not to judge what you read right away. Take some time to think over the advice in this book and look at it from the angle of, “How can I apply these ideas?” instead of “that won’t work for me”.

Better yet, look at these ideas and study them, re-work them so that they are applicable to your current situation. Just because I suggest ways to do something does not mean that is the only way to do it. Maybe you have a new concept that was inspired by what I do; that is great, go for it, storm your own trail.

The moment you stop learning or challenging yourself, you become stagnant with little or no growth. Please understand that I am not proposing that you become so focused on achievement that you leave no time for fun and

Igniting your Potential

relaxation. I am simply saying that when you have a task at hand, you give it your ***all*** and reach for your full potential. That way when you do take that time to relax and have fun, you can concentrate on that and not on “what needs to be done”. Trust me I know what I am saying; I am guilty of this far more than I care to admit.

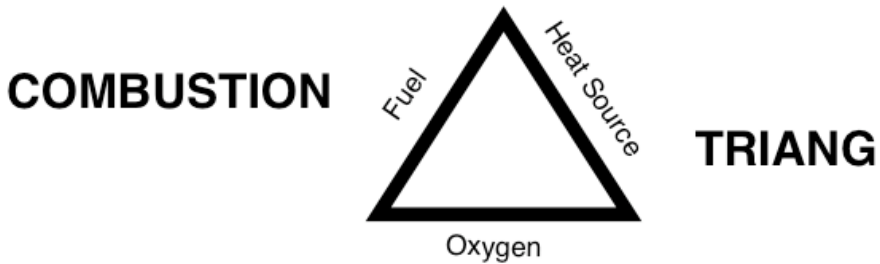
IGNITING YOUR POTENTIAL

THE TRIANGLE OF POTENTIALITY

THE TRIANGLE OF COMBUSTION

This book is based on a concept that I learned as a firefighter. For many years, I have worked with my local fire department and although many things have changed, one thing has not, is the ***Law of Combustion***.

You see, as a *new* firefighter, you are taught the “Triangle of Combustion”; it looks like the illustration below



In order for combustion to take place, you need a combination of the following elements: Fuel, Heat Source and Oxygen. If those elements are present, you might start the chemical process of combustion. However, there is a

Igniting your Potential

catch; it requires a delicate balance of each element to make the process happen.

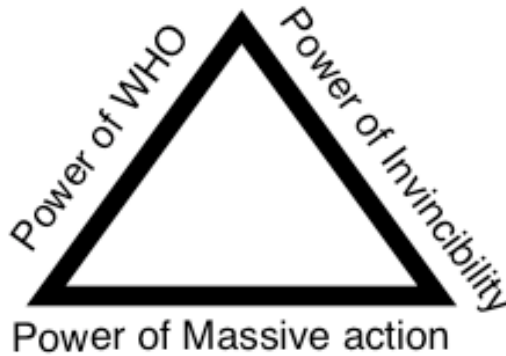
If you have fuel and a heat source but only a little oxygen - combustion will not occur. In fact, combustion can happen so rapidly that it uses all the oxygen in a given area and the fire smolders. If someone introduces oxygen suddenly, such as opening a door to the room, you will get something known as a “backdraft” and the room will ignite rapidly!

If you have fuel and oxygen but the heat source is a smoldering ember, there may not be enough heat to start the process. Additionally, a fire can actually starve itself by consuming all the fuel.

When I started putting together this program, I was struck by the similarities between the physical properties of combustion and the process of reaching your full potential.

The “*Triangle of Potentiality*” is inspired by the “*Triangle of Combustion*” and looks like the illustration on the next page...

Igniting your Potential



In order for a person to succeed in any endeavor, there are three important elements that need to be present:

- The Power of Who
- The Power of Massive Action
- The Power of Invincibility.

However, the same catch applies to this Triangle as it does to the triangle of combustion; that is the concept of balance. There is a precise and delicate balance to ignite **Success!** For example, if you have a strong sense of who you are (**power of who**) and know what steps to take to achieve your goals (**massive action**) but are easily discouraged

Igniting your Potential

(*power of invincibility*) by criticism, **Success** will be out of your reach. On the other hand, let us say, you know who you are and you are bulletproof to criticism, but you are lazy when it comes to action. You will be a great dreamer, but never one who accomplishes what you set out to do.

We need to explore this triangle in detail and determine how each element affects us. Then we need to look and see if there are any practical steps, we can take to strengthen and balance each element to help us ***Ignite Our Potential!***

In the chapters that follow, we will look deeper into the three sides of this triangle and help develop a blueprint for success, to achieve more than we ever dreamed. First, let us summarize each of the elements.

SIDE ONE = THE POWER OF WHO

Before we can take action on a plan for our lives, it is essential to have a basic understanding of ***who we are***. It is important to understand that this is an ongoing process, for as we grow and get older; ***who we are*** will change and

Igniting your Potential

evolve. *It is essential to have a basic understanding of who you are and what is important to you.*

SIDE TWO: THE POWER OF MASSIVE ACTION

Once you have a basic understanding of who you are and what you want, then you can make choices on where you want to go. This usually involves determining goals that you wish to accomplish. In order for you to accomplish those goals, you will need to harness the power of massive action.

"A DREAM WITHOUT A PLAN IS JUST A WISH!" AUTHOR UNKNOWN

SIDE THREE: THE POWER OF INVINCIBILITY TO CRITICISM

As you take ***massive action***, you will find that you may come across some roadblocks to accomplishing all that you

Igniting your Potential

set out to do. Therefore, it is crucial to be able to keep striving toward your objectives in the midst of a sea of criticism. This criticism may come from people who are jealous of your goals or it may come from your biggest supporters. The key to it all is differentiating between “just” and “unjust criticism”.

Unfortunately, this is a problem that has been perpetuated by our society at large. The “self-esteem movement” wanted to enhance a child’s self-image by being positive and pumping up their confidence. The inherent problem is the belief by well-intentioned adults that failure destroys confidence in one’s ability. Part of this book is to change your attitude and beliefs about how to view failure and criticism.

In an article entitled, “The Gift of Failure” Steve Baskin shares the story of a young man cleaning his room. His mother walks in to see two piles of trophies. She asks her son, “What are you doing with the trophies?” He replies, “The small pile is the

Igniting your Potential

awards from the tournaments and meets that I won.” He then dismissively points at the larger pile saying, “Those are the ones I got just for showing up. I’m throwing those away!” This child understood that those other trophies were of ***no value***! Children know that affirmations are not enough; it takes genuine accomplishment to build a person’s identity! We will discuss this further in The Power of Invincibility.