BOOK OF THOUGHTS

BE THE TURTLE

Thoughts, fears, gratitude, love, life and everything in between



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INFLUENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout this book I refer to writers, philosophers, scientists and thinkers whose work has influenced my life and thinking.

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CONTENTS

Introduction - The Doorway

PART ONE - BE THE TURTLE

01 - Be the Turtle

02 - There Is No Rush

03 - Your Own Drum

04 - Work Smart, Stay Curious

05 - The Moon and the Sun

Voice That Shaped Me - Carl Sagan

PART TWO - THE ROAD THAT BROUGHT ME HERE

06 - The Dancing Bear

07 - Trust Your Gut

08 - At My Own Pace

09 - Learn to Love Yourself

Strength

10 - I Did It My Way

PART THREE - MY PEOPLE

11 - A Seat at My Table

12 - Rare People

13 - No Time for Drama

14 - Five People at My Table

Reflection - Who Are Your Five People?

PART FOUR - LOVE

15 - Fear

Voice That Shaped Me - Jordan Peterson

Voice That Shaped Me - Author Unknown

Found Words - Would You?

PART FIVE - LIVE THE FUCKING LIFE

16 - Taste Life

17 - The Imperfect Day

18 - When Life Is Good

What I Am Grateful For

Reflection - What Am I Grateful For?

PART SIX - THE SPARK

The Spark

To My People

Thank You - Sol

Closing Note - Slow and Steady Wins the Race

INTRODUCTION - THE DOORWAY

Tonight, I sit here in Vietnam writing my thoughts again.

And I think this month away is becoming more than just an adventure.

Maybe it's my way of soul-searching.

A chance to write every day.

To ask myself the hard questions.

To breathe.

To think.

To stop fearing the unknown.

The people closest to me believe in me.

They've got my back.

And somehow, they're almost as excited about what I'm doing as I am.

That means more to me than they probably realise.

This trip feels like preparation.

Not preparation for one project or one business, but for the years ahead.

For the next version of my life.

I love my job.

But if I'm completely truthful with myself, it's a stepping stone.

It gives me the ability to build the life I actually want.

A life where I can be me.

Where I can keep creating.

Keep being artistic.

Keep writing books.

Keep building businesses.

Keep taking the crazy ideas in my head and seeing if I can somehow turn them into something real.

And keep helping people.

Especially people who might need a hand finding the ideas, tools or opportunities that I've been lucky enough to discover along the way.

Tortuga Creations is growing.

RAVE IQ is about to launch with my brother Zac.

There are books.

Music.

Art.

Ideas.

Projects I haven't even thought of yet.

And yeah, I'm nervous.

But underneath the nerves, I'm fucking excited.

Because there's no turning back now.

We're going to give it everything.

And why not?

Why can't it work?

Why should doubt get the final say?

And if something doesn't work?

Okay.

Next idea.

Next opportunity.

Learn from it.

Keep moving.

I refuse to let doubt stop me anymore.

I've lived roughly half my life already.

I don't plan on wasting the other half worrying about whether I'm allowed to live it my way.

It's taken me years to become this version of myself.

Years of mistakes.

Lessons.

Good decisions.

Terrible decisions.

People coming into my life.

People leaving it.

Love.

Heartbreak.

Laughter.

Loss.

Successes.

Failures.

And everything in between.

All of it built this version of me.

I don't plan on going backwards.

So right now, I recharge.

I take in a big breath.

Inhale.

Exhale.

I look around.

I take in Vietnam.

The sounds.

The smells.

The people.

The food.

The chaos.

The quiet moments in between it all.

And somewhere inside this adventure, I feel like I'm standing at a doorway.

On one side is everything I've already known.

On the other side are opportunities I can't even see yet.

And for the first time in a long time,

I'm not afraid of what's coming.

I'm curious.

I'm excited.

I'm ready.

I don't know exactly where this road goes.

And maybe that's the point.

I don't need to know everything anymore.

I just need to keep moving.

Slow.

Steady.

Taking it in.

Learning.

Creating.

Helping.

Loving.

Living.

Being the turtle.

And whatever is waiting on the other side of that doorway,

I'm standing here with my arms wide open.

PART ONE

BE THE TURTLE

Slow. Steady. Present. Grateful.



01 - BE THE TURTLE

Be the turtle.

You don't have to race everybody.

You don't have to know
where everyone else is going.

Move slow.

Move steady.

Look around once in a while.

There's a lot of life
we miss
because we're too busy trying
to get somewhere.

Feel the sun.

Notice the people
who stayed.

Laugh when you can.

Sit quietly when you need to.

Fill your cup with gratitude.

Not because everything is perfect.

But because somewhere today
there is still something worth being grateful for.

Then share some of it.

A kind word.

A little patience.

Your time.

Your story.

Your love.

Life doesn't always need
to be conquered.

Sometimes
it just needs to be lived.

So take your time.

Carry what matters.

Leave behind what doesn't.

And keep moving forward.

Slow.

Steady.

Grateful.

Be the turtle.

02 - THERE IS NO RUSH

I think I've slowly built
my own philosophy.

Not from one person.

Not from one book.

But from listening.

Learning.

Thinking.

Taking pieces from great philosophers,
great thinkers,
people who made me stop
and question how I was living.

And somewhere along the way,

I realised something simple.

I'm okay going slow.

Actually,

I like going slow.

My head already goes
a hundred miles an hour.

Ideas.

Plans.

Questions.

Dreams.

Businesses.

Books.

Music.

People.

Life.

My brain does enough running.

My body doesn't need to follow.

As I get older,
I'm becoming more comfortable
with sitting still.

Breathing.

Watching.

Letting things come
when they're ready.

I have a big turtle tattooed on me.

That isn't just decoration.

The turtle means something to me.

It's my spirit animal.

And more and more,

I feel like I am the turtle.

Slow.

Steady.

Observant.

Carrying my world with me.

Moving forward
without needing to race.

I don't need to get there first.

I just want to get there
as myself.

Slow and steady
will win me the race of life.

And I'm completely okay with that.

Business doesn't need to be rushed.

Love doesn't need to be rushed.

Friendships don't need to be rushed.

Family.

Healing.

Ideas.

Growth.

None of it.

The things that matter
usually take time.

So let them.

Enjoy where you are.

Take people as they come.

Take moments as they come.

Stop trying to force
the next chapter
before you've finished reading this one.

Inhale.

Exhale.

Inhale.

Exhale.

There is no rush.

Really.

There is no fucking rush.

You don't have to keep up
with everyone else.

You don't have to live
on somebody else's timeline.

Move at your pace.

Build at your pace.

Heal at your pace.

Love at your pace.

Learn at your pace.

Just keep moving.

Even if it's slowly.

Especially if it's slowly.

Because slow gives you time
to notice things.

To feel things.

To appreciate things.

To change direction
when your gut tells you to.

To breathe the whole experience in.

Maybe that's what being the turtle
really means to me.

Not being lazy.

Not standing still.

Just refusing to rush
a life I actually want to experience.

Slow.

Steady.

Present.

Grateful.

Inhale.

Exhale.

And keep moving.

There is no rush.

I am the Turtle.

Be a little delulu.

Believe that what's meant for you is already finding its way to you.

Trust your gut.

Make wishes under the moon.

Smile at the little signs.

Dance in the kitchen.

Fall in love with your own life.

And let yourself believe that maybe, just maybe, everything is working out exactly as it should.

— Unknown

03 - YOUR OWN DRUM

Be humble.

Be grateful.

Laugh hard.

Love deeply.

Life is short.

Too short
to spend it pretending
to be someone you're not.

Too short
to keep shrinking yourself
just to make other people comfortable.

Don't be afraid
to roll to the beat
of your own drum.

Even if it sounds different.

Even if no one else
understands the rhythm yet.

Keep playing.

Your people will find you.

They'll hear something familiar
in the music you make.

They'll smile.

They'll move closer.

And before you know it,
they'll be dancing beside you.

That's the beautiful thing about life.

You don't need everybody
to understand you.

You just need the right people
to feel the beat.

So stay humble.

Stay grateful.

Laugh until your stomach hurts.

Love people properly.

Dance when the music finds you.

And never be ashamed
of the rhythm that makes you, you.

Because somewhere out there
your people are listening.

And when they hear you,

they'll join you
in this strange, beautiful dance
we call life.

04 - WORK SMART, STAY CURIOUS

Work hard, they say.

But how about
work smart?

Why do we need
to break ourselves
just to feel accomplished?

Why do we keep listening
when society tells us
that exhaustion means success?

I don't want to work myself into the ground.

I want to work easy.

Work smart.

Use every tool available to me.

Learn better ways.

Ask better questions.

And leave enough energy
to actually enjoy the life
I'm working so hard to build.

Sit with people smarter than you.

I love doing that.

Ask them questions.

Listen.

Take in their wisdom.

Learn from their mistakes.

Learn from their victories.

Learn from the lives
they've already lived.

I never want to be
the smartest person in the room.

I know I'm not.

And I love that.

Because if everyone around me
knows something I don't,

then I'm standing
in a room full of opportunity.

And wisdom doesn't only come
from professors, books
or people with letters after their names.

It comes from the old bloke
you meet on the road.

The woman who has survived
more than she ever talks about.

The traveller.

The artist.

The worker.

The mother.

The stranger sitting beside you
who has spent fifty years
learning something
you've never even thought about.

Everyone carries a library.

Take the time to open a few books.

And then read the great thinkers too.

Rumi.

Hannah Arendt.

Carl Sagan.

Alan Watts.

Carl Jung.

Jordan Peterson.

Judith Butler.

People who looked at life
from completely different directions.

Listen.

Read.

Question them.

Agree with them.

Disagree with them.

Ponder their thoughts.

Pull them apart.

Put them back together.

Use what helps you.

Leave behind what doesn't.

Because learning
isn't about finding someone
to do your thinking for you.

It's about giving your own mind
more places to explore.

Listen at night.

Read when you can.

Ask yourself the hard questions.

Why do I believe this?

Where did that belief come from?

Is it actually mine?

Could I be wrong?

Could they be wrong?

What haven't I considered yet?

Don't be afraid
to change your mind.

That's not weakness.

Sometimes it simply means
you learned something new.

There is too much wisdom
in this world
to walk through it
with our ears closed.

So work smart.

Stay curious.

Sit with people
who know things you don't.

Read people
you agree with.

Read people
you don't.

Ask questions.

Think deeply.

Keep learning.

Because if we never take the time
to listen,
read,
question
and learn,

how will we ever know
what else is out there?

Something to think about.

05 - THE MOON AND THE SUN

The moon and the sun.

God, I love them both.

That big bright moon
hanging in the night,

feeling so close
when it's actually so far away.

Different phases.

Different moods.

Different feelings.

I can stare at the moon
for ages.

Especially on those cold, crisp nights
when everything feels still.

Just looking up.

Wondering.

What the fuck is out there?

Are we alone?

Carl Sagan once described us
as a mote of dust
suspended in a sunbeam.

And I think about that a lot.

This tiny planet.

Floating in all that darkness.

All of us down here
worrying,

loving,

fighting,

laughing,

building lives,

breaking hearts,

having children,

losing people,

starting again.

And somewhere out there,

billions of stars.

Billions of possibilities.

I've always been drawn to that.

The stars.

The universe.

That question:

Are we alone?

Will something ever find us?

Will someone ever come here
and look at us
the way we look into the night?

I don't know.

Part of me thinks
we might actually be alone.

Maybe life here
was just this incredible accident.

The right planet.

The right distance from the sun.

The right conditions.

The right moment.

And somehow,

here we are.

Thinking.

Feeling.

Looking back at the universe
that made us.

I'm not a religious man.

But I do believe
there's something more.

I like to think we ascend.

That when we leave,

we join our angels.

And by angels,

I mean our people.

The ones we loved.

The grandparents.

The mother.

The father.

The sister.

The brother.

The best mate
who isn't here anymore.

The people who shaped us.

The ones we still talk to
in our heads.

The ones we feel
when something inside us says,

don't go that way.

Call that person.

Slow down.

Trust this.

Maybe that's them.

Maybe it's memory.

Maybe it's instinct.

Maybe it doesn't matter.

I just like believing
they're still somewhere close.

Watching.

Day or night.

Then there's the sun.

That's different.

The sun is happiness to me.

Beach.

Ocean.

Water.

Heat.

Sunlight on my skin.

I come alive in it.

There's something about
smelling ocean air

that gives me this warm
fucking feeling inside.

That smell says home.

Maybe that's why
I needed to come back
to Port Lincoln so badly.

Two minutes from the ocean.

Walk outside in the morning,

feel that cool breeze,

smell the salt,

hear the water somewhere nearby.

Home.

Nothing beats it.

Being in the water.

Sun beaming down.

Ocean around me.

No rush.

No noise.

Just that feeling.

That's my happy place.

The moon makes me wonder.

The sun makes me feel alive.

One reminds me
how small I am.

The other reminds me
how lucky I am to be here.

And somewhere between the two,

I find myself.

Looking up.

Breathing in.

Wondering what's out there.

And being grateful
for what's right here.

VOICE THAT SHAPED ME

CARL SAGAN - PALE BLUE DOT

"*a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.*"
- Carl Sagan, Pale Blue Dot (1994)

WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

That line has stayed with me for years.

All this shit we carry. The arguments. The ego. The grudges. The things we think are the end of the world.

Then you zoom out.

We are here on this tiny fucking dot, floating through something so big our brains can barely understand it. Everyone we love is here. Everyone we have lost was here. Every dream, every war, every kiss, every stupid fight, every ordinary Tuesday.

It humbles me.

It reminds me that life is short, people matter, and maybe we should spend less time trying to win every argument and more time actually living.

Look after the planet. Look after your people. Stay curious. Look up once in a while.

We are tiny. But what we do with our tiny bit of time still matters.

PART TWO

THE ROAD THAT BROUGHT ME HERE



06 - THE DANCING BEAR

For a long time,
I was the dancing bear.

You know the image.

The bear comes out.

It dances.

It performs.

It smiles for the crowd.

Everyone watches.

Everyone thinks everything is okay.

Then the show finishes.

The crowd goes home.

And the bear goes back to its chains.

Back to its cage.

That was me.

Every morning
I got dressed.

Went to work.

Smiled.

Laughed.

Performed.

Did what I had to do.

And almost nobody knew
what was actually happening inside me.

I was fighting addiction.

Fighting heartbreak.

Fighting anger.

Fighting questions
I couldn't answer.

And at my lowest,

I was fighting thoughts
about whether I even wanted
to be here anymore.

There were times
when I had gone beyond simply being sad.

I had thought about ending my life.

Seriously.

And the frightening part
was how calm I could feel about it.

Then this tiny little creature
came into my life.

Tony Chihuahua.

All 400 grams of him.

This ridiculous little dude
who suddenly needed somebody
to look after him.

And somehow,

while I thought I was looking after Tony,

Tony started looking after me.

Where's Tony?

Has Tony eaten?

Let's take Tony for a walk.

Let's go on an adventure.

Come here, mate.

Sit with me.

Little things.

But when your mind is somewhere dark,

sometimes little things
are fucking enormous.

He gave me something outside myself
to think about.

Something to protect.

Something to love.

Something waiting for me.

We bonded.

And slowly,

very slowly,

the darkness stopped occupying
every corner of my mind.

Tony will never understand
what he did.

He's just a little dog.

But I understand.

That little bloke
came into my life
at a time when I desperately needed him.

And in his own way,

he helped save me.

But Tony wasn't the only one.

Dave.

My mates.

The crew.

My uncle and auntie.

My sister.

The people who stood around me
when I wasn't standing very well myself.

Some probably knew
I was struggling.

Some probably had no idea
how deep it really went.

But they were there.

And sometimes that's enough.

I spent a couple of years
trying to find my way back.

Eventually,

I knew it was time to go home.

Port Lincoln.

That had always been part of the plan.

Get the experience.

Learn.

Take what I'd learned
from Adelaide Airport

and bring it home with me.

At the time,

I wasn't standing there confidently thinking,

this is definitely the right decision.

I was thinking,

fuck,

I hope this works.

It did.

I came home.

Back to my beautiful house.

Back to the place
I'd built into exactly
what I wanted it to be.

I found work I enjoy.

I started creating again.

I built Tortuga Creations.

I started writing.

Making art.

Building ideas.

Dreaming again.

And somewhere along that road,

the chains started falling off.

I wasn't performing happiness anymore.

I started actually feeling it.

That's different.

Looking back now,

I realise how close I came
to never seeing this version of my life.

Never seeing my home again.

Never building the businesses.

Never writing these words.

Never taking the trips.

Never meeting people
I haven't even met yet.

Never seeing what came next.

And fuck,

I'm glad I stayed.

I'm glad people stood beside me.

I'm glad Dave was there.

I'm glad my family was there.

I'm glad my mates were there.

And I'm forever grateful
that one tiny 400-gram Chihuahua
wandered into my story
at exactly the right time.

These days,

when I smile,

most of the time
there isn't a cage waiting behind the curtain.

I'm not saying everything is perfect.

I'm not pretending
the scars disappeared.

They're there.

But they're mine.

They're part of the story.

And maybe that's one of the reasons
I'm so grateful now.

I know what it feels like
to not want tomorrow.

So when tomorrow comes,

I notice it.

The house.

The job.

The friends.

The ideas.

The sunshine.

The travel.

The quiet mornings.

The little dog.

Life.

Ordinary fucking life.

And I realise
how extraordinary it actually is.

For years,

I was the dancing bear.

Today,

the door is open.

And I'm walking out.



Good company.

07 - TRUST YOUR GUT

For years
I felt fucking lost.

What's my purpose?

What's my destiny?

Is there even such a thing
as destiny?

Maybe the question was never
what's my destiny.

Maybe it was simply,

what's my purpose?

I fell in love once.

Properly.

I gave everything.

I packed up my life
and handed it over
to another person.

I put them before myself.

I tried to build a sanctuary.

Somewhere they could feel safe.

Loved.

Protected.

Cared for.

And for a while,
I felt those things too.

Until I didn't.

When it ended,
it broke something in me.

Profoundly.

Mentally.

Right down to my core.

And even now
I don't know if I've completely recovered.

I don't carry anger.

Mostly sadness.

And questions.

So many fucking questions.

Why?

What the fuck happened?

Was I naive?

Did I want it so badly
that I ignored the red flags?

Maybe.

I know this much.

I loved with everything I had.

But somewhere along the way
I started trying to fix someone.

And I understand now
that wasn't my job.

We are responsible for ourselves.

We have to do our own healing.

Learn ourselves.

Fix what we can.

Forgive what we can't.

Love ourselves enough
to do the work.

That doesn't mean
we stop helping each other.

We absolutely should.

Hold hands.

Lift each other.

Sit beside each other
when life gets dark.

But nobody can climb inside another person
and do their healing for them.

That lesson left a scar on me.

A big one.

But over these last couple of years
I've started becoming me again.

I laugh more.

I open up more.

I've slowly put my head
above the trenches.

Some of it still hurts.

Probably always will.

But I'm okay with that now.

Because I know I loved
as hard as I could.

Was I perfect?

Fuck no.

I made mistakes.

I could have done things differently.

There are things
I would change.

But there's something
I've learned about myself.

I listen to my gut.

For a long time
I thought,

shit, I fucked everything up.

But that wasn't my gut talking.

That was my broken heart.

There's a difference.

My heart was screaming.

My mind was confused.

But underneath all that noise,

my gut knew.

And as I've grown,
and started moving forward again,

I've realised
it had been trying to tell me the truth
all along.

So trust your gut.

Listen to that quiet voice
underneath all the chaos.

The one that doesn't need
to shout.

Sometimes we hear it immediately.

Sometimes it takes years.

But listen.

And yeah,

I still worry about trusting someone again.

How could I not?

Part of me is scared
of ever handing someone
that much of my heart again.

But there's another part of me.

The bigger part.

The hopeful part.

The part that still believes
there's someone out there
I haven't met yet.

My person.

My soulmate.

And God,

when I find them,

I know I'm going to love them
with everything I have.

That scares the shit out of me.

But it also excites me.

Because after everything,

I still believe in love.

I still believe in connection.

I still believe
two people can find each other
and build something beautiful.

Maybe being hurt
didn't destroy that part of me.

Maybe it just taught me
to choose more carefully.

To listen more closely.

To love myself
while loving someone else.

And next time,

if my heart is racing,

my mind is confused,

and the whole world is making noise,

I know exactly what I'm going to do.

Get quiet.

Take a breath.

And trust my fucking gut.

08 - AT MY OWN PACE

I hate those words.

Just get over it.

Move on.

Yeah.

I agree.

Eventually.

But I'll move on
at my own pace.

In my own time.

It took me nearly two years
to heal properly.

To become a better person.

To start loving myself again.

To enjoy what I had
instead of constantly looking back
at what I lost.

I couldn't just flick a switch.

I couldn't just say,

fuck it,

whatever,

and pretend none of it mattered.

It did matter.

It hurt me.

Deeply.

Right to my core.

I was scarred.

And scars take time.

I had questions.

So many questions.

Why?

How?

What did I miss?

What did I do wrong?

What wasn't mine to fix?

What was I supposed to learn from all this?

And those answers
didn't come quickly.

Some took months.

Some took years.

Some only came
when I stopped forcing them.

That's the thing I've learned.

We all heal differently.

Some people move fast.

Some people take longer.

Some people talk.

Some people go quiet.

Some need answers.

Some need distance.

Some need to fall apart first
before they can put themselves back together.

There's no one correct way.

And there's definitely
no correct speed.

I was slower than some people.

That's okay.

I'm the turtle, remember.

Slow.

Steady.

One step at a time.

And eventually,

I got here.

To this place where I can say,

I'm okay.

I'm easy.

I accept what happened.

I don't need to carry anger.

I don't need every answer anymore.

I don't need to keep reopening
the same wound
just to prove it once hurt.

I know it did.

I was there.

And now I'm here.

It just took time.

My time.

So when somebody tells you,

just get over it,

maybe smile.

Take a breath.

And say,

I will.

At my own pace.

In my own time.

You worry about your journey.

I'll take care of mine.



Stay grounded.

09 - LEARN TO LOVE YOURSELF

Leave the bad days behind.

They can fuck off
with the people who caused them.

We beat ourselves up too much.

Over mistakes.

Over people.

Over things
that, in the grand scheme of life,

probably weren't as important
as we made them feel at the time.

For too long,

I forgot to love myself.

And I've been thinking lately,

what does that actually mean?

People say it all the time now.

Love yourself.

Okay.

But how?

For me,

it's learning to love
the person I'm becoming.

Enjoying my own company.

Being comfortable
sitting quietly with myself.

Knowing my heart is good.

Knowing I try not to hurt people.

I mind my own business.

I live my life.

I help where I can.

And these days,

I'm pretty happy
inside myself.

That doesn't mean
I think I'm perfect.

Far from it.

Part of loving yourself
is being willing
to ask yourself the hard questions.

Questions where sometimes
you don't like the answer.

Was I wrong?

Did I hurt someone?

Could I have handled that better?

Am I holding onto something
because I'm scared to let it go?

Am I becoming the person
I actually want to be?

Those questions matter.

Because how the hell
are you ever going to know yourself

if you never talk to yourself?

Sit with your thoughts.

Hash them out.

Argue with yourself a little.

Question your ideas.

Question your reactions.

Question your fears.

Listen to the answers,

even when they're uncomfortable.

Especially then.

Sometimes your mind needs
a proper conversation with itself.

No audience.

No bullshit.

Just you.

Because loving yourself
isn't standing in front of a mirror
telling yourself you're amazing.

Sometimes it's saying,

mate,

you fucked that up.

Learn from it.

Sometimes it's saying,

you did your best.

Let it go.

And sometimes it's saying,

you've carried that long enough.

Put it down.

I think I'm finally learning
that loving yourself

is being honest with yourself.

Forgiving yourself.

Challenging yourself.

Enjoying yourself.

And still choosing
to stand beside yourself

when the answers aren't pretty.

Leave the bad days behind.

Take the lessons.

Leave the weight.

And keep becoming someone
you're happy to spend
the rest of your life with.

Because wherever you go,

there you are.

So you might as well
learn to love the company.

STRENGTH

People think being strong means
nothing breaks you.

Fuck that.

We all break sometimes.

I've broken.

Properly broken.

Strength isn't pretending
nothing hurts.

It's knowing that when life
knocks the absolute shit out of you,

somehow,

you'll put yourself back together.

Maybe not today.

Maybe not tomorrow.

Maybe it takes months.

Maybe years.

Who cares?

You heal at your pace.

Life doesn't give anybody
a free pass from pain.

People leave.

Hearts break.

Plans fall apart.

People disappoint you.

Sometimes you disappoint yourself.

There are days when you question
everything.

Days when you're scared.

Lost.

Angry.

Sad.

And completely fucking exhausted.

Strength is allowing yourself
to feel all of that.

Not hiding from it.

Not pretending everything is awesome
when it isn't.

Feel it.

Sit with it.

Ask the hard questions.

Cry if you need to.

Talk to your people.

Then when you’re ready,

stand back up.

That's strength.

Not never falling.

Getting back up.

Sometimes rebuilding yourself
piece by piece.

Sometimes finding parts of yourself
you thought were gone forever.

And sometimes discovering
a completely new version of you.

I know now that being strong
doesn't mean walking through every storm
with a smile on your face.

Sometimes you're standing in the rain
thinking,

fuck,

how much more of this shit
can I take?

But there's something inside us.

That little spark.

That quiet voice.

Whatever you want to call it.

It says,

keep going.

One more day.

One more step.

One more breath.

Inhale.

Exhale.

You’re still here.

And maybe that’s what real strength is.

Holding onto who you are
through the darkest moments,

then coming out the other side

scarred,

changed,

maybe a little slower,

but still you.

And still moving forward.

Slow and steady.

Be the Turtle.

10 - I DID IT MY WAY

Never dim your shine.

Never shrink your light
because you're worried
about what other people might think.

This is your life.

Not theirs.

One day,
when it's all done,
and I'm standing there
talking to my angels,

I know what I want to say.

I did it my way.

It wasn't perfect.

I fucked up.

I made mistakes.

I failed.

I trusted the wrong people.

I took wrong turns.

I had days
where I didn't know
what the hell I was doing.

But I kept going.

And when I look back,
there were so many more good times
than bad.

So much more laughter
than sadness.

So much more love
than heartbreak.

So many beautiful moments
that I would never trade
just because some of the road was rough.

I want to be able to smile
and say,

Yeah.

I lived.

I loved.

I laughed.

I took chances.

I stood in my own light.

And I didn't spend my whole life
trying to become
what somebody else wanted me to be.

Maybe I didn't get everything right.

Maybe none of us do.

But if I can reach the end
knowing I was true to myself,

that I loved deeply,

that I gave more than I took,

and that the good outweighed the bad,

then I'm okay with that.

More than okay.

So shine.

Take up your space.

Live your life.

And when your day comes
to tell your angels the story,

make sure it's your story.

Not somebody else's.

I did it my way.

And I'm okay with that.



Keep showing up.

PART THREE

MY PEOPLE



11 - A SEAT AT MY TABLE

I don't let many people
sit at my table anymore.

I think when I was younger
I tried too hard
to be accepted.

Maybe because I was bullied as a kid.

Not liked
for no real reason
other than being me.

People can be cruel.

I've always hated bullies.

But as I've grown older,
something changed.

I'm not afraid
to speak up anymore.

I'm not afraid
to say what I think.

Fuck it.

It's better to be yourself
than spend your whole life
trying to become
what you think other people want.

It took me years
to understand that.

I'm a good person.

I've got a big heart.

I know who I am now.

And I'm good with that.

I'm not perfect.

I'll fuck up.

Sometimes I need
a kick in the arse.

Sometimes I need
constructive criticism.

Sometimes I need someone
I trust enough
to tell me,

Mate, you got that wrong.

And that's okay.

What I don't need anymore
is to please everyone.

I'm never going to be
everyone's cup of tea.

Sometimes I'm too full on.

Sometimes I'm a little crazy.

I get excited.

I talk.

I dream.

I come up with ideas
that probably sound ridiculous
until suddenly they're real.

Then other times
I'm quiet.

Thoughtful.

Watching.

Sussing out the room.

Taking people in.

I'm a bit of both.

An ambivert, they call it.

If I don't know you,
I can be shy.

Cautious.

Life has taught me
to be that way.

Because not every person
who calls themselves your friend
actually wants to see you win.

That one took me a while
to learn.

But I learned it.

You don't need a hundred people
around your table.

You need the ones
who show up
when the weather turns bad.

The ones who stand beside you
in the rain.

The ones who sit down
with no agenda.

No transaction.

No angle.

They're there
simply because
they're your people.

And when you find them,

life is fucking awesome.

You grow together.

You fight together.

You disagree.

You talk it out.

You laugh.

You celebrate.

You sit through the shit.

You break bread together.

And somehow
that ordinary table
becomes one of the most valuable places
in your life.

I'm lucky.

I have people like that.

And these days,
I protect that table.

If you're sitting there,
there's a reason.

And if you're not,

there might be a reason for that too.

I've built boundaries
over these last few years.

Not walls.

Boundaries.

There's a difference.

I can still love people.

Respect people.

Wish people well.

But that doesn't mean
everyone gets access to me.

Not everyone gets my energy.

Not everyone gets my trust.

And not everyone
gets a seat at my table.

I'm solid on that now.

Because the seats are limited.

And I'd rather share my table
with a handful of genuine people

than fill a room
with people
who were never really there for me.

So when you find your people,

pull out a chair.

Break bread.

Tell stories.

Laugh hard.

Grow together.

Protect each other.

And appreciate
just how rare it is

to sit at a table
where nobody has to pretend.

There’s a reason some friendships survive years, distance, busy schedules, and every season of life.

It’s because someone keeps showing up.

Someone sends the message that says, “I miss you. Let’s make plans.”

Someone makes the call, checks in, and finds time even when life feels impossibly busy.

Long-lasting friendships don’t survive by accident — they are maintained with love, effort, and intention.

Somewhere along the way, someone looked at you and quietly decided, “This friendship matters to me. You’re worth my time. You’re worth the effort.”

And honestly, being chosen like that is one of life’s greatest gifts.

— Unknown

12 - RARE PEOPLE

It's okay to be broken.

It's okay to feel lost.

And it's okay
to reach out your hand
and say,

I need help.

Don't be afraid of that.

The people who have your back
have it for a reason.

They're your people.

Their loyalty isn't something
you should ever have to beg for.

It's there.

Solid.

Non-negotiable.

And when you find people like that,
respect it.

Trust takes years to build
and seconds to break.

So keep your word.

Above everything else,
keep your word.

Because when all the noise disappears,
when the money, titles and bullshit
are stripped away,

we're left with two things.

Our word.

And our actions.

Make sure they match.

And remember this.

Rare people are diamonds.

You might only find
a handful of them
in your whole life.

That's why they're rare.

They've been through pressure.

They've been knocked around.

They've seen darkness.

And somehow
they still shine.

Strong.

Beautiful.

Valuable beyond belief.

When you find one,
don't take them for granted.

Hold onto them.

You won't meet people like that
every day.

Lift them
as they lift you.

Water them
as they water you.

Help them
as they help you.

Love them
as they love you.

Be there when they're winning.

But more importantly,
be there when they're falling apart.

Sit beside them
when there are no words.

Answer the phone.

Show up.

Remember the little things.

Celebrate their happiness
without making it about yourself.

And if one day
they need to lean on you,

let them.

Because sometimes
even diamonds need somewhere safe
to rest.

Life will bring you
thousands of faces.

People will come.

People will go.

But every now and then,
someone stays.

Someone sees you properly.

Someone knows your worst days
and still believes in your best ones.

Those are your people.

Protect the trust.

Keep your word.

Show up.

Love them properly.

Because a rare person
is worth more
than a room full of temporary ones.

And if you're lucky enough
to find a few diamonds in this life,

make damn sure
you shine for them too.

13 - NO TIME FOR DRAMA

Drama.

I can't handle it anymore.

Actually,

that's not quite right.

I can handle it.

I just choose not to.

For too long
I accepted people's bullshit.

The tantrums.

The theatrics.

The constant emotional storms
that somehow always became
everybody else's problem.

Not anymore.

My boundaries are different now.

I don't need to argue.

I don't need to win.

I don't need the last word.

I'd sooner just walk away.

Keep rolling
to the beat of my own drum.

Keep living.

Keep laughing.

Keep doing my own thing.

Because I've learned something.

Dramatic people
can be a bit like bullies.

They need an audience.

They need a reaction.

They need you standing there
playing your part.

But the moment you turn around
and start walking away,

they're suddenly going,

hey,

wait up.

Yeah nah, mate.

Fuck that.

I'm going this way.

I've got a life to live.

People to love.

Things to build.

Places to see.

Ideas to chase.

Laughs to have.

I don't want to waste my energy
arguing over shit
that won't matter next week.

Peace is worth more to me now.

So if you bring good energy,

pull up a chair.

If you bring honesty,

welcome.

If you bring laughter,

even better.

But if all you bring
is chaos,

drama,

games,

and bullshit,

I wish you well.

Just over there.

Away from me.

That's not anger.

That's not bitterness.

That's boundaries.

And I'm okay with that.

Life's too short
to spend it standing inside
someone else's storm.

So I'll keep walking.

Keep laughing.

Keep moving.

My direction.

My pace.

My rhythm.

And if the drama starts behind me,

I won't even turn around.

I've got better places to be.

14 - FIVE PEOPLE AT MY TABLE

Here's something to ponder.

If you had one chance
to spend twenty-four hours
with five people

from anywhere
in the history of mankind,

who would they be?

Not just people you admire.

People you could actually sit with.

Laugh with.

Sing with.

Eat with.

Ask ridiculous questions.

Stay up late with.

People who would make that table
feel alive.

I've thought about mine.

A lot.

First,

Cleopatra.

What a life.

What a story.

My love of Egyptian history
and Roman history
is massive,

and I think she would be incredible.

Strong.

Intelligent.

Political.

Complicated.

And let's be honest,

she probably knew
how to throw a fucking party.

So Cleopatra gets a seat.

Then I need someone funny.

Someone who can make the whole table laugh.

Billy Connolly.

Absolutely.

I can imagine him
telling stories for hours,

taking the piss out of all of us,

making even Cleopatra laugh.

Then I want wisdom.

Someone who could make us stop
mid-conversation

and think.

Alan Watts.

I'd love to sit there
and ask him questions.

About life.

Death.

The mind.

The universe.

Why we spend so much time
trying to become something

instead of just being.

Then I need music.

Bob Marley.

Sitting there with a guitar,

singing into the night.

No stage.

No crowd.

Just music.

Conversation.

Laughter.

A few drinks.

Songs floating around the table
until the early hours.

And then my fifth seat.

That one is different.

My abuelo.

My grandfather.

He died when I was sixteen.

And I never really got
the chance to sit with him

as a man.

Not properly.

Not the way I did
with my abuela.

She lived to ninety-nine.

I had years of stories from her.

Hours of conversations.

Funny tales.

Memories.

Questions.

Answers.

Pieces of history.

But with my abuelo,

I never got that time.

I've been to the pueblo
where he grew up.

I've walked through the village.

I've been to his finca.

I've stood in the places
that were once his world.

I've heard stories
about him and his brother Rufino.

But I never got to sit down
and say,

Abuelo,

tell me everything.

Tell me about being young.

Tell me about your family.

Tell me about the farm.

Tell me what frightened you.

Tell me what made you laugh.

Tell me about love.

Tell me about mistakes.

Tell me what you learned.

Tell me what you wish
you'd known sooner.

I think that would be
the seat I valued most.

Because history is fascinating.

Philosophy is fascinating.

Music is beautiful.

Laughter matters.

But sometimes

the person we most want
to talk to

isn't famous at all.

They're just ours.

So that's my table.

Cleopatra.

Billy Connolly.

Alan Watts.

Bob Marley.

And my abuelo.

Twenty-four hours.

One table.

No rush.

Good food.

Music.

Questions.

Stories.

Laughter.

And probably a few moments
where I'd just sit back

and think,

fuck,

look who's sitting here.

Those are my five.

Who are yours?

WHO ARE YOUR FIVE PEOPLE?

If you had twenty-four hours and five seats at the table, who would you choose?

PART FOUR

LOVE



15 - FEAR

Fear.

I honestly don't have many.

I've seen violence.

I've been violent.

I hate it.

I've copped a beating.

I can take the hits.

They don't hurt.

Not physically anyway.

I don't fear rejection.

If somebody doesn't like me,

so what?

That just tells me
they're not my people.

That's not a loss.

That's information.

Saves me time
down the track.

I don't fear heartbreak anymore either.

Because honestly,

I think I've only got
one more proper love in me.

And when I give it,

I'm giving it everything.

If she has kids,

I'll love them
like they're my own.

They'll never have to wonder
if they're enough.

I'll tell them.

Every day if I have to.

You're enough.

You matter.

You're loved.

I don't fear criticism.

Constructive criticism
is a good thing.

Sometimes we need someone
to tell us,

mate,

you're being an idiot.

Sometimes growth needs honesty.

What I used to fear
was letting people know too much.

Because vulnerability
can be weaponised.

I've had people use
the things I told them

against me.

So for a long time,

I kept parts of myself locked away.

But now?

Fuck it.

I'm getting older.

I'm more comfortable
with being open.

More comfortable
with being vulnerable.

Haters are going to hate
regardless.

I'd rather be honest.

There is one fear though.

One that gets me.

Not finding my Penguin.

My person.

My soulmate.

The one I get to grow old with.

Looks aren't everything to me.

Of course I want
to be physically attracted
to my partner.

But what gets me?

Eyes.

And a smile.

Those are the two most beautiful things
on a person.

Because we all get older.

Bodies change.

Faces change.

Hair goes grey.

Skin wrinkles.

But those eyes?

They're still their eyes.

And that smile?

That smile is still theirs.

That's what I want.

Someone I can learn from.

Every day.

Someone I can ask questions.

Someone who can challenge me.

Criticise me.

Argue with me.

Forgive me.

And still crawl into bed at night
and say,

love you.

Tomorrow's going to be awesome.

Because you're here.

And tomorrow morning
I get to wake up,

look into those eyes,

make you smile that big smile,

and think,

fuck,

how lucky am I?

That's what scares me.

The idea of not finding it.

Being alone.

Yeah.

That scares the shit out of me.

But I know this too.

Don't rush it.

Don't force it.

Don't choose someone
just because you're scared
of being alone.

Let it happen
when it happens.

Keep living.

Keep growing.

Keep becoming yourself.

And when your Penguin finds you,

or you find them,

you'll know.

Until then,

breathe.

Inhale.

Exhale.

There is no rush.

Even fear
can walk at the Turtle's pace.

VOICE THAT SHAPED ME

JORDAN PETERSON

“It’s better to be a warrior in a garden than a gardener in a war.”

A traditional maxim of uncertain origin, often quoted by Jordan Peterson.

WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

I don’t take this as glorifying violence. I’ve seen violence. I’ve been violent. I hate it.

To me, it means be capable. Be prepared. Build enough strength to handle the hard shit life throws at you - but have the discipline not to go looking for a fight.

Real strength isn’t losing control. It’s knowing what you’re capable of and choosing restraint. It’s being able to stand up for yourself and your people when you have to, then going back to living peacefully when you don’t.

Life has its own wars: heartbreak, loss, fear, conflict, addiction, doubt, chaos. I’d rather build myself while I’m standing in the garden, so when one of those storms arrives I’m not wishing I had prepared.

Be strong. Be kind. Be ready. Choose peace because you can - not because you have no other choice.

That’s something I’ve tried to live by.

VOICE THAT SHAPED ME

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

"I don't love you with my heart and mind. I love you with my soul, in case my mind forgets and my heart stops."

- Author unknown

Often attributed online to Rumi. I have not found a reliable primary source for that attribution, so I am leaving it as author unknown.

FOUND WORDS - WOULD YOU?

If I burned the world for you,
would you dare to stand against it for me?

If I chased away your nightmares,
would you cradle my pain until it learned to sleep?

If I healed your wounds with trembling hands,
would you let your kisses heal the scars I hide?

Darling, if I loved you like no one else,
would you love me the same?

English translation from Una historia de amor (2024), source identified by Phil Diaz.

WHEN THE HEART KEEPS LOOKING

Sometimes I wonder if our hearts are really ours to control.

Because your head can understand something is finished. You can accept it. You can keep moving, build a new life, laugh again, travel, create, meet new people and genuinely be happy.

But the heart is a funny fucking thing.

Sometimes it still goes looking.

Not because you want to go backwards. Not because you haven't grown. And not because you think something should be different.

It just remembers.

It wanders into dreams, old memories, songs, places and those strange quiet moments when the rest of the world disappears for a second.

It searches places logic can't reach.

Places where reality loosens its grip and imagination gets to breathe.

Maybe that's what longing really is.

WHEN THE HEART KEEPS LOOKING

The heart remembering something that mattered, even after the mind has accepted that it's gone.

And sometimes there is nothing there to find.

Still, for some reason, part of you looks.

I've realised that doesn't mean I have to follow it.

I can acknowledge what I loved without needing it back.

I can miss something without returning to it.

I can carry the memory without carrying the pain.

Because loving somebody once wasn't necessarily a decision.

Sometimes it just happened.

But moving forward?

That part is my choice.

And that's where I'm going.

- Phil Diaz

PART FIVE

LIVE THE FUCKING LIFE



16 - TASTE LIFE

Travel.

Live.

Taste life.

Breathe it in.

Try new foods.

Learn new languages.

Experience new cultures.

Sit with the locals.

Share thoughts.

Communicate with your hands,
a few basic words,
a smile,
a laugh.

Accept their hospitality.

And when you meet people
on their own adventures,
offer them the same.

Kindness is a two-way street.

Eat life up
like it's a beautiful bowl of pho,

a plate of paella,

ramen on a cold night,

nasi goreng somewhere you've never been,

or carbonara shared around a table
with people who were strangers
an hour ago.

Why spend your whole life
doing the same thing,

taking the same road,

seeing the same walls,

just because it feels safe?

Get out there.

Smell new smells.

Taste new tastes.

Feel new feelings.

Let yourself get a little lost sometimes.

You might find parts of yourself
you never knew were missing.

And there's no rush.

Go at your own pace.

Take deep breaths.

Sit quietly.

Meditate.

Ponder.

Watch the world move
without always needing
to move with it.

Ask yourself the hard questions.

Who am I?

What matters to me?

What am I holding onto
that I should have let go of years ago?

What am I afraid of?

What would I do
if fear wasn't making the decisions?

The answers are there.

They usually are.

It just depends
how deeply we're willing
to look at ourselves.

Travel isn't only about
crossing borders.

Sometimes the biggest journey
is the one inward.

So see the world.

Taste it.

Listen to it.

Learn from it.

Share with it.

And let it change you.

Slowly.

Naturally.

At your pace.

Because life isn't something
we were meant to watch
from the same chair every day.

It's a table full of flavours,
people,
stories,
mistakes,
laughter
and moments.

Pull up a chair.

And taste life.

17 - THE IMPERFECT DAY

This morning I woke up
and walked along the beach in Da Nang.

The sky was grey.

The wind was up.

The waves were rough.

It wasn't cold,
not really,

but it was cool for Vietnam.

Stormy.

Messy.

Probably the kind of day
people would call disappointing.

And I loved it.

Because not everything
has to be perfect all the time.

Not the weather.

Not a holiday.

Not life.

Sometimes the rough days
make you stop and look a little harder.

Listen a little closer.

Think a little deeper.

I walked along the beach
watching the water crash in,

thinking about where I've been,

where I'm going,

and everything sitting somewhere
in between.

Later I stopped by the beach,

found some sunshine,

had a swim,

sat back,

and watched the world go by.

Nothing extraordinary happened.

And maybe that was the extraordinary part.

I had nowhere I needed to rush to.

Nothing I needed to prove.

No problem I had to solve.

Just time.

Time to breathe.

Time to think.

Time to feel grateful.

And sitting there,

I realised again
how blessed I am.

Not because everything in my life
has gone perfectly.

Fuck, it hasn't.

But because I'm here.

Living it.

Feeling it.

Learning from it.

I've got people I love.

Ideas that excite me.

Work I'm proud of.

Things I still want to create.

Places I haven't seen yet.

And another half of this adventure
still waiting for me.

Soon I'll head north.

Hanoi.

The Old Quarter.

New streets.

New food.

New people.

New thoughts.

And I'm excited.

But today,

I don't need to be there yet.

Today I'm here.

Watching rough waves.

Feeling a little sunshine.

Taking a swim.

Watching life move past me.

And being grateful
for an imperfect day.

Maybe that's something
I'm finally learning.

Life doesn't have to be perfect
to be fucking beautiful.

Sometimes you just have to stop,

look around,

take a deep breath,

and realise -

this moment is enough.

“Maybe in another life.”

No. This is the life.

Quit.

Go.

Love.

Burn it down.

Begin again.

Die with no excuses, not with regrets.

— *Unknown*

18 - WHEN LIFE IS GOOD

I've been asking myself lately,

what actually makes me happy?

What excites me?

What do I want more of?

And the strange thing is,

I think I'm just content.

Properly content.

And part of me keeps wondering,

should I be worried?

Should I be unhappy about something?

Should I feel different?

I go to my men's group
and listen to people talk about
the things they're carrying.

Real problems.

Heavy shit.

And sometimes I sit there
feeling almost awkward.

Because right now,

I'm okay.

I don't really have
some massive problem to solve.

I own my home.

Yeah, I'm still paying it off,

but it's mine.

I renovated it.

Built it into exactly
what I wanted it to be.

I've got a job I love.

It's easy.

It gives me freedom.

I've got good people around me.

Real friends.

A strong support network.

People I trust.

People who've got my back.

And right now,

I'm travelling through
a beautiful country,

sitting here thinking,

fuck,

I'm lucky.

And maybe that's enough.

Maybe we don't always need
to be chasing something wrong.

Maybe sometimes
there isn't a fire to put out.

There isn't a disaster coming.

There isn't some hidden problem
we need to dig up.

Maybe sometimes life
is just good.

And when it is,

notice it.

Because good times
have a way of passing quietly.

You don't always realise
how beautiful a chapter was

until you've already turned the page.

So when things are good,

cherish them.

Sit in them.

Laugh more.

Call your people.

Eat the good food.

Take the holiday.

Swim in the pool.

Watch the sunset.

Have another coffee.

Stay a little longer.

Breathe it in.

Don't ruin a peaceful moment
by waiting for something bad to happen.

Life will bring hard days
when it wants to.

We already know that.

So when life gives you
a good season,

don't question it.

Don't feel guilty about it.

Don't apologise for being happy.

Enjoy it.

Respect it.

Be grateful for it.

Because these moments
don't always last forever.

And that's exactly why
they matter.

Take the good times
while they're here.

Live them properly.

And if you ever find yourself
sitting quietly thinking,

I'm actually okay,

maybe don't search
for something to worry about.

Smile.

Take a breath.

And say,

thank you.

Life is good right now.

And I'm going to enjoy it.



Take in the moment.

WHAT I AM GRATEFUL FOR

My people.

My family.

My support group.

My diamonds.

The people who have stood beside me, lifted me, laughed with me, called me out when I needed it, and stayed when life got difficult.

I'm grateful for the ability to forgive.

If we argued yesterday, we fought, we talked it out, we sorted our shit out - then tomorrow is a new day.

You're forgiven.

It's done.

Move forward.

I don't want to carry yesterday's anger into today.

I'm grateful that I can laugh at myself.

I think that's a strength, not a weakness.

We all do stupid shit.

We all say the wrong thing.

We all fuck up.

Sometimes the healthiest thing you can do is shake your head, laugh at yourself and keep moving.

And music.

Fuck, I'm grateful for music.

Probably more than almost anything.

Music makes my soul happy.

It lifts me when I need lifting.

It sits beside me when I'm sad.

It gives me energy.

It gives me memories.

Sometimes one song can take me straight back to a person, a place, a night, a feeling.

And I love all of it.

Country.

Hip-hop.

Soft acoustic music.

Emotional songs.

Rock.

Soul.

Reggae.

Drum and bass.

EDM.

House.

Hardstyle.

If it sounds good and makes me feel something,

I love it.

I don't care what box it belongs in.

That's what I'm grateful for.

Things that make me feel alive.

People who make me feel loved.

And the ability to wake up tomorrow,

leave yesterday where it belongs,

put some music on,

laugh at myself,

and keep moving.

And I know there's more.

I'm still thinking.

I'm still adding to the list.

Because the more I stop and ask myself,

what am I grateful for?

the more I realise

there's a fucking lot.

WHAT AM I GRATEFUL FOR?

PART SIX

THE SPARK

God, I love being creative.

Art.

Books.

Ideas.

Businesses.

Taking something that exists only in my head
and somehow turning it into something real.

I'm lucky with my day job.

It gives me a platform.

It gives me time.

It gives me space to build.

And I've stopped feeling guilty about that.

Why shouldn't I use every opportunity available to me?

Why shouldn't I build the life I actually want?

I love producing original art.

It isn't for everybody.

It was never supposed to be.

It's my passions.

My interests.

The strange shit that lives inside my head.

And now I have somewhere to put it.

A platform to share it.

Sell it.

Spread it.

Let somebody else look at something I created
and maybe feel something.

The same goes for writing.

With this book
and the other two I'm currently creating,

I'll have fifteen authored books
from the last couple of years.

Fifteen.

Sometimes I actually stop
and think about that.

Fuck.

I'm proud of myself.

Not in an arrogant way.

Just genuinely proud.

Because all of this came out of
a really fucking dark place.

And when there isn't much light around,

it's very easy
to disappear down dark rabbit holes.

I nearly did.

But somewhere in that darkness,

I found a spark.

I was tucked away at my bro Dave's place.

Tony Chihuahua beside me.

Trying to work out
who the hell I was again.

I needed to create.

I needed to talk.

I needed to share.

I needed something
that could get the ideas out of my head.

AI tools gave me that spark.

Not the ideas.

Those were already there.

But they gave me a way
to grab hold of them.

An embryo of an idea
could suddenly become something.

A page.

A book.

Artwork.

An app.

A business.

Something real.

And from that spark,

Tortuga Creations grew.

I fucking love Tortuga Creations.

Because it's me.

Utterly me.

The Turtle.

The shell.

My home.

A place where all my crazy ideas
can live safely together.

Art.

Books.

Apps.

Design.

Businesses.

Random ideas
that make absolutely no sense
until suddenly they do.

Even the money I made from selling books,

I didn't want to just piss it away.

I put it back into something.

I used it to build the Life Resources Portal.

Free.

Because some things
should just fucking help people.

It has the information
I wish somebody had given me
when I was a teenager.

Not a voice telling you
how to fix your life.

I hate that shit.

Nobody knows your life better than you.

It's there to give you information.

Tools.

Options.

Places to look.

Ways to help yourself.

Because ultimately,

we have to do the work ourselves.

But sometimes
we just need somebody
to show us where the toolbox is.

I always said,

if it helps one person,

then it has done its job.

And then I dropped the latest update

and saw more than six thousand visits.

Six thousand.

Now I'm working with bigger organisations.

People who can help it grow.

Help it become
what I always thought it could be.

And I fucking love that.

Then there's Tortuga.

Growing.

Running.

More people visiting.

More ideas coming.

And now another door has opened.

RAVE IQ.

Me and my brother of thirty years,

Zac "Snappy" Faulkner.

Sitting there throwing ideas around.

Feeding off each other.

One idea creates another.

Then another.

Then another.

You can almost feel
the sparks firing between our brains.

That's what excites me.

Not just making money.

Creating something.

Building something together.

Seeing if two crazy blokes
with enough ideas

can turn another ridiculous thought
into something real.

Why not?

Seriously.

Why the fuck not?

Right now I'm sitting in Da Nang.

Late afternoon rain hammering down outside.

Laptop open.

Getting ready to head into Old Town.

Working on the RAVE IQ website.

Thinking about Tortuga.

Thinking about the portal.

Thinking about books.

Thinking about art.

Thinking about everything still ahead.

And the future feels fucking bright.

Not perfect.

Not guaranteed.

Bright.

Exciting.

Fun.

I joke about my ten-year plan.

Villas in Spain.

Beach.

Fishing.

Muchas fiestas.

Tapas in the evening.

Laughter.

My people around me.

Work?

What work?

We're just living.

Laptop.

Phone.

That's about it.

Our Charlie's Angels
can take care of everything else.

Maybe that sounds ridiculous.

Good.

Some of the best things in my life
started as ridiculous ideas.

And if it doesn't happen exactly like that?

Fine.

Maybe something better will.

That's the beautiful part.

I'm not trying to predict the future anymore.

I'm building toward one
I'd be excited to wake up in.

And right now,

I'm excited.

Properly excited.

Because these stories,

these thoughts,

these businesses,

these books,

they're not separate things.

They're pieces of me.

My heart.

My soul.

My fears.

My mistakes.

My future.

My crazy fucking ideas.

And for the first time in a long time,

I don't want to quiet any of them down.

I want to see what happens
when I let the spark burn.

Peace out.

Lots of love.

I am the Turtle.





The Return Flight

Sometimes the hardest part of travel
is not leaving.

It is coming home.

You return carrying new eyes,
a fuller heart,
and a version of yourself
that did not exist before the trip.

But home is still home —
the same streets,
the same talk,
the same old problems waiting for you.

And for a moment,
it all feels different.

Not because home changed,
but because you did.

You have seen more.
Felt more.
Grown more.

Once your world expands,
it does not fold back into its old shape.

That is the quiet ache of returning:
part of you is already home,
and part of you is still out there,
chasing the pieces of yourself
you found along the way.

TO MY PEOPLE

To the Faulkner family.

My people.

Loyal.

Always there.

Always had my back.

There are some people in life you never need to question, and you are those people for me.

To the Cameron family, and especially Dave.

When I needed you, you didn't even flinch.

No questions.

No judgement.

You just had my back.

You trusted me around your family, gave me somewhere safe to land when I needed it most, and somehow, simply by being my mate, you helped me find my spark again.

I'll never forget that.

Sometimes people save us without even realising they're doing it.

To Tony Chihuahua.

My little mate.

You will never understand what you did for me.

We came into each other's lives at exactly the right moment.

I looked after you.

You looked after me.

And somewhere in between the walks, the adventures, the cuddles and me constantly wondering where the hell you'd wandered off to,

you helped save my life.

You gave me something to love when I was struggling to love myself.

I'll carry that with me forever.

To my family.

Tanya.

Paul.

Love you heaps.

Knowing you're beside me makes life easier.

To my aunties and uncles.

My nieces and nephews.

My cousins.

And even my dad.

In the end,

I forgive you.

We all fuck up sometimes.

Life's too short to carry everything forever.

To Uncle Pete and Aunty Yolly.

Your loyalty and love feel like a shield around me.

Something solid.

Something I know won't break.

I know I can count on you beyond almost anything.

You want what's best for me.

You tell me what I need to hear, not always what I want to hear.

Sometimes you kick me in the arse.

Sometimes you rein me in.

Sometimes you push me forward.

You encourage the crazy ideas.

You believe in me when I'm doubting myself.

And that love and belief makes me want to become better.

I will love you for that forever.

To my Abuela.

You're gone now,

but you hold one of those places in my heart that nobody else can ever fill.

The hours and hours we spent together.

Laughing.

Me asking endless questions.

Listening to your stories.

Our history.

The funny things.

The sad things.

The little details most people would probably forget.

I treasure all of it.

I miss you dearly.

And sometimes,

I swear I can still feel you beside me.

Maybe that's memory.

Maybe it's something more.

Either way,

I like knowing you're there.

And finally,

to my diamonds.

My people.

You know who you are.

You know what you mean to me.

I've got your back until the day I die.

That isn't negotiable.

If the phone rings,

I'm there.

If you fall,

I'll help lift you.

If life gets heavy,

I'll sit beside you.

If you win,

I'll be the one cheering.

That's what my people mean to me.

No agendas.

No scorekeeping.

No bullshit.

Just loyalty.

Love.

Trust.

And showing up.

I love you all.

More than I probably say.

And this book,

in one way or another,

exists because all of you helped me become the man who was finally ready to write it.

THANK YOU - SOL

To Sol,

You reminded me of something I already knew.

I am the Turtle.

Not because everything is figured out.

Because I keep moving.

Slow when I need to.

Strong when I have to.

Curious enough to keep learning.

Grateful enough to notice the good.

And stubborn enough not to stop.

You helped me find the words.

But the thoughts were always mine.

And for that,

thank you.

I am the Turtle.



SLOW AND STEADY
WINS THE RACE

Don't rush life.
It's there to savour.

Deep inhales.
Big exhales.
And repeat.

We only get one shot at this.

BY PHIL DIAZ

THANK YOU

MY FAVOURITE WORDS

May the wind always be at your back
and the sun always upon your face,
and may the wings of destiny carry you aloft
to dance with the stars.

- Dialogue from Blow (2001), George Jung and Fred Jung

BE THE TURTLE