THE NAKED ENTREPRENEUR
A JOURNEY FROM FEAR TO TRUE WEALTH
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MARIA ELITA
All Truths, not merely ideas,
but truthful faces,
truthful pictures or songs
are highly beautiful.
— Gandhi

True knowledge exists in knowing
that you know nothing.
— Socrates

All truths are easy to understand
once they are discovered; the point is
to discover them.
— Galileo
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Troy Hazard — the entrepreneur

For me, writing this book has been nothing short of epic! I never imagined that after 20 years in business I would end up getting naked to the world in an effort to help show others the way. So now it’s time to honour those who have helped get me to this wonderful place in my life.

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And finally, to everyone that will make the choice in life to face their truth as they read this book, thank you, for having the courage to do so.

See ya, mate.

Troy Hazard
It is always the greatest pleasure with any book I write to thank the intimate circle of friends and family who support me. Once again, I am blessed with this joyful opportunity, which for me completes the written works of another episode in my life.

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Lastly, I’d like to express my immense gratitude to my co-author, Troy Hazard, for the courage and honesty he has shown in writing this story with me. We laughed, cried, sang and collected our thoughts over what this book should represent. I believe you did a brilliant job, Troy. Thanks so
much for getting truly naked in your story. I'm sure there are many people who will learn from you to do the same.

Miracle be!
Love, ME

PS: I'd like to thank Pirate Pete (you'll meet him in this book) for letting me see him in my imagination. You are such a funny little pirate and I hope that everyone reading this book will also be able to find their own Purple Patch.
The soul coach

What would happen if you began to examine your whole life, as if re-evaluating a business plan, and started to live life another way, where there are not as many certainties, not as many expectations and you aren’t able to predict all the outcomes? One thing you would be doing as an absolute—you’d be living in truth every day.

Tell me, are you living your life in truth or fear?

The entrepreneur

Now don’t get me wrong; not for one moment do I feel like I’ve heard a higher calling, nor do I feel ‘reborn’. In fact, to the contrary, I feel like a part of me has just died. Upon
reflection, I realise that I did not start shaving my head seven years ago with the psychic vision that I would become a monk in the new millennium. The fact is, I’m just bald! And there’s no way I’m about to ring my Porsche dealer and tell him to put my car on the market as I no longer need material possessions. And if you think I’m going to go sit on a hill with my legs crossed in the lotus position, holding my fingers together, humming with my eyes shut or taking long treks and talking to yaks, then you’re sadly mistaken.

But there is something different about today...
PART I

THE SOUL COACH,
THE ENTREPRENEUR,
THE SYNCHRONISTIC
MEETING
The entrepreneur
28 December

I am sitting at home alone out the back of my house on the Brisbane River, pondering life. I’ve been here since the sun came up, sitting in silence, listening to the waves lapping, the birds chirping and my own thoughts buzzing in my head. I have no words left to describe the year behind me. It’s as if time is in slow motion and I am taking hours to process thoughts that ordinarily I would process in a millisecond.

My mobile phone goes off. It seems to ring and ring and ring. I glance at it, wondering if I should answer. I see it’s one of my best mates, so I pick it up. Jason is on the Gold Coast and he proceeds to tell me to get my backside there to his beautiful holiday apartment for a drink with some friends that are coming down for the night.

I decline. I’m shattered—physically, mentally and emotionally. There’s nothing left in the tank! Picking up the phone was an effort in itself.

This last year was long and tough and I’m glad it’s over. As I reflect, I realise this was the toughest year of my life. It
even eclipsed the year that I got divorced after 12 years of marriage and the year I lost $500,000 in bad debts. In fact, this last year hurt more than both of them combined.

I am quite comfortable at that moment sitting out the back staring blankly into the water, reflecting on the year that was, on my own, in silence. The year behind me presented so many challenges.

Professionally, I had one of the busiest times in my career and on top of that, received a six-figure tax bill I could not avoid. I spent 246 nights away from home, took 102 flights (23 of those international), worked countless weekends as a conference speaker, co-hosted a national business television show and worked back-to-back 16-hour days for months on end. On top of that already hectic life, I also became global president of The Entrepreneurs’ Organisation, one of the world’s premier entrepreneurial communities.

Financially, it was my best year in the last 15 in business, with sales up a further 40 per cent, and profit up 36 per cent. And for the first year in 15, I actually rewarded myself for some of my hard work instead of tipping it all back into the business or other investments. This year I was a little indulgent and took up my passion for motor sports, elected to stay in great hotels, flew first class, and enjoyed some of my hard-earned cash. But none of it helped. I totally ran out of steam.

In the middle of the year I had an emotional brain snap and ended a long-term relationship with the woman I was convinced would be the mother of my children. And some months after that, I experienced yet another relationship breakdown. Put that all into one body and one year and it was total overload!
Troy Hazard and Maria Elita

As I sit out in my backyard recalling the last 12 months, my mind wanders and I dig deeper into my memories of the last 15 years. Wow, what a ride. And a long, hard one at that.

With all these memories rushing back into my head on a collision course with each other, I can feel my shoulders start to slump under the weight of so much hard work and struggle. For so long I have been going at it, day in and day out, convincing myself this is what it’s all about. That you’ve got to do the hard yards to get in front — life wasn’t meant to be easy. That you need to create opportunity — it doesn’t just come to you. How often have I heard these things? And how often have they made me tired?

Yep, I’ve read all the books, done all the study, learned all the lessons. First, as I was starting out, it was the business books I sucked into my head, then the motivational books, then the self-help books and then the DVDs. Along the way I found my internal power, learned the laws of attraction, understood my strength, and visualised more things than Nostradamus on steroids.

Even simple thoughts of the journey so far are exhausting. Over the last 15 years I have started, or bought and sold, 10 companies. Some of them were stellar successes, others made me feel like I’d just gone nine rounds with Mike Tyson, blindfolded, with my hands tied behind my back.

As I recall the long list of enterprises I shake my head and ask myself out loud, ‘What the hell were you thinking?’ Among my various conquests, I’ve owned a recording studio, a pizza shop, a property development...
company, an ISP and technology company, an advertising agency, a business consultancy and launched a career as a speaker and author.

Over the years I have passed all the national averages of a business in growth mode and managed to continue its development and avoid the bankruptcy courts. Cheers to me, as I raise my glass in celebration. If I believe what everyone tells me, I’ve done very well over the years. I’m a true entrepreneur, a business leader and a success. But at what cost?

Today, life has just collapsed around me. I’m thinking to myself, ‘I’m so done with everything. I’m over it! Make it go away! I don’t want to talk to anyone, be anywhere, go anywhere, or interact with the world’. I’m happy to just sit here under an umbrella, watching the boats float up and down the river. But again, the silence is broken by the ringing of my mobile phone.

‘Go away! Just leave me alone!’ I scream inside my head. But my mate can’t hear my silent plea. He keeps calling and texting me until finally, I give in. I pick up my phone.

Using every last bit of energy in my body, I ask him, ‘You’re not going to stop calling me until I come, are you?’ ‘No’, Jason replies. ‘I’m not. See you here in an hour.’ Adding a few expletives for emphasis, he then hangs up.

I throw my things together, put on some sunscreen and a hat, get in the car and wait for a moment as the soft-top roof folds back and disappears into its hiding place. I figure if I do have to go somewhere, I may as well enjoy the ride.

As I pull onto the freeway, the road is clear in front of me so I open up the flat six-cylinder Boxster engine and listen to it scream, just to remind myself that this thing really can do zero to 100 kilometres per hour. It’s just as fast as the propaganda promotes, and I love it!
A smile appears on my face for the first time all day thanks to the rush of speed, the selector snapping into the next gear, the exhaust barking like a junkyard dog and the feel of the g-force against my body in the seat.

I re-engage with the world and stop trying to figure things out or think about the future. I begin to feel things and live in the moment, the ‘now’. And in this now, I’m living life in response to the wheel in my hand. My only focus is the right moment to change gears, relative to the sound of the engine. I’m completely absorbed in my immediate environment. I’m forced to take my mind off the last year and think of only one thing — the drive. If I don’t, then this car will punish me! But my feeling of release is short-lived.

A little over an hour later, I pull into my mate’s car park and head up to the apartment. I’m unshaven and look like I haven’t slept for a week, carrying a bag of mismatched clothes and an armful of New Zealand sauvignon blanc.

I throw my bags into a bedroom and head straight for the fridge to put the wine in ice, grumbling to Jason about how he disturbed my self-pity session and silence. He just laughs and hands me a glass. Jason’s girlfriend wanders into the kitchen with a grin and after giving me a peck on the cheek, grabs her glass and walks past us onto the balcony.

We sit for a while and then he confesses, ‘Mate, I was holding out on you. I’ve actually invited Maria to join us tonight for a drink and a chat’. I look at him and cringe. ‘Oh, man! Not the freakin’ psychic chick! Geez! I thought we were just going to have a drink.’ My response only generates a naughty schoolboy laugh as he tops up our drinks.

An hour later, Maria strides through the door like a whirlwind of energy and the world follows her in. As she