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EMBRACE YOUR
FREEDOM

CREATING THE LIFE
FOR WHICH YOU WERE DESIGNED

FRANK KECK

I June, 2009

I would like to thank everyone who has made this book possible. This book has been a dream of mine for several years now and it is so very gratifying to have it finished.

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INTRODUCTION

If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.

--Henry David Thoreau

Fulfillment - creating the life for which you were designed—that's what it's all about. You might not be able to define fulfillment, but you certainly know whether you have it or not. Have you ever wondered why some people seem to be more fulfilled than others? Do you wonder why sometimes the folks who have nothing seem the most contented, while others who have everything imaginable in terms of success and material comforts still may not be fulfilled?

Have you ever met someone extremely successful yet unfulfilled? I have; in fact, I've met lots of them. Of course, to be fair, I've also met lots of unsuccessful people who are unfulfilled. I'm sure you know both kinds.

I believe that life is about creating fulfillment. And, in order to create fulfillment, you must learn to like yourself. Most people know they need positive self-esteem. In one Gallup Poll, 89% of respondents said that self-esteem was the primary factor for them to work harder to succeed. 63% said that spending time and effort to develop self-esteem was a worthwhile endeavor.³ Low self-esteem affects people of all

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ages, colors, races, and ethnicities. It's an epidemic, affecting rich and poor alike. Low self-esteem is an equal opportunity offender.

Why do people have low self-esteem? I believe it's because they haven't discovered and embraced their freakiness. Your freakiness is everything that makes you unique and guides your purpose in life. It's what sets you apart and makes you remarkable! Discovering your freakiness is the first step toward learning to like yourself and raising your self-esteem.

So, what are your God-given talents and abilities? What are you really good at doing? What things make you happy? If you didn't have to worry about earning a living, what would you enjoy doing every day?

As I have studied and interviewed happy, fulfilled people, I've found that they share several common elements. Most importantly, they have all solved what I call "The Fulfillment Equation."

The Fulfillment Equation

Take Inventory + Take Aim + Take Care = Take Off!

- 1. Take Inventory:** Take time to discover what things you are inherently good at and what you truly enjoy doing. Figure out who you are so you can discover what you were designed to do.
- 2. Take Aim:** Use what you've learned about who you are to formulate an ideal picture of who, what, and where you want to be. Motivation comes from knowing your purpose in life and then setting out to fulfill it.
- 3. Take Care:** Create a plan to nurture and develop your newfound freakiness. Learn how to put the right fuel in your tank so you get the best performance.

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4. Take Off: Get ready to start living the life you were designed for. Now that you know who you are, where you're headed, and how to take care of yourself, you're ready to go from being different to making a difference!

Embrace Your Freakness will show you how to progress through each step of the Fulfillment equation by putting simple, proven elements into practice in your everyday life. Congratulations on starting your journey toward true happiness and fulfillment!

"Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs--even though checkered by failure--than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in a gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."

--Theodore Roosevelt



TAKE INVENTORY

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

“Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You.”

--Dr. Seuss

“Know thyself.”

--Socrates

I was sitting at my desk the other day and thinking . . .
You wouldn't pull your camper with a moped,
You wouldn't hunt squirrels with hand grenades,
You wouldn't highlight a book with a black marker,
You wouldn't pick a flower with a lawnmower,
You wouldn't plow a field with a screwdriver,
You wouldn't light a candle with a flame thrower,
You wouldn't use a garden hose to clean your teeth.

You wouldn't do these things because the tools aren't suited to the intended task; they aren't being used for their proper purpose. That's a no-brainer, right? We get it. Then why do we expect to find fulfillment living a life we weren't designed to live?

When we consider the things that lead to fulfillment, we have to admit that some people are just naturally smarter, harder-working, or better-looking than average, and those things undoubtedly pave their way to success. However,

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there is one thing that *all* successful, fulfilled people have in common: they have figured out their freakiness. They have discovered what makes them unique—their particular interests, talents, and experiences. Then they’ve figured out how to use these raw materials to fulfill the purpose for which they were designed.

In the movie *City Slickers*, Billy Crystal Three male friends, facing their 40th birthdays and experiencing midlife crises, decide they need time away from their "soft" city lives. Fans of old Western films, particularly John Wayne's RED... and two of his good friends, facing their 40th birthdays and experiencing midlife crises, decide they need time away from their "soft" city lives. They set out to vacation at a dude ranch, where they will be responsible for a two-week-long cattle drive through the Colorado hills. Along the way the urban cowboys encounter bad weather; macho, gun-wielding ranchers; and pregnant cattle; but they finish the drive with their lives back on track. The expedition is headed up by Curly, a seasoned cowboy played by the late Jack Palance, who has no patience for the city slickers and their large learning curve. In my favorite scene, Palance and Crystal are riding along and talking about the meaning of life. Palance holds up his right index finger and says, "It's about one thing." When Crystal asks what that one thing is, Palance replies, "That's what you have to figure out."

In a nutshell, that's what *Embrace Your Freakiness* is all about: figuring out how to make the most of your unique talents and abilities so that you can do "that one thing" you were designed to do.

Figuring Out Your Freakiness

What abilities do you have? What are your passions and inclinations? All of us were born into particular life situations with inherent likes, dislikes, personality traits, strengths, and weaknesses. We don't have any control over these things,

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but we can learn to make the most of what we've been given. Are you using your freakness as it was intended to be used?

Let's start with a definition:

Freakness: (*freak-nes*) – *n*

The combination of your individual gifts and talents;
2. The phenomena that make you remarkable and unique, equipping you to fulfill your specific purpose in life.

Figuring out what makes you unique—your freakness—is just the first step in your journey toward fulfillment. Once you've identified your freakness, you have to embrace it, channel it, and nurture it, so that it will enable you to create the life for which you were designed. The process of finding fulfillment is a journey, not a sprint, and you may have to re-read this book at each stage of the process. Use it as a life workbook. Do the exercises with the important people in your life, or with the support of the Embrace Your Freakness workshop. You will need a lot of support and encouragement on your way to living a fuller, richer, and more rewarding life.

Seven Famous Freaks

Not sure you want to embrace your freakness? Here are a few historical examples of individuals who embraced their freakness and went on to lead successful, fulfilling lives:

Leonardo da Vinci – da Vinci discovered early in life that he had a passion for asking questions and solving puzzles. He probably drove his parents and teachers crazy, but he was able to push the limits of what was understood by his contemporaries, drawing pictures of helicopters and parachutes hundreds of years before technological advances

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would allow either to be built. It was this curiosity combined with his natural artistic abilities that helped da Vinci paint the Mona Lisa and the Last Supper. His father had seen his natural gift for artistry, and insisted that young Leo pursue these gifts. Da Vinci took his inquisitive nature, added a passion for creativity and helping others, and became the most creative mind of his time.

Albert Einstein – One story Einstein liked to tell about his childhood was of a wonder he saw when he was four or five years old: a magnetic compass. The needle's invariable northward swing, guided by an invisible force, profoundly impressed the child. The compass convinced him that there had to be "something behind things, something deeply hidden." It was this sense of wonder that was Einstein's Freakness.

Even as a small boy Albert Einstein was self-sufficient and thoughtful. According to family legend he was a slow talker, always pausing to consider what he would say. His sister remembered the concentration and perseverance with which he would build houses of cards.¹ Einstein's Freakness came from combining his sense of wonder with his perseverance & concentration. Though he flunked 8th grade mathematics, Einstein's passion for following his sense of wonder helped him formulate the theory of relativity, changing the face of modern physics and making Einstein the pre-eminent scientist of the 20th century.

Mother Theresa – Mother Theresa grew up poor and accepted a vow of poverty, yet she enriched the lives of countless people all over the world. In her 45 years of ministering to others, Mother Theresa built over 600 missions in more than 123 countries. By putting others' needs above her own, Mother Theresa inspired people around the world to help the poor and oppressed. Mother Theresa's Freakness (probably not a phrase you thought you would ever hear is

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it?) was her ability to put others first. She combined her passion for helping others with a vision for creating better lives for thousands of people.

Steve Jobs – Steve Jobs dropped out of college after taking just one course. But Jobs’ lack of higher education didn’t affect his ability to imagine new possibilities and to persuade others to embrace his vision and follow his lead.

Jobs became the creative genius behind Apple Corporation, and his company continues to create innovative new products purchased by consumers around the world. Using his imagination to create things that he thought people would need, and then convincing them they need those things, that is Steve Jobs’ Freakness.

Oprah Winfrey – Oprah started her life on a farm in Mississippi, where she took to speaking by reading aloud and reciting books at the tender age of three. After moving around to various homes, and after suffering physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, she moved in with her father, and kept looking for ways to help others and to stay in front of her audience. Oprah’s two interests—being in front of an audience and helping others avoid the horrors she had experienced as a child—came together to define Oprah’s freakness, which she embraces to this day.

Tiger Woods – Woods started imitating his fathers’ golf swing when he was 6 months old, and appeared on the Mike Douglas show when he was only 2 years old. When his father, Earl, saw Tiger’s ability and passion for the game, he coached his son to combine his natural ability with a freakish determination to always do his best. Tiger’s Freakness is this desire to always give his best effort, combined with his natural athletic ability and his love for the game of golf.

All these individuals embraced their freakness, whether or

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not anyone else agreed with their chosen path in life. They had confidence in themselves and that allowed them to make things happen. If you develop this same confidence, you'll be able to join them in achieving great things in your life!

Getting Started

To quote the rock band, The Who, "Who are you?" If you're like me, you probably grew up living day to day, going to school, playing sports, hanging out with friends, getting your first part-time job, maybe heading off to college, and eventually starting your first full-time job. You did what you needed to do, without really pausing to figure out what sort of person you were or where you were headed. For lots of us, it takes a midlife crisis to make us take the time to identify our freakiness and take stock of who we are and where we want to go with our lives.

Let's start with a big question: are you a wandering generality or a meaningful specific? Well-known motivational speaker Zig Ziglar defines a wandering generality as someone who wanders through life without any specific purpose, . . . whereas a meaningful specific is someone who knows where they are headed at each point along the trail. Obviously, you'd rather be a meaningful specific—knowing who you are and what you stand for. In order to become a meaningful specific, you need to discover your unique gifts and figure out what you're supposed to do with them—your purpose in life.

Discovering your unique gifts—your freakiness—involves looking at your entire life, examining what you've done up to this point, figuring out what you've liked, disliked, excelled at, been lousy at, pursued, and avoided. There are a lot of exercises to help you; go with your gut, and write down the first thing that comes to your mind unless the directions tell you otherwise. The more thorough and

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thoughtful your answers, the more precisely you'll define the freakiness that makes you, you.

Childhood

In order to get at the real you, we need to go back to your childhood. What kinds of things did you do as a kid? How did you like to spend your time? What sort of friends did you seek out? What activities/events did you look forward to and what activities/events did you do anything you could to avoid. The following questions are designed to help you get a good sense of who you were as a child. You may want to think of yourself at a particular age—6, 8, 10—as you answer. Take some time to go through all of them and answer as completely as you can.

Childhood

List five things you did for fun when you were a child.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Did you prefer playing inside or outside? inside outside

How would you have completed this sentence? "When I grow up I want to be

What did people say you were good at doing?

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What kinds of things did you daydream about?

Which cartoon character best described you as a kid?

What did you like best about that character?

I have read in articles on the internet that the character you chose, and what you like most about them is how you see yourself. I have found this to be fairly accurate and usually a lot of fun when you do it with other people.

Circle all that apply and add your own:

When I was a child, I enjoyed:

with dolls	duck duck goose	football
with trucks	tag	soccer
play with guns	jump rope	basketball
doctor/nurse/medic	hopscotch	hockey
board games	capture the flag	golf
cards	four square	tennis
by watching TV	kick the can	stick ball
with imaginary friends	hide and seek	on the internet

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with stuffed animals	jacks	computers
riding my bike	dodge ball	bullied other kids
with a wagon	car games	lemonade stand
in a playhouse	marco polo	paper route
cops and robbers	swimming	mowed lawns
superheroes	red rover	video games
pretend to be adults	tetherball	simon says
marbles	steal the bacon	frisbee
four square	surfing	twenty questions
baseball	curling	others

What things did you not like doing?

Who was your favorite family member? (aunt, uncle, brother, sister, etc.)

The Teenage Years

Now we'll move onto your teenage years. While some people did not change much between childhood and adolescence, others changed quite a bit.

When I was a little kid, I was very outgoing and loved to ride my bike on obstacle courses set up in the vacant lot next to our house. I would ride for hours, not stopping until it was too dark to see where I was going. (There were no street lights in our neighborhood in those days.)

As a teenager, we moved closer into town, and my interests changed. I was more into running and playing music. I left my love for bike riding and obstacle courses behind.

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As you think about your teenage years think about how you were the same or different from when you were younger. The goal of these questions is to spur your memory, to help you remember, both the good and the bad of your teenage years.

When you were a Teenager, what did you do for fun?

Did you prefer to spend time inside or outside?

Did you like spending time by yourself, with one or two friends, or with lots of friends?

Who was your best friend as a teenager?

What did you like most about them?

What was your favorite subject in school?

What was your opinion of school?

How did you complete this sentence, "when I finish high school I want to be..."
