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Speaker, Professor, and Director of the Center for Meaning and Purpose

LIVING

in the Light of Day

How to avoid the ‘Success Trap’, strive to be at your best and live a more meaningful, flourishing, and prosperous life.

David Penglase

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David Penglase is a behavioural scientist with degrees in business and the psychology of adult learning, an MBA, a master's degree in Professional Ethics, and a Master of Science degree in Applied Positive Psychology. He is the author of Intentionomics® - *The impact of your intentions on living a happy, flourishing, and prosperous life* and *The Art & Science of Building Customer Trust – How to fast-track trust and earn new, repeat and referral business*. He is an award-winning professional conference speaker and corporate educator, working with top-tier corporations, helping leaders and their teams achieve success by applying evidence-based strategies and tips from his fields of applied positive psychology, professional ethics, and the science of intentional trust.

Praise for David Penglase's LIVING in the Light of Day

"From the opening reflections to the expansive list of 25 qualities of a good life, we are treated to a patient and understanding guide on how to grow into a trustworthy driver of your own life – and a trustworthy companion in the better world we all need to build together. While news stories abound of crooks and swindlers dodging consequences and living large on their crimes, Living in the Light of Day reminds us that true wealth, success, and happiness are built on a foundation of trust."

Michael F. Steger, PhD
Speaker, Professor, and Director of the Center for Meaning and Purpose
Colorado State University

"An insightful, illuminating, and above all helpful book on a topic of real importance that is often overlooked and underappreciated in our modern world"

Dr. Tim Lomas
Senior lecturer in positive psychology
University of East London

"David Penglase takes an established principle, Justice Brandeis' famous 'Sunlight Test', and invests it with additional depth and renewed relevance. His conclusion that a good life is one in which we become the best version of ourselves invites deep reflection - on many levels - in the best tradition of philosophy."

Dr Simon Longstaff AO
Executive Director, The Ethics Centre

“David’s latest work couldn’t come at a better time, but when you consider the subject matter he canvasses in Living in the Light of Day, when has his advice and observations not been relevant. In all of our relationships starting in the family home, business and across countries the foundation of how we exist, conduct ourselves and thrive as a society is based on trust. With it we grow, without it we never reach full potential. I commend David on his work and believe society will be richer with his latest book.”

Peter Baines OAM
Founder, Hands Across the Water.

“David Penglase invites you to live a happy, flourishing, and prosperous life by being courageous, taking action, focussing on what you want for others, giving them a reason to trust you, and being accountable for your actions. Nearly a decade ago he shared the power of Intentionomics with the world. Living in the Light of Day, comes at a moment of profound disruption and change. Let it be your guide to be the best version of yourself.”

Olivia Sarah-Le Lacheur
Chair, AFA Foundation

“I loved this book from the moment I started reading it. It is such an important piece of work in a time when it appears we are losing our sense of direction and our understanding of what is truth and what is fiction. I encourage you to engage deeply with this elegant and enlightening guide to a better and more purposeful life.”

Dr Adam Fraser.
Director of the e-Lab (TM)
Author of ‘The Third Space’ and ‘Strive’

“As a former United Nations peacekeeper and military commander, I know the importance of trust, particularly when it comes to leading teams on the battlefield, where your decisions directly impact on the lives of others. Trust needs to be earned and is an integral part of our lives, communities, and our world. David delivers a resourceful and insightful book that will help you become a better person, leader, and ultimately, become the best version of yourself.”

Major Matina Jewell (retd)

“David has so eloquently found a way to capture and share the depth of his life’s work and learnings. It is written in the way he lives, on Purpose, with Trust and Integrity. This book is for anyone that is committed to being the best human being they can be.”

Larry Fingleson,
Co-founder and Managing Director The Growth Project
& Founder & CEO of The Catalytic Impact Institute

“This powerful book is rich with wisdom, brimming with compelling stories, and inspiring in its open invitation to you - the reader - to transform into a higher, more enlightened version of yourself. David’s clear, honest voice doesn’t just entreat you to evolve, he shows you how. A patient and wise guide, David shows you how to intentionally choose to become a better version of you.”

G. Shawn Hunter
President, Mindscaling
Author, *Small Acts of Leadership: 12 Intentional Behaviors That Lead to Big Impact*

“David’s book is a powerful reframe with practical strategies for leading a happy, fruitful life. Whether doubtful of the road ahead or looking to take life to the next level, this book provides more than band aids for challenges but a real strategy for life.”

Jon Yeo
Curator TEDxMelbourne
Executive Speaker Coach

“There are so many self-help books these days that you can pick what you want to change and there will be a book for it. This book, however, is enlightening in the way that it addresses what we all need to get back TRUST. Trust in ourselves, others, and our purpose and then to live life to the fullest in the light of day.”

Nicolette Barnard
Head of HR Pacific, Siemens

In memory of my mother who left our earth way too young.
Her love and moral example of what it means to be truly
LIVING *in the Light of Day* have been my guiding light
and will remain with me forever.

“Your time is limited, don’t waste it living someone else’s life.”

Steve Jobs

Chapter One – Avoiding the Success Trap

Spoiler Alert! Not everyone can make it to the top ... there’s just not enough room!

Imagine, just for a moment, that almost everything you’ve been told about being successful was basically flawed.

Do you seriously believe you can be anything you want to be?

Really? Anything?

Don’t get me wrong here ... I’m not suggesting for a moment that you don’t strive for success in whatever area of life you might want to improve. In fact, I encourage you to do so, and this book will help you to do just that.

However, just be careful and clear on *why* you want to pursue success.

Motivational gurus around the globe extract millions of dollars from people wanting (needing) to believe in self-help spin like ‘The Law of Attraction’ – which is often defined as ‘If you want something enough, it will miraculously manifest itself into your life’.

Good luck with that.

The problem is many of these flawed ideas and strategies around success, often have elements of truth and possibility about them. For this reason, they sound good, seem to make sense, are often unchallenged and many have become almost part of our modern psyche.

Consider this though. Amidst this push by motivational experts for positive thinking and the promise of success, data from many developed countries indicate that about 1 in every 5 working adults have mental health disorders and substance abuse problems. This rate increases to more than 1 in 3 people over a lifetime who will develop a behavioural health disorder.¹

Things aren't quite right

Something in the way we are gauging success in life is awry.

What if the pursuit of success could make you feel like a failure and do serious damage to your sense of life satisfaction?

That's the Success Trap!

This doesn't mean positive thinking or being an optimist are wrong. However, as you will discover in this book, it's just not always appropriate.

This is also not suggesting setting goals is a bad idea. In fact, it's a good idea, but sometimes we set goals for all the wrong reasons and even when the goal is achieved your sense of success and life satisfaction may be at risk.

What are you basing your assessment of success and life satisfaction on?

Success Traps in Personal Life

There is nothing wrong in wanting the best that money can buy, high-end luxury items, the latest in technology, or to 'have it all'. However, science tells us your sense of life satisfaction and success, depend on what's driving your passion to want or need to have it all.

Be very aware that it is in the financial interest of advertisers and marketers (and not necessarily in your best interests) that you fall into the success trap of wanting to keep up with the Joneses (whoever the Joneses might be).

These marketers and advertisers use influencing strategies that entice you to believe the grass is greener on the other side of the fence; that you need to upgrade your car; you need to move to a bigger home; you need the latest shinier phone; you need the designer clothes; you need that latest high-tech kitchen gadget that chops, churns, grates, juices, blends, steams, bakes, and fries.

They're urging you to get out your credit cards, buy now, pay later, amass more 'stuff' to feel more successful. However, what you will discover in this book is a growing body of evidence-based research overwhelmingly challenges that notion.

To be clear though, the success trap isn't just set around amassing more material things in your life.

Success Traps at Work

In the business world, the success trap is set and if you're caught, it is ready to make you feel like a failure.

If you buy into the advice of the motivation movement, all of us need to be ambitious ... if you're not climbing the corporate ladder or striving to build your own multi-million-dollar business, you'll never be a success.

That just doesn't make sense.

Not everyone wants to be a leader or own their own business. Does that mean they are destined never to be satisfied with their life or feel like they're successful?

What does make sense is the levels of life satisfaction, meaning, purpose, well-being, and success we can experience when we strive to be our best versions of ourselves.

None of us is perfect, and we each only have what we have.

This is not to say that being ambitious is wrong.

Again, what the research shows is, your sense of life satisfaction and success depend on what's driving your ambition.

This is also not saying you need to avoid success. What you need to avoid is being trapped into a false sense of what success is for you. More is not always better. The view is not always the best from the top.

That brings us to one of the goals of this book which is to help ensure you don't get caught in the 'success trap', and potentially feeling like a failure, or at the very least, dissatisfied with your level of success.

What Happens When People Get Caught in The Success Trap?

Success traps come in many shapes and sizes ... and once caught, all have the potential to negatively impact your overall sense of life satisfaction.

In workplace settings, success traps can cause people to turn a blind eye to unfair, unethical, immoral, or illegal practices.

Success traps at work can result in the pursuit of profit at any cost ... regardless of the damage done to employees, customers, suppliers, the community, or environment.

Success traps can create toxic work cultures that over time lead to exposure and failure.

In our personal lives, success traps can lead to lies, deceit and breaches of personal trust ... all resulting in damaged and often irreparable relationships between partners, between

parents and their children, between siblings or relatives, and between friends or teammates.

Make no mistake here though, the pursuit of success can indeed be admirable and worthwhile in your personal and work life. However, the success trap is set to catch anyone who lacks mindful awareness of the intentions behind their pursuit of success ... and the success trap is even more dangerous when any action, in the pursuit of success, is knowingly and intentionally driven by ego, and without any care of the impact of decisions and actions on others.

What Is Success Anyway?

For a topic that is covered so broadly throughout our personal and business lives, a clear definition of success is problematic.

What does become clear is this: Context matters.

How you define or determine success will depend on the context – on what part of your life you might be referring to.

For example, you might define success in your business life on your daily achievements. Many people report feeling more successful crossing off a task when completed on their daily 'to do' list.

You might feel successful on the achievement of short, medium, or long-term goals (whether set by yourself, or with your manager) ².

Success at work might be when you get a promotion – whether it's one you've been seeking, or one that is bestowed on you as a pleasant surprise.

Or it could be you feel successful when simply doing your job.

Many people report feeling more successful when their job involves making life better for someone else in some sort of way. It could be a customer, a colleague, a manager, a supplier, or anyone for that matter. ³

Similarly, how you define or determine your success will depend on the context you're referring to in your personal life.

People report feeling more successful when they achieve a personal life goal.⁴ Examples include reaching a savings or investment target; realising they have found their life-partner; birth of a child; being a member of a winning sports team; or travelling to see one of the famous wonders of the world.

When do you feel more successful in your business or personal life?

A more important question is, why do you feel successful in those situations?

Unless you become more aware of what's driving your pursuit for success, in whatever context of your personal or business life, you will be at risk of getting caught in a Success Trap.

The real and present danger is you might be caught in a Success Trap and completely unaware that you are.

An Alternative Lens for Success

As you read this book, you will be able to consider success and life satisfaction through an alternative lens.

The typical lens in which many people view success is by comparing ourselves to others. This can include comparing our achievements, what we have, where we live, our physical appearance and other such comparisons.

Few people, if any, win the social comparison game ... there will always be someone who has more or done more than you. That's why social comparison is often referred to as a zero-sum game. It's a game that is almost impossible to win.

The more appropriate, practical, and achievable lens to view success, is through striving to be the best version of yourself.

This is a book about building character, earning trust, and acting with integrity ... a reminder and blueprint for intentionally and authentically striving to be the best version of yourself, and for living a meaningful, flourishing, and prosperous life.

It is a book about living a 'good' life.

The Moral Responsibility of Striving to be Your Best

This is also a book about being accountable for your actions.

Recognising that none of us is perfect, this is *not* a book about striving for perfection ... no one wins at that game.

A word of warning here and reality check; make no mistake, for most of us, me included, intentionally and authentically striving to be the best version of yourself is not easy, but so very rewarding and important for all our futures.

Each of us has a moral responsibility to strive intentionally and authentically to be the best version of ourselves. If we don't, we do a disservice to ourselves, our families and loved ones, to our friends, our community and to the world.

Choosing to strive intentionally and authentically to be the best version of yourself will require of you to have the courage to accept your imperfections, mistakes, and flaws.

That is not an easy task for any of us.

Living intentionally and authentically striving to be at your best isn't for the feint-hearted, and yet throughout history, philosophers and thought leaders have agreed that it is our moral duty as humans to do so.

At the same time as accepting your imperfections, mistakes, and flaws, you'll also need to have the courage to think differently, choose differently and act differently.

As I am writing these words, my own self-talk is chattering away telling me I have no right to even dare write this book. My self-talk is warning me that I'm setting myself up for failure and exposing my own imperfections, mistakes, and flaws to the world.

And yet, as I personally apply one of the many evidence-based positive psychology strategies outlined in this book, I can mindfully acknowledge and accept my self-talk, and the mixed emotions I'm feeling, and still choose to continue writing anyway.

It is mindful, appropriate actions that support us striving to be the best version of ourselves that matter.

Neither you nor I need to do battle with our critical self-talk ... we don't have to continually try to turn up the volume on positive thinking – that can be exhausting and ineffective.

Throughout this book I will provide you with evidence-based research and strategies to help you accept any critical self-talk you might have (and we all have it) and choose appropriate values-aligned actions that move you toward the best version of yourself.

The Choices You Make

For most of my adult life I have been fascinated, both academically and experientially, by what causes people to think, feel and act the way they do.

People fascinate me because:

- we are so similar and yet so different
- we can be in a similar situation and yet our experiences of that situation can differ
- we can have similar possessions or wealth and yet differ in our happiness
- we can have similar educational opportunities and yet differ in our wisdom
- we can have similar opportunities and yet differ in how we use them
- we can have similar choices and yet make very different decisions.

Many lessons have and continue to be learned from the Covid 19 global pandemic.

The lockdowns, isolations, border closures, travel restrictions and separation from loved ones has given many people time and opportunity to think about what's important in their lives.

It's given people time to reflect on their lives, who they are, what they stand for, and how satisfied they are with the life they are living.

In disastrous situations like the Global pandemic, it becomes even more obvious why the world needs each of us to strive intentionally and authentically to be the best version of ourselves ... our future depends on it.

Imagine a world where every person had the courage to take up their moral duty to strive intentionally and authentically to be the best version of themselves ... to act with integrity, to be trustworthy, to be a person of good character.

While that might be impossible, the more of us who choose to be that person, the better this world will be.

You see, that's it isn't it ... it's the choices we make and the actions we take that determine and show who we are, what really matters to us and what we stand for.

This then has been an introduction to the goals of this book ... to challenge you to discover or rediscover what really matters in your life, avoid getting caught in the success trap of keeping up with social comparisons, and to strive to be the best version of yourself.

What's next?

In the pages that follow you will have the opportunity to reflect on the choices and actions you can make to strive to be the best version of yourself and ultimately how to live a meaningful, flourishing, and prosperous life.

In **chapter two** we further the discussion on the Success Trap and explore some examples of how people respond when caught out not striving to be at their best. We also look at the damage to relationships and trust and how that damage is difficult to repair, and the impact that can have on the success and life satisfaction of those involved.

In **chapter three** I will introduce you to a fresh look at the power of your *intentions*.

You will discover that your intentions are far more than just a thought about what you intend to do, and how your intentions can unlock the door to higher levels of meaning, purpose and yes ... success in your professional and personal lives.

In **chapter four** I will guide you through some practical and evidence-based activities that will help you gain further clarity on the importance of intentions, and how to live a more intentional, meaningful, flourishing, and prosperous life.

In **chapter five** we will explore the links between intention and the levels of trust you experience in your work and personal relationships. I will introduce you to the *Intentional Steps to Trust*[™] process that covers five steps to help you earn, build, and maintain trust-based relationships.

I am certainly not saying these five Intentional Steps to Trust are guaranteed to solve all your relationship problems or lead you to living a more meaningful, flourishing, and prosperous life. However, what I am saying is that these steps are each backed by evidence-based scientific research that will certainly help you to take appropriate action to positively affect your life – and the lives of those you impact through your professional and personal relationships.

In **chapter six** I will introduce you to three lenses through which you can consider trust in a very practical way. You will learn about the confidence and control required for self-trust; the courage and collaboration required to trust others; and the combined character, competence, and consistency required to earn others' trust.

Chapter seven is focused on the confidence and control required for self-trust. We will explore why self-trust is the trust upon which the other two types of trust rest. You will discover that if we do not get self-trust right in our lives, everything else starts to topple.

Chapter eight looks at the courage and collaboration required to trust others. You will discover why placing your trust blindly in others is a flawed practice because it opens the door to blame, criticism, mistakes, and loss of accountability.

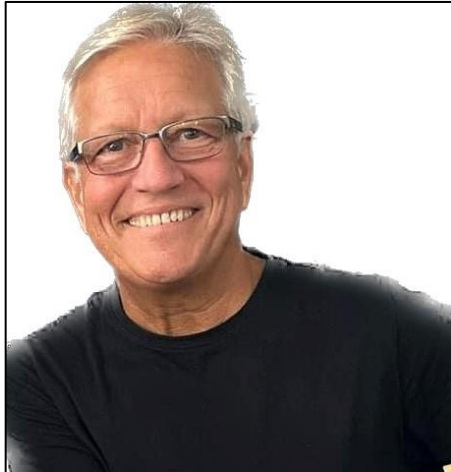
Chapter nine delves into the combined character, competence and consistency required for you to earn others' trust. We will explore what is meant when we refer to someone's character, and why the adage 'Promise what you can deliver and deliver on your promises' is still a powerful guiding principle to apply in all our relationships.

Rather than looking at success through a lens of social comparison and being caught in the success trap, *Living in the Light of Day* reframes the lens of success by helping you view success as striving to be your best version of you and living a 'good life' ... a meaningful, flourishing, and prosperous life.

There is such an enormous amount of research on what contributes to your overall sense of life satisfaction and in **Chapter ten** I have distilled this into 25 contributing elements to living a 'good life'. For each of these contributing elements, I provide you with some context, a key point, an activity, and the evidence you will experience as you complete the activity. I'm confident this will be a chapter you will return to again and again as you gain clarity on which of these contributing elements you would like to personally work on and enhance in your life.

The **final chapter** is a personal message from me, exploring the importance of making our lives more meaningful, and our moral duty to strive to be the best version of ourselves.

A message from the author.



Thanks for taking the time to download and read this first chapter of LIVING in the Light of Day.

Let me ask you these two questions:

- 1) Are you chasing success based on other people's expectations or definitions?
- 2) Would you like to simplify your life without giving up what really matters to you?

If you have answered yes to either or both of these questions, I'm confident you will gain value from your own copy of LIVING in the Light of Day.

You can purchase your copy of the book in your favourite format at:

www.davidpenglase.com/resources/living-in-the-light-of-day

Here's what I know ... our world seems hell-bent on distracting us and stealing our attention from what really matters in life – our relationships (with ourselves and with others).

Whether you decide to purchase your own copy, or perhaps a gift copy for someone you think would enjoy and gain value from a copy, my very best to you.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

References and Notations

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