



# IT'S A STATE OF MIND

**STOP EXISTING START LIVING**

JAMES BOARDMAN

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**STOP EXISTING | START LIVING**

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*This book is dedicated to my children Angelina, Alba  
and Bailey, who in my darkest hour saved  
my life*

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# INTRODUCTION

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## ABOUT ME

Hi, I'm James Boardman.

I have three children, Bailey Angelina and another little lady Alba, who is just two weeks old as I write. Without a doubt, my children saved my life. Their presence and love brought me back from the depths of despair and depression, and they won't realise that until they are older.



I have a wonderful partner in Jemima, who is looking forward to being a mummy and who supports me through everything I do.

I live in the South East of England. I've travelled in small doses but nothing like what I want to.

I'm an ambitious 38-year-old guy, who wants to help as many people as possible to be the best version of themselves.

My mission is to touch as many lives as I can, to make a difference in people's thinking and to raise self-awareness in everyone's daily actions.

I proudly served in the Royal Marines for just over eight years, which gave me focus at a point in my life when I needed it.

I had no qualifications or direction until I watched the war film *Black Hawk Down* and thought it would be an amazing idea to join up!



Becoming a Royal Marine Physical Trainer (PTIRM) was one of the proudest moments in my career. It was something that I looked at in the brochure at the very start and wanted to be.

I was also told it was never going to happen because it's so tough to get in, but I fucking proved them all wrong. I have a habit of doing that.

It was simply the best job I've ever had and miss the role I played; like an ex-girlfriend you fell for heavily then split from.

Back in "Civvy Street", my life is now very different. I have a lot to contend with!

Running my company, Bodys Shock Fitness, is my new career. It was launched 3½ years ago and there are more than 250 people who regularly turn up for my classes each week. Then there's the 100-plus online clients working on my programmes to develop themselves.

After that, I have eight personal clients to take care of at any one time as well!

Of course my life has its challenging days, but I love to help people. No matter how busy it gets, I always strive to provide a service that far exceeds client expectations.

Being a business owner is demanding. Those of you reading who run your own company will know what I'm talking about. Stresses and anxieties all come into play. Perhaps, like me, you find it's so difficult to switch off, especially if your office is currently in your dining room.

I'm an extremely ambitious, highly-driven chap and work could easily take over my life. Balancing my lifestyle so that it isn't dominated by work is tough and I have to be on my game each day to cope.

Without a doubt, bringing up my three kids is harder than anything I've ever done, especially as they get older. I'm already finding myself worrying that I'm not going to see them for much longer. They'll soon hit

that stage where they are too “grown up” to want to hang out with dad anymore.

My kids are my world. As a dad of three, I have my hands full for the foreseeable future.

If all of that wasn't enough to deal with, I have the stresses of moving to a bigger home to contend with this year. There is no avoiding it; as a family have simply outgrown the current one.

When we are settled in, I'm planning to have a dedicated office with more space. I am sure this will help me manage my work/life balance.

As you can see my life is busy, but I like it that way. How do I survive? I rely heavily on planning and I'll teach you my system in this book.

### **MY DARKEST HOUR**

It was around 1am and I was lying awake in the family home by myself. I had driven my family away, I had left my job in the Marines and I had no identity. I was in a deep depression, but didn't realise it at the time.

I had no real friends as I had spent the last eight years away from my home town, so had no connections.

I didn't know what to do. I was suffocated by the person that I had become. I had to find the old me again, break the cocoon and get out.

At the time I didn't know what else to do other than go for a run. So that's what I did, I went for a run. A 30-minute run turned into an hour run, an hour run turned into two hours and so on. I ended up running for three hours. I hadn't run in months. I hadn't done any fitness in months because I couldn't be arsed – I was too busy trying to figure my shit out. I had been in prime condition as a physical trainer in the Marines but by now I was out of shape.

That run changed my whole perspective of life. I thought about what was important in my life. What was I going to do? What was I good at?

I'm a big believer in fate, and I believe that I was meant to go on that run in order to reflect on my life. I thought so hard about things that I lost track of time. I came back with a plan and a reminder what my "why" was. I knew what I had to do and set about getting it done.

I had no help back then, no self-awareness of what I was doing or the position I was in. Sometimes you need a shake – a kick up the arse – and that's what this book is. So read it, wake up and smell the roses – it's time to reclaim your life.

## **WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK**

Have you noticed the thousands, in fact millions, of men over the age of 35 struggling to get through each day. They come from every walk of life – from builders to company directors, professional sportsmen to Sunday league footballers.

Why are they struggling? Why are *you* struggling? Somewhere along the way you got lost or stuck in a rut. Many men have lost touch with their true identity and struggle to find their purpose in this world.

The antidote to this is upgrading your mindset, increasing self-awareness and understanding what you want out of life.

Mindset is vital to the development of your life. It's the key to personal development, your health, your work or business, and your relationships.

When you have control and balance in each of these four categories, you can move forwards and live a life that brings enjoyment, fulfilment, health and prosperity.

This book will open your eyes about how your identity has evaporated over the years causing you anxiety, depression, low confidence and low self-esteem.

At times, I will be ruthless about where you may actually be in life and how you can turn things around – because when you’ve lost your mojo a big dose of tough love is the only way to snap out of it.

### **HOW MY SPARK GOT SNUFFED OUT**

I began my career in the Royal Marines as a sniper.

I passed my sniper course and was deployed to Afghanistan in January 2006. I started working as part of a six-man team to protect the Royal Engineers.

After two years of being a sniper I had the opportunity to become a Royal Marine Physical Trainer, which I snapped up and qualified in 2008. Being in the forces was the most amazing job for me, even to date.

Working with recruits – watching them turn up as boys (shitting themselves) and then turning them into men trained to defend this country – was an honour.

I worked with some of the most inspiring and awesome guys around and it was a privilege to know them.

I guess I see my role now as being similar – helping men struggling in life to turn things round and develop no matter what level they are at.

September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011, was the date I left the Royal Marines. I remember driving back home with one consuming thought: “Have I done the right thing?”

What made me leave if I loved it so much? I wanted to be at home with my family to be a full-time dad. Seeing them at weekends just didn't cut it.

Looking back, my transition from military to civilian life was all of 48 hours. I left working with highly-motivated recruits in the Royal Marines, to teaching teenagers aged 16 to 18 at a local college. And the worst thing was that they didn't want to be there.

For the first 12 months it was very apparent to me that I was changing and not in a good way. I was failing as a husband, a father, a friend and as an employee.

I was failing in life.

I had lost any ambition, spark, identity and vision of where my life was going.

I had a job I didn't want to be in and found no satisfaction from the role. I was broke, on the bones of my arse, because I had taken a £10,000 pay cut to move back 'home'.

I found it difficult to go from a job that gave me pride, ambition, identity and drive – to becoming stuck in a dead-end job that was quite the opposite. This was tough to deal with.

Everyone is capable of achieving amazing things. For you, this may seem like a long way off from your current situation. However, it isn't out of your reach.

Recapturing your best is a state of mind. I chose to put this book together as a tool to help you realise that. Open up your eyes to the things

stopping you and holding you back. I wanted to share a way forward for you to be able see your path, plan and implement, and be the best version of yourself.

I went through a very difficult time in my life. It was very lonely and hard to accept, and I had made an awful lot of mistakes along the way.

I never really dealt with the depression or anxiety I felt. I just kind of 'got on with it'. At the time I didn't understand. I went from having a love for life to falling into a rut that I couldn't get out of. I imagine that if you are reading this book you may be in a similar position.

My hope is that this book puts some spice back into your life. I hope that the journey I took helps you realise that you are not the only man in the world that feels the way you do.

I don't want you to be stuck in that hellish rut for years. I want to drag you out of that state of mind and help you to build a winning mentality.

## **WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR**

This book is aimed at men over the age of 35 who want to improve the way they live their lives. It looks at the problems men face as we get older.

Lack of direction is a common problem.

I've worked alongside men in their 30s and 40s who are directors of big companies; men who thought they had clear direction in their life, only to wake up one day and find out that they didn't, and that they were just lying to themselves.

Direction can apply to many things – family life, relationships, health or business for example. This book is for those who are tired and fed up of feeling in limbo and who need to work on a clear vision of where they are going.

Moving forward takes a chain reaction from having no direction, to having an idea of a plan, to implementing that plan, and then to building momentum and consistency.

This book helps you to establish a solid strategy and thought process using proven tactics to move forwards and achieve the life you want and deserve.

Many men feel trapped in different ways. This can be through not reaching their full potential, treading water in dead-end relationships, being tied into a job they hate just to keep the roof over their head, or not being confident enough to go to the gym.

You will explore the emotion of feeling trapped and how you can break down the mental prison. You can move forwards with your life, and be free from the feelings of fear, anxiety, self-doubt or low self-esteem.

Now you finally feel the time is right, that time when you decide to do something about moving yourself forward, this book will guide you through.

As you look for inspiration, this book will enable you audit your life, to draw a line in the sand, so you are in a position to act. It is certainly going to make you be honest with yourself.

## **WHAT THIS BOOK COVERS**

This book uncovers the deep issues that are preventing you from living the life you want to. You will look at the various triggers that can cause you stress and frustration. It will draw out emotion and help you to look at your life from an honest perspective.

It looks in detail at proven methods that will take you from a chaotic lifestyle that lacks routine to a way of living that finds everyday balance.

It teaches you to put together a concrete plan and be more proactive. You will learn about the power of habits and routines, and build the structure you need to move forwards.

Let's look at each chapter in turn.

## **HOW YOU GET TO ROCK BOTTOM AND WHAT IT MEANS**

Men approaching 35 and beyond are likely to go through physical and mental changes. The introduction of new and bigger responsibilities is likely to change the way you live your life.

The days of doing what you like, when you like, have gone. You now have demands to deal with in your work and family life that will restrict your freedom to be the free spirit you might have once been. For some, that restriction brings the change of mind and body, which can be overwhelming and hard to deal with, and they hit what feels like rock bottom.

Maybe it's consistently lying to yourself about where you are in life? Are you drinking in the evening to numb the frustration and the unhappiness?

For most men who find themselves in this position, the fire in their belly has gone. The drive has gone. They feel they've lost their purpose and they can't carry on like that much longer.

It's time to turn things around. It's time to face some hard facts about the way you have been living your life. It's time to start self-auditing and making a plan of action. You are going to look deeply at yourself. To move forwards you must first confront the past and present.

To do that, I am going to ask you to use your gut instinct to score four key areas in your life out of ten. Once you've finished this chapter and audited your life, you will know what is going well for you and what isn't. It's an uncomfortable truth, but it will spur you on to make positive changes.



## **WHAT FACTORS RAISE OR LOWER YOUR AUDIT SCORE**

Having a long, hard look at yourself and what you have become is often a difficult process to understand and accept.

There are usually many feelings of anger for allowing things to get as bad as they have.

Sometimes men feel ashamed at how they have let themselves go or feel upset that they haven't been prioritising what matters most. You will read about how to face those feelings and deal with them in the right way. Believe it or not, you are massively winning by coming to terms with what you find.

Once you know more about how a variety of factors can improve or diminish the quality of your life, I want you to review the four key areas again – looking in detail at cold hard facts of what's actually working and what's not, rather than your initial gut instinct.

I promise you'll find some pleasant surprises among some of the disappointments when you do your second assessment.

## **GETTING BACK ON TRACK**

In this chapter, it's time to look at how to make sense of what's going on and start to think about a better plan for the future.

You'll start by considering how well you have done by facing up to the problems you need to solve. Then I will share with you the power of planning and teach you how to set better priorities to guide you towards a more fulfilling life.

The chapter closes with assessing your audit to see what the biggest problems are so you can put a plan in place to solve them as quickly as possible. Once you know what you definitely want to focus on, you can put together a detailed plan, which is covered in the next section.

## **HOW TO CREATE PLAN TO MOVE FORWARDS**

Now you understand your situation, what's working and what's not, it's time to start moving forwards.

You look at how introducing positive habits, routines and structure to your life are the ways to win.

I will teach you how to put together yearly, 12-week, weekly and daily plans. These will add structure to your life, so you can take control of what you do and how you do it. The plans give you a destination to aim for and a tool for making sure you consistently work towards being the person you want to become.

Once you know how to make improvements, the next step is learning how to do those consistently to get the best results.

## **HOW TO MAKE LIFE-LONG CHANGES SUCCESSFULLY**

Once you learn how to plan, you need to know how to stick with it in the long term. You will learn important lessons to maintain your progress. You will be introduced to the CICR formula. This stands for

- **Commitment**
- **Implementation**
- **Consistency**
- **Review/rethink**

You will master the techniques to keep growing as an individual, how to always improve yourself and to be the best version of yourself – now and in the future.

## **WHAT TO DO AFTER YOUR FIRST 12-WEEK PLAN**

The last chapter of the book talks about not falling back into your bad old habits.

I'm sure you've made bold New Year's resolutions in the past, only to see them fade into obscurity a few weeks later. I am going to teach you how to stick with your objectives for life.

I'll also give you some advice on how to put together subsequent plans.

## **HOW TO USE THIS BOOK**

The first time you read this book, you are probably going to feel like you've been hit by a truck. Facing up to the cold, hard truth is a lot to deal with mentally.

You have to read the information from the start to the finish to fully grasp the process you need to follow. If you skip through chapters, you will miss important steps you need to understand. As you go, mark paragraphs that you can relate to the most. This is good for quick reference in future.

I've included my own stories and some from my clients to prove it's not just you who has become lost or overwhelmed – and that there is an answer. I know a lot of people take comfort in knowing it's not just them having these struggles, and that other people's insights can be highly motivating.

I have set some tasks for you. There are two types of task:

- exercises to audit your life and your take on where you are now, and what makes life worth living
- planning sessions to put a system in place so you focus on what needs to be done to make you happy again

I have created a downloadable, worked example of a completed plan so that you can clearly see the sort of information to include in your own plan, and how much detail you need to go into. You can find it in the resources section.

If you want to connect with other guys working hard to transform their lives, I run a free Facebook group called JB Men's Group. It is for those men that want to hold themselves publicly accountable and share their experiences with others travelling on the same path.

If you have a question, you can email me any time at:

me@boardmanjames.com.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

1. Carry out a gut instinct review of your life
2. Do a detailed audit of how things are going
3. Review what's working and what's not, brainstorm solutions
4. Set your yearly goals
5. Create your 12-week plan
6. Create your weekly plan for week one
7. Create your daily plan for week one (optional)
8. Follow your first week and review it
9. Plan the next 11 weeks
10. Follow the plan for the remaining weeks
11. Take a week off to assess
12. Plan the next 12 weeks

## **LET'S GO**

Congratulations on taking the first steps to changing your life. It's not easy to admit to yourself you're in a bad place.

It's often hard dealing with changes in your life, but I want to help. I want the best for you. I want to see the very best version of you come to the fore.

You have some testing times ahead, facing up to some of the realities of your current situation.

However, if you follow the advice in this book right through to the end I can promise you that you will be much happier, more confident and able to move forward with your life.

# ARE YOU ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED THAT YOU HAVE LOST THE JOY IN YOUR LIFE? ARE YOU JUST NOT THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF?

Many men wake up one day and wonder how their life has turned into a disaster zone, full of responsibilities and obligations, and no time to truly have fun and be themselves. How much longer are you going to keep waking up to "Groundhog Day", keep telling yourself you do something about it Monday?

This book helps you see why your life has gone off the rails and how to reclaim a brighter future.

Discover how to:

- audit your life
- understand the cause of your unhappiness
- prioritise and structure your day to day routine to improve your wellbeing
- use regular small short-term goals to make big changes in your life

No matter how jaded and frustrated you feel, there is a way to lead a more fulfilling life.

## JAMES BOARDMAN

Stared into the same dark abyss after leaving his beloved military career in the Royal Marines behind. He now runs a successful coaching business for men aged 35+ and has helped hundreds of people get their lives back on track. For more information see [www.boardmanjames.com](http://www.boardmanjames.com).



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