

**GURU
GUIDE**
with
Vidusha and Anton

in conversation with
Steven Robinson

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**HAVING THE
RIGHT ATTITUDE**

A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO THE GURU GUIDE

The 'Guru Guide' is an attempt to refine decades of hard-earned expertise into succinct, simple and practical advice.

It is NOT meant to be an exhaustive exploration of a topic: rather, pointed areas of focus which can only be discerned by a practitioner. It is not meant to be a generic set of advice: it is advice from battle-hardened professionals who have had a lifetime of experience and proven track records.

The Guru Guide has a pre determined format:

- ✓ It aims to understand a topic/ area of focus
- ✓ It aims to give tools to help you navigate the area
- ✓ It also gives contexts and examples: so that you can customize it to suit YOU

Exploratory, intimate and insightful, the Guru Guide aims to bring to you a wealth of expertise which can only be possible through veterans whose varied and in-depth experiences offer unparalleled insights.

The brevity and simplicity is by choice, and design. Focused on Executives and Managers who want to get quick tips and techniques, who are eager to improve their craft

and trade : the Guru Guide aims to offer 'little nuggets' of advice and importantly, simple tools, which will enable practitioners to up their game and benefit from expertise which may be hard to find in a hurry.

INTRODUCING



**VIDUSHA
NATHAVITHARANA**

Vidusha is currently the Destiny Architect at High5 Consultancy and Luminary Learning and the organization's founder. His areas of expertise are with strategy facilitation, HR strategy development and Leadership Training. He has conducted assignments in 15 countries regionally and consulted for the World Bank, the UN as well as some of the top corporates in Sri Lanka and the Region. He is also a member of the board of directors for Chrysalis, a social enterprise working to empower women and youth by fostering inclusive growth in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.



**ANTON
THAYALAN**

Anton is a multi-faceted professional who has had over two decades of hands-on experience in process improvement, change management and strategic management, and currently works as the Chief Evangelist of Luminary Learning and the Transformation Therapist of High5 Consultancy. As the former AVP at HSBC DPL Anton won accolades for his superlative work there: and won the prestigious HSBC Group Service – Global Talent Management Member two years in a row. Anton currently works as a consultant focusing on efficiency and productivity improvement and process optimization for local and regional clients.

INTRODUCING STEVEN ROBINSON

Steven is one of those rare human beings who is able to turn adversity and absolute crisis into the launchpad to become the 'best version' of himself.

Steven's right arm was ripped off following a harrowing motorcycle accident : and the ensuing surgeries saw him 'die' 3 times on the operating table. Rather than bemoan the fact that he had no arm, Steven's first response to seeing himself in the mirror was to celebrate the fact that his 'acne' was gone !

Rather than allowing the 'disability' to be an 'excuse' for despondency and mediocrity, Steven made it into the

'best thing' that happened to him, and went about shaping his life, not only going on to become a millionaire, but also to learn new skills continuously : including learning how to ride (horses, and being placed 3rd in the National Dressage Competition), learning to repair Vintage Jukeboxes (and using 3D printing to make parts that are otherwise unavailable now), becoming the 'one armed pilot' and also, an entrepreneur who made his fledging idea into a million dollar business...

Steven is that archetypal beacon of hope : the purveyor of positivity and the beater of all odds. Whenever we have a tough day, whenever we see negativity creeping in, whenever we feel hope is lost, we honestly think of Steven : and ask ourselves 'what the hell is OUR excuse' !



WERE YOU ALWAYS THIS POSITIVE ?



No : Steven tells us honestly. As a wiry little kid with Acne being bullied relentlessly in school, Steven honestly talks about 'feeling small' and lacking confidence. He hated going to school : and would often 'buck' school simply because he didn't know how to really stand up for himself - and fend off the incessant bullying.

The only thing that really brought joy and confidence during his normative years was riding a motorcycle : which he and one of his friend used to do every opportunity they got. His eyes light up when he talks about the 'tricks' they used to perform on 'two wheels.' He was rather aimless, unsure, lacking confidence and above all, didn't really have a 'drive' he tells us : with a queer little smile on his face (which we could never place !)

SO... DO YOU THINK A TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE HELPS PUT THINGS INTO PERSPECTIVE ?

'It certainly helped' Steven tells us : 'it helps put life into perspective.' Most people who are really driven place a traumatic experience as the start of their 'relentless drive' : and we think Steven is also one of them. However, Steven tells us that it is 'wise' not to wait until a crisis to understand that life is to be experienced : and that we ought to grab each day with both arms and make the most of it...

Every one of us DO have situations that get us to think twice about life. Make them 'launchpads' to 'get yourself out of the lethargy you are in' Steven advises. We remember a question that was throw to him about 'deep jealousies' and 'anger' : and Steven telling them 'use anything negative to become something positive for you !' The bottomline is this : you can use anything you feel that 'eats you up' or 'fuels you forward.'

He continued with a big grin 'don't allow negatives to be negative for you - its not worth it.' There is so much you CAN do : and there is so much you can EXPERIENCE : WHY ALLOW yourself to be anything but positive and push forward ?



WHY DO YOU CONSTANTLY CHALLENGE YOURSELF ?



'I wanted to prove to myself I can' was the simple answer that Steven gave. ' I don't ever want to allow a fear to define me : so, I asked what am I afraid of : and I went about DOING SOMETHING about it - and soon enough, it became a habit. I was really scared of flying (and he laughs about having to get 'therapy' before taking a holiday overseas because it involved 'flying there' !) so, I went on to be a pilot : I was scared of horses (having had a rather 'nasty experience' with a horse as a kid) so I took on horse riding,

I never studied in school, and realised I never learnt anything - so, I took night classes - and then went on to University to get a Degree (and the thesis he had to do is what led him to start his Digital Jukebox Company !)

I don't see it as 'challenging myself', honestly : its just that I want to always try out new things - do something more - be something more - have a more wholesome experience of life - work on something that will give me joy - and be someone I can truly be proud of - so, I go out there and do what I have to do. Nothing is impossible is not something I just talk about - it is honestly something I genuinely believe in : not just for myself, but for any human being..

MINDSET 1 : THERE IS NO FAILURE - ONLY DEGREES OF SUCCESS

One of the BIGGEST reasons people never really do anything is the fear of FAILURE.

So, understand there really IS NOTHING CALLED FAILURE : it is how other people have constructed the world : and you don't have to believe in that concept.

See, if you start doing something you never did before : and even if you make 1% improvement, it is STILL SUCCESS. You are more successful than you were yesterday : so that's a win isn't it ?

So, what have you got to lose? Go out there and just do it : because, every day you do it is a success.

LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION

YOU HAVE A DREAM OF BEING A BILLIONAIRE. YOU WORK HARD, DAY AND NIGHT, WITH EVERYTHING YOU HAVE : AND REACH ONLY 100MILLION.

ARE YOU A FAILURE ?

HELL NO! YOU ARE DAMN RICH - SOMETHING YOU WERE NOT WHEN YOU STARTED OUT ... SO WHY ARE YOU A FAILURE ? YOU ARE A DAMN GOOD SUCCESS...

SURE - NOT AS SUCCESSFUL AS YOU WANTED TO BE : BUT A SUCCESS NONE THE LESS !!!



MINDSET 2 : TAKE THE FIRST STEP - AND A STEP IN FRONT EVERY DAY - NO MATTER HOW SMALL IT IS

The reason why people give up is that they don't see success fast enough. Most of the time, little improvements never really show up - but they are taking place.... They are taking place as long as you are working on it.

The mindset you need to have is this : don't worry about the result so much - just take a step in the right direction every day - and before you know it, things will happen. Remember mindset 1 ? There IS no failure : only degrees of success : so, just keep working on it : and you will be successful sure enough...

THEY RECKON IF YOU LIFT A BABY ELEPHANT FROM THE DAY IT IS BORN, EVERYDAY, TWICE A DAY, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO LIFT IT EVEN WHEN IT BECOMES A FULLY GROWN TUSKER !

HONESTLY, I HAVEN'T TRIED THIS, TO TELL YOU WHETHER IT IS TRUE OR NOT : BUT THE 'PRINCIPLE' AROUND IT IS RIGHT : SLOW, SMALL, INCREMENTAL THINGS HAVE A MASSIVE IMPACT OVER TIME.

IT'S A BIT LIKE ME TRYING MY HAND (YOU KNOW I HAVE ONLY ONE ISN'T IT ?) AT SQUASH : AND I WAS HONESTLY NO GOOD AT IT WHEN I STARTED. BUT MY FRIEND WHO HELPED ME, KEPT URGING ME ON, TELLING ME 'YOU WILL GET IT - BUT IT WILL JUST TAKE MORE TIME FOR YOU THAN FOR OTHERS.... IT'S BEEN SIX YEARS : AND HE WAS RIGHT. I DID IMPROVE WITH TIME : NOT AS MUCH AS A NORMAL PERSON : BUT I DID IMPROVE NONE THE LESS AND EVEN BETTERED THE CLUB AVERAGE !

MINDSET 3 : NEVER COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS - COMPARE YOURSELF ONLY TO WHO YOU WERE YESTERDAY AND WHO YOU WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE

Here is the biggest challenge for yourself : you need to stop comparing yourself to others. I know you may have heard this from many others before : but the reason I tell you not to compare is slightly different. See : you need to understand that the only person you have to compare against is you : because that is the only person you know well enough to compare against.

So, see yourself for who you are now, and ask yourself where you need to be - with regards to anything - and then, work on it : and then, make comparisons.... As long as you are working on yourself, you will always see improvements : it is impossible not to : and this is a source of great motivation. The moment you compare your improvement to someone else it can certainly be a huge demotivation. so, the key to continuous motivation is to see yourself making progress : and being able to feel so good about it : and you can do it the moment you compare yourself to who you were...

WHY COMPARE YOURSELF IN THE FIRST PLACE ?

YOU DON'T HAVE WHAT THEY HAVE
: YOU DON'T HAVE WHAT THEY
DON'T HAVE : YOU DON'T KNOW
THEIR CONTEXT : YOU DON'T
KNOW THEIR ABILITIES, THEIR
WEAKNESSES : THEIR
CHALLENGES.... YOU ONLY
COMPARE THE 'RESULTS' - BUT
NEVER QUITE THE THINGS THEY
HAVE GONE TO GET THERE...

SO, YOU ARE INSPIRED BY ME IS IT ?

YOU WANT TO BE LIKE ME DO YOU ?

DO YOU ?

HONESTLY ?

WANNA GIVE YOUR RIGHT HAND
TO FIND OUT ?

MINDSET 4 : ALLOW YOURSELF TO TAKE OPPORTUNITIES THAT COME YOUR WAY

Too many times you get opportunities that you never make use of. Not all opportunities are glamorous. Not all opportunities are prestigious. Not all opportunities are wrapped up as an opportunities : most of the best opportunities come wrapped as problems.

Allow yourself to take opportunities : in every form and shape they come in.... The trick is this : go out to LEARN more than anything else. TRULY LEARN. Develop an insatiable curiosity about anything and everything : and when you do, you will see 'opportunities to learn' EVERYWHERE...

EVERYTHING you learn comes in handy : comes in useful : in the weirdest and most unexpected ways. So, go out there and learn as much as you can, every day....

You really will be surprised at how much you will achieve when you learn all you can....

WHEN I TOOK MY DEGREE IT WAS SOMETHING I DID WHOLEHEARTEDLY : NOT BECAUSE I WANTED A DEGREE : BUT BECAUSE I HONESTLY WANT TO LEARN. I PORED OVER MY STUDIES : AND REALLY DEEP DIVED INTO EVERYTHING I WAS TAUGHT.

THEN I HAD TO DO MY THESIS : AND WRITE A PROGRAM.... BECAUSE I LOVED VINTAGE JUKEBOXES, AND WAS ALREADY FIXING THEM UP I WROTE A PROGRAM TO MAKE A DIGITAL JUKEBOX. NOW, BEFORE MY DEGREE I WENT FOR YEARS OF NIGHT SCHOOL - AND DID ALMOST ALL THE PROGRAMS THEY OFFERED THROUGH NIGHT SCHOOL - INCLUDING METAL WORK, WOOD WORK, AND A PLETHORA OF OTHERS. ALL THESE THINGS I LEARNT MEANT I NOT ONLY WROTE THE PROGRAM - BUT I ALSO ACTUALLY MADE A FULLY FUNCTIONING DIGITAL JUKEBOX !

WHAT DO YOU KNOW - A FEW YEARS LATER I BECAME A MILLIONAIRE BUILDING THESE DIGITAL JUKEBOXES !

MINDSET 5 : DON'T LISTEN TO ANYONE WHO DOESN'T HONESTLY WANT TO HELP YOU

There are enough naysayers. NEVER listen to anyone - honestly - unless they are willing to actually help you.

There are three types of people you will meet. There are those who will say 'Steven this is impossible' and there are those who will say 'Steven, that's a great idea' and here is the differentiator to find out if they really mean it or not 'let me help you'. Don't listen to anyone who doesn't tell you 'let me help you' because ultimately whether people agree with you or not, if they are willing to help you, these are the ONLY people you must surround yourself with : everyone else you really must drop like a hot potato !

REMEMBER I TOLD YOU I WANTED TO LEARN HOW TO PLAY SQUASH ? I ALMOST GAVE UP ON IT BECAUSE ALMOST EVERYONE TOLD ME I COULD NEVER PLAY IT WITH ONE HAND. EVEN WHEN I TRIED BY MYSELF I FOUND MY HAND AND EYE CO-ORDINATION WAS SO BAD I COULDN'T EVER HIT THE BALL - EVEN ONCE.

THEN I FOUND A FRIEND WHO TOLD ME 'IT'S POSSIBLE : COME, LETS PLAY TOGETHER'. HE WAS NEVER ONCE 'BOTHERED' BY MY LACK OF INITIAL PROGRESS : HE JUST KEPT URGING ME ON 'IT TAKES TIME' IS ALL HE TOLD ME.

TODAY, MANY MANY YEARS AFTERWARDS, I CAN PLAY A DECENT GAME. I STILL SUCK AT IT FROM AVERAGE STANDARDS : BUT, AT LEAST I CAN HIT THE BALL !!!
PROGRESS !

SO, SURROUND YOURSELF WITH ONLY THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO HELP YOU - AND YOU WILL ACHIEVE A HELL OF A LOT MORE THAN YOU THINK IS POSSIBLE...

HAVING DONE ALL THIS : DO YOU HAVE A REGRET ?

I honestly don't have regrets...

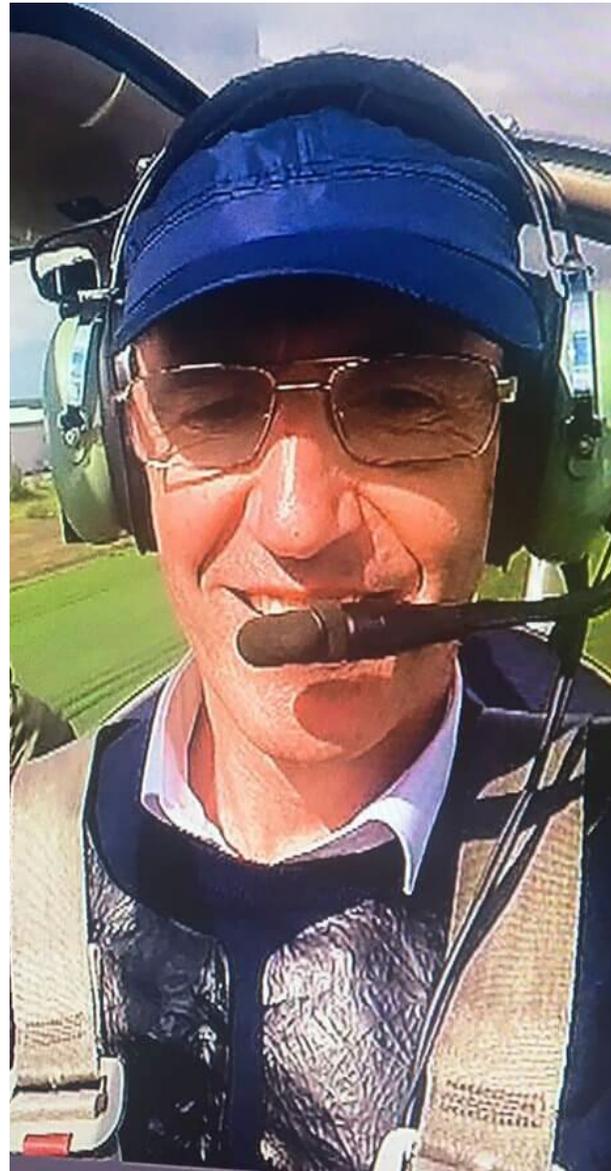
I have had a full and fulfilling life...

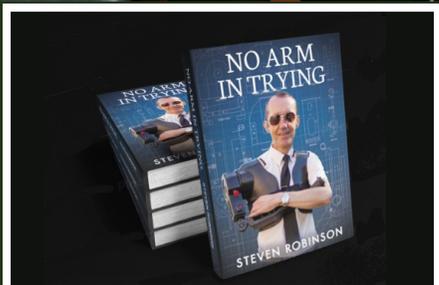
I have achieved much...

But, in retrospect : I do wish I'd married and had kids. I look at all I have achieved and wish I had someone to leave it behind for. To be able to tell my kids 'here you go guys : take all this : and do with it as you wish, and make something more out of it' But, I am the eternal optimist. I never lose hope.

'Whose to know : maybe love finds me yet : even during Covid eh?'

Steven winks : and we wonder whether he has actually found that special someone...



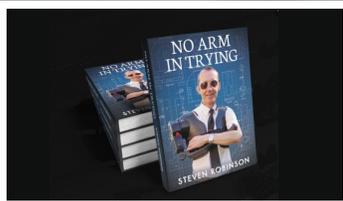


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INSPIRATIONAL BOOK](#)



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