

# James Butler's Newsletter #34

Amuse, Inform and Inspire

June 2005

The last issue's profile of Charlie Plumb seems to have touched a number of you – which pleases me! It seems it helps to recognise those who support you, and how you can support others – keep packing those parachutes!

Do you remember what was happening in June 1984? My nephew was just being born, Wham! were Top of the Pops and I was still in short trousers (and had hair!). And it was the last time I could say I supported the team who were Champions of Europe.

## *Coming Back To Be A Champion*



Many will have heard that Liverpool FC won the European Cup late last month. I don't mention that to gloat (well, only a little!), but more because of the manner of their victory. For the non-football followers, my team were totally out of the match at half-time. They were trailing by three goals and were being outclassed. A record thrashing looked a possibility.

Within minutes of the re-start, captain Steven Gerrard scored a wonder goal, and suddenly the fans erupted and Gerrard egged the team on – willing them to not lose hope. In an amazing turn of events, just six minutes later the scores were level, and Liverpool had a chance to steal the trophy. Over an hour of tense football and a sudden death decider had to be endured by the teams and fans before Liverpool were finally triumphant.

And how is this relevant to Painless Business? Well, I think many of us face times in business, or in life, when our hopes seem dead and buried, or our faith in our future is tested. At those times, champions step forward and want success enough to overcome the odds and win through. One of the reasons I enjoy watching sport so much (and Wimbledon starts next week!), is the obvious mental tussle between competitors can be as important as the natural ability. Why else do sportspeople invest so much in mind coaches and sports psychologists?

Other memorable sporting occasions offer examples of the power of mind over matter. From the same era, Dennis Taylor in 1985 became the World Snooker Champion by coming from a seemingly hopeless position to win on the very final ball of a mammoth match against Steve Davis. A few years before, in 1981, Ian Botham led England back from the brink of despair, for the team and his own career, with an inspiring display against Australia (and we won't let them forget!). In business, Walt Disney was virtually bankrupt when the first Mickey Mouse film was a success and spawned the Disney empire. Thomas Edison tried over 3,000 different possible filaments before he found the one that made commercial electric light bulbs possible.

I have written in the past about holding your vision and keeping the faith in adversity (Issue 17, after a trip to Isandlwana in South Africa). My belief is that the determination that Gerrard and his team mates showed to become Champions of Europe is only possible if you want to win more than others – if you are so connected with your vision that you will keep the faith. Do you have a clear vision of where you are headed?

## *"Never Gonna Give You Up"*

If we're casting our mind back to the 80s, perhaps we can draw something positive from the musical wasteland that was Rick Astley's career. The beauty (?) of his work is the ability for that tune to stay in your head for days (bet you hum it before the end of the day!).

And as you do hum it, perhaps you can think how you can ensure you never give up on your vision. Here are my thoughts on some good things to have in place to help you with that:

**A vision:-** helps to have this in the first place – a clear idea of what you want from life helps you be focussed and to keep going through challenges. I have just re-drawn my own 15 year vision – which just ties in with the year 2020. Yes, for the first time since I was a teenager, I have 2020 vision! And beware, if you're still reading the newsletter then, I reckon we will be well past Issue 200 – how many bad jokes are there in the world?

**A plan:-** an idea of how you are going to make that vision a reality. A plan contains clear steps, action points or milestones for you to work through. This breaks a big goal into manageable chunks (a bit like when you have to wade through a huge plate of food at the in-laws). If some of your goals are really stretching and you can't see the plan right now, give it time to develop.

**A parachute packer:-** (or two) – have a support team around you who will help when you face challenges (which are almost inevitable if you're growing). That could be friends, family, a spouse, a business partner or someone else in business who wants to share the journey with you. If I had a pound for every time someone has said to me "I thought I was the only one who felt like this" I would be able to buy the entire Rick Astley back catalogue on e-bay (and much more besides).

**An Achievement Journal:-** I am a big fan of collecting evidence that we are actually good at what we are trying to do. Our sub-conscious mind is superb at collecting evidence that we're hopeless, so we need to prompt it to collect the positive too. When I have a wobble or a challenge, I have a file to turn to, which reminds me what I have achieved.

**Some affirmations or inspirations:-** some personal development gurus swear by talking to yourself in the mirror each morning. I'm less of a fan, but if it works for them, it might for you! Gerrard screaming at his team mates worked, so why not scream at yourself (lovingly) every now and again?

**A reality check:-** sometimes we see our challenges out of all proportion, because we are so embroiled in achieving our vision. Having other interests, or people to talk to, can give us some perspective and helps us see ways round obstacles. Lance Armstrong's encounter with cancer helped him get perspective and go on to become the best racing cyclist of all time.

And, to stick with the idea of comebacks, like Liverpool's, Rick Astley is currently touring the UK and will be just down the road from me in Henley on 9<sup>th</sup> July. Sadly, I have a prior engagement!

## *Painless Business News*

The last month has been a great one for me – and the start of a successful summer I hope. June 2005 has been my best month in (almost) 3 years in business and I thank my clients, past and present, for their support. The Painless way to grow a business is by referrals from clients, and I appreciate the role my own clients play in my growth – thanks! However, I'm not resting on my laurels and have lots of exciting things planned for the coming months to keep driving forward – watch this space!

I have delivered a couple of workshops and training courses in the last month, and I do enjoy seeing business people working together to develop themselves and grow their businesses. Moving forward I will be changing the nature of some of these workshops, but you will be the first to hear.

After the last newsletter I received the following from a newsletter reader and regular workshop attendee, Claire Thirlwall:

*Thanks for the last newsletter. I agree with your list of inspiring people but it is worth remembering that all over the world people are detained without charge in the most degrading and inhumane conditions, and not just in developing countries under military rule. I was lucky enough to hear Moazzam Begg, who was released without charge after nearly three years in detention in Guantanamo Bay, speak at the Amnesty AGM and he was the least bitter or angry person I have ever heard speak. He said some of the guards were the most humane people he had ever met and that they, as the only people he had contact with, were his saving grace. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/4295993.stm> for more on the story. I am the Chair of the Abingdon Amnesty International Group and I'm always keen to make the point that the work we do is inspiring and not just depressing. To use your analogy, Amnesty members pack the parachute for people who they will probably never meet but who need their help due to desperate circumstances.*

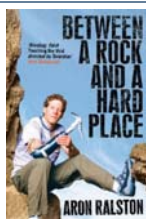
Claire, who is a chartered landscape architect, makes an excellent point and you may wish to visit [www.amnesty.org.uk/amnesty/works.shtml](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/amnesty/works.shtml) to find out what a difference their work makes. And don't forget I love to receive newsletter feedback like this!

On a less serious note, please remember you still have time to view the Newsletter archive and suggest your favourite issue – it has been great to receive nominations in recent weeks. Next month's theme could be timely!

### *Book Review*

A number of commitments in my village mean that, other than a couple of crime novels, I haven't read any books this month. I was tempted to review E-Myth Revisited again, because I believe so strongly that anyone in business should read it, but thought instead I would profile a new magazine for women in business.

The website is <http://www.women4successmagazine.co.uk/> and I do recommend you have a look. It has only just been launched, so you may be able to get a free copy through the website. For any readers who are female and in business – have a look.



Another email from a reader, and another Clare! Clare Lock of Clockstudio (a superb graphic designer, if I may say so!) saw Between a Rock and A Hard Place by Aron Ralston and thought I might like it. Haven't read it – but has anyone else? I have invited Clare to do a guest review next month!

### *Painless Puns*

I have the following inspiring thoughts for you this month:

*Success in life is largely a matter of coming up smiling at the proper moment; defeat is only a means to the ultimate end.*

F.W. Woolworth

*Many of life's failures are people who did not realise how close they were to success when they gave up.*

Thomas Edison

*Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved.*  
Helen Keller

And before you read the joke this month, I want you to know this has no connection to my attempts to get a date back in 1984!

*Man to woman in bar: "If I could see you without clothes, I would die happy."*

*Woman in response: "If I saw you without clothes, I would probably die laughing."*

### *Final Words*

I hope you are able to identify your own 2020 vision, and keep the faith in the face of adversity to see it through. Remember to vote on your favourite issue, and send any other feedback on the newsletter.

Did I mention my team were Champions of Europe? And they have done it for the fifth time? That's far more than their trophy-less challengers in Manchester. I shall continue to enjoy the moment, as long as my wife lets me!

Warmest regards

James Butler

email: [james@painlessbusiness.com](mailto:james@painlessbusiness.com)

voice: +44 1491 659073

web: <http://www.painlessbusiness.com>

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