



GG HOW TO...

GUIDE TO HAPPINESS

No arms, no legs, no excuses

IF ANYONE EVER HAD GOOD CAUSE TO PLAY THE VICTIM, IT'S NICK VUJICIC. BUT DESPITE HIS DISABILITY, HE CAME TO BELIEVE THAT HE WAS "NEVER CRIPPLED UNTIL I GAVE UP HOPE".

Nick Vujicic is one of those people who make you ashamed to have ever complained about being hard done by. Born with no limbs, the indefatigable 28-year-old Australian has completed a university degree; travelled the world; taught himself to skateboard, surf and scuba dive; started a non-profit foundation; established an international career as a motivational speaker; relocated to the US; and even starred in a film (*The Butterfly Circus*). Drawing on his recently released autobiography, *Life Without Limits*, here he explains how he overcame his challenges and how you can tackle yours.

YOU WEREN'T ALWAYS AS UPBEAT AS YOU ARE NOW, WERE YOU?

No, when I was younger I was often filled with dark thoughts, wondering how I could ever have a normal life. When I was 10, I tried to drown myself in the bath, but couldn't go through with it.

YOU SPENT A LOT OF TIME PRAYING THAT YOU'D WAKE UP ONE DAY WITH ARMS AND LEGS.

Yes, I call this the 'If I just had X, I'd be happy' mass delusion. So many of us pursue beauty or success or material possessions in the belief those things will make us happy. But I know people with perfect bodies who aren't half as happy as me, and slum-dwellers in Mumbai who have more joy in their lives than many of those living in exclusive gated estates.

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO BECOME SO CHEERFUL?

At a certain point, we all have to say to ourselves, "Do I want to spend my life wallowing in misery, or do I want to rise above what has happened to me and pursue my dreams?" None of us have much control over being

blindsided by a negative event – being made redundant, being in a car accident, having a relationship end. It's natural to be sad and feel bad when those things happen, but then you've got to pull yourself up and ask, "What's next?"

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE IS SOMETHING YOU MAKE A HABIT OF.

No-one, including me, is upbeat 100 per cent of the time. But I've never come across a pessimist who was also a successful, fulfilled, happy person. Pessimism weakens your will and allows your moods to control your actions. You can't always control your situation, but you can always control the way you look at it. Optimists adjust their attitude to make the best of a situation.



Doctors were able to craft a small left foot for Vujicic, allowing him some mobility.

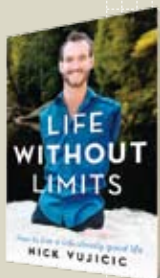
WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE TO THOSE WHO ARE UNSURE ABOUT WHAT DIRECTION TO TAKE IN LIFE?

They should think about what engages them so much that they'd do it for free. If they can find someone who is willing to pay them to do that, they've got a fulfilling career. They should also keep in mind what Helen Keller once said about true happiness coming from "fidelity to a worthy purpose". I've found the greatest

rewards come when you give of yourself, make a positive difference to the lives of others and become a part of something bigger than yourself.

WHAT ROLE DOES SPIRITUALITY PLAY IN YOUR LIFE?

It's played a huge one since I became a Christian at 15. I know for certain that God doesn't make mistakes, but he does make miracles. I am one and you are too.



THE FOUR ATTITUDES THAT WILL TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

IF YOU AREN'T WHERE YOU WANT TO BE, OR HAVEN'T ACHIEVED WHAT YOU HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO ACHIEVE, THE REASON MOST LIKELY RESIDES NOT AROUND YOU BUT WITHIN YOU. IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES, THE FIRST THING YOU NEED TO CHANGE IS YOUR ATTITUDE. THERE ARE MANY ATTITUDES TO CHOOSE FROM, BUT I BELIEVE THE FOUR MOST POWERFUL ARE:

AN ATTITUDE OF ACTION.

When you can't catch a break, try creating your own. When you've experienced a tragedy, try and create some good out of the bad. The first steps are hard, but taking action creates positive momentum. As long as you are moving forward, you are on a path away from the past and towards the future.

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.

We can all claim to be victims of one misfortune or another and when we feel entitled to the good life we feel outraged when bad things happen. But there's no future in that mindset. Instead, you should focus on what you have to be grateful for. If you can't find anything in your present situation, focus on what you'll have to feel grateful for in the future.

AN ATTITUDE OF EMPATHY.

One of the reasons I had suicidal thoughts as a boy was because I was self-centred enough to believe no-one suffered the way I did. When I realised that many people have challenges equal or greater than my own, I began to reach out to others with more empathy. I discovered that when confronted with hard times, it can be helpful to assist someone who's even worse off, rather than focusing on your own troubles.

AN ATTITUDE OF FORGIVENESS.

When I was younger, I couldn't forgive God for my lack of limbs, or the kids who teased me about it. But anger is not designed to be an around-the-clock emotion. It's like keeping the engine revving constantly on your car – it creates a lot of physical and psychological stress. When I worked through the anger and resentment to get to forgiveness, I felt much better physically and emotionally. It lightened my load so I could chase my dreams free from the baggage of the past.

THE BEST *DIGITAL* PERSONAL TRAINERS

TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL TAKE YOUR WORKOUTS TO THE NEXT LEVEL



1. GARMIN EDGE 800
Garmin's top-of-the-line cycling GPS trainer lets you race against previous times while monitoring your heart rate, cadence, speed and much more on the customised screen. The elevation function is especially cool: it allows you to see your current altitude as well as run analytics on all your previous ascents and descents. Once you get home, simply sync the Edge 800 with your computer and post your routes on Facebook via Garmin Connect. (\$499, garmin.com.au)

2. MICOACH PACER
Adidas takes on Nike+ with a smart system that connects a heart-rate monitor, a stride sensor (it clips to your shoe), and a pacer to help you break through your fitness plateaus with personalised, interactive workouts. (\$250, adidas.com.au)

3. NIKE+ SPORTWATCH GPS
A timepiece-cum-trainer, Nike's newest sports watch has a built-in TomTom GPS that works with a stride sensor to provide detailed running diagnostics — which, thanks to a clever touchscreen, you can analyse

during your run. It also connects you to the nearly four-million-strong running club at nikeplus.com, where you can set goals, track progress, meet friends, and find new routes. (\$250, released July 1, nike.com)

4. GYMBOSS
This simple interval trainer times your workouts — whether you're doing CrossFit or weight training — and rest periods, sounding alarms when it's time to switch things up. Minimalist features keep you focused on the activity at hand. (\$29, gymboss.com.au)

THREE FITNESS APPS TO TRY NOW

1_NIKE BOOM You bring the workout, and Nike brings the voices of famous athletes, who speak over your workout mix and offer motivation. (Free, iTunes, Android) **2_STRETCH** A virtual yogi walks you through preloaded, customisable yoga sessions. If you don't know your Cobra from your Cow Face, you can look them up in the database of poses, which also includes the original Sanskrit names for positions and the health benefits for each move. (\$0.99, iTunes, Android) **3_UPBEAT WORKOUTS** Uses your iPhone's accelerometer to calculate your running pace and then select songs from your iTunes library that sync up with your cadence. (Free, iTunes)

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