

IMPERFECTLY
CHASING
DREAMS

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INTRO

I've always wanted to write a book.

Why is the right time to do it now? *The truth is, it isn't.* There will always be reasons, *read excuses*, why it's not the right time to do something we dream of. Today is no better than yesterday. Big dreams are exciting, but also scary. And, if we let it, the fear will always win.

There's only one change that has happened, *in my head*, that has allowed me to chase my dream of writing a book... I decided to stop thinking about what other people will think and **STARTED BELIEVING IN MY STORY.**

That's it!

I hope that in walking you through my own life and sharing with you what I've learnt (*so far*), that you will start believing in yours.

With Love

Veronika

WHO AM I?

Alright, here it is... It's time to introduce this book. I sat down to do this about an hour ago and managed to write just about... *nothing*. On the other hand, a lot of other things did happen. I have gone for a wee three times, complained (to myself) about how my back is killing me (*many times*), and read introductions from all the books I could get a hold of. On top of that, I have been trying to figure out what the banging noise outside is. It's either a very loud squirrel eating nuts or someone trying to fix something. Either way, you need to know.

Who am I?

I'm Veronika. Hey!

At this very moment, I am sitting at my desk in our rented flat in a small ski town in Scotland called Aviemore. I am 27 (*turning 28 next month*) originally from the Czech Republic, and now both a Czech and British citizen. My boyfriend Charlie and I are about to embark on our next journey to go to Australia for a year. This time in pursuit of saving up for a house deposit to buy a house here in Scotland, but more on that later in the book. *I can't tell you everything in the introduction. You wouldn't want to read the rest of the book.* So get comfortable and let's get on with this.

As you may have noticed from the very little you read so far, I want you to have fun reading this book. Some of it will probably be my own inside jokes that you will not get. *I'm sorry about that.* The only thing I can say to that, is that I hope you can humour me there and keep reading because there is a lot of value (*other than the jokes*) in this book.

My approach to this book is to share the wisdom I've learnt through my story. Not because I think it is anything special, *I'd*

say ordinary, but because it makes me a better person every day. We all learn from our experiences and mistakes. *Here is what I've learnt*. I hope that you will find something in it. If you already know or practice some of these things, use this as a loving reminder. If you find something new, take it in and enjoy it. If you simply think I talk nonsense in some parts of this book (*hopefully not all*), you are left with the jokes. *Good luck*.

I have always dreamt about holding my own book in my hands. A book that I wrote, put together, and self-published. About a year ago, I fell in love with reading books again. Everything in the online world is so fast. It forces us to rush and stare at screens all the time. Reading books helps me slow down.

As I'm going to be in Australia for a year and I don't want you to wait, the first version of this book is an ebook. Whether you are already holding an actual hard copy or reading it on your kindle, tablet or any other device, from the bottom of my heart, I HOPE YOU ENJOY IT!

I want you to take it slowly. If you like to read in the evenings, make yourself a cup of tea and put your heating blanket on. *If you don't own a heating blanket, take a break and order one. It's the best thing that has ever been made, trust me! I don't know how I went all the years without it.* And peanut butter. It doesn't matter what time of the day you read. I hope this book will make it easier for you to snatch some time off and dream about what your life would look like if you would just let go of all the limiting beliefs that are stopping you. One by one.

Life is fun so don't take it so seriously. Remember, LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT.

Don't expect this book to magically change your life. It is a long process. A beautiful journey you have to learn to LOVE. Let's start

with mindset and then spice it up with some action. Use this book as imperfect inspiration to chase your dreams, no matter how big and scary they are.

Everything is possible!

DREAM BIG

Never hold back when it comes to dreaming!

Chasing your dreams is not an easy journey, get ready for some slips and bumps. Other people might even try to stop you and make you turn around.

Sometimes out of jealousy, sometimes out of love.

Don't let that stop you!

Have fun.

NOW OR NEVER

The human mind can get very creative when the survival instinct kicks in. We come up with all possible things that will allow us to get out. Before we know it, we turn exciting planning into excuses.

The truth is, there is never a perfect time to do something scary or something we've never done! We'll never feel ready.

We stay in the same job because even though it's not ideal, we are used to it and get regular pay. We live in the same place our whole lives because we inherited a house which means we don't have to figure out where we would like to live by ourselves. We go on holiday to all-inclusive resorts that are closed off from all the 'danger' waiting for us outside the walls in the country we visit. It's dangerous everywhere. The telly box says.

We are afraid of flying because our plane could crash, but we drive cars that have a much higher death rate. We try to cure big scary diseases like cancer whilst creating many more by living a more comfortable and isolated lifestyle. We take pills to fix everything but are not willing to spend a few minutes a day to look after our physical and mental health, because we don't have time.

We often choose pain over pleasure because at least we know what to expect.

We don't like uncertainty.

I wish everyone used the 'NOW OR NEVER' attitude more often and followed their dreams.

The trick is to start with one thing and once you experience the joy and rush of adrenaline, it will fuel your next decision. Your mindset will switch from focusing on the danger of seeing opportunities in the new experience or gaining new skills.

Start with small things. Get more comfortable with being uncomfortable and watch where your life takes you.

A CHANGE OF APPROACH

Sometimes life seems to be either about success or failure.

Are we more driven and competitive than ever before? Maybe it's always been like that but nowadays we can see more of everything and everyone on the internet.

For me, the concept of having either success or failure, *where something in between is not a thing*, was at its peak when I lived in London. I moved there straight out of high school and at first, it completely opened my eyes to so many new things. People were so kind. Everyone was different but people respected that instead of judging. People of all races and ethnic backgrounds were living in one big city and it worked.

Many English people would probably disagree with me right now. But, coming from the Czech Republic where I felt like people, *especially older generations*, seemed to still be stuck in the war and post-war war mindset, fearing any changes; moving to London opened a new world to me.

Later on, when I got to know London and people living there on a deeper level, it started to reveal the not so great sides of it as well. Studying at an art and design university, I learned about the competition and the busy side of London. By the time I finished my degree, I had no confidence. I was no longer of the belief that hard work can get you anywhere. I realised, otherwise, that getting a foot in the door is almost impossible unless someone takes you under their wing and serves you up to the people in power.

It's been over 4 years since I finished my degree and I can tell you

one thing. All this disappointment and bitterness (*Yes, I'm finally able to call it that out loud*) from living in London comes down to the fact that I was following the path I thought I should. This was one reason why I left the Czech Republic. And then, I did the same in London. If I had realised earlier that there are unlimited options for how I can live my life, I would have been so much happier and wasted less time feeling like crap. Instead of chasing my dream Graphic Designer job in a big creative agency, I would have looked around at all the possibilities and tried different things so much earlier.

There is no such thing as failure. You can look at other people's lives, try what they do, and if it doesn't work for you, change your approach! Keep doing that until you find what works for you. You can even create a totally new path. It doesn't need to look like anyone else's. That is success.

It's not about making it somewhere where others expect you to get. It's about making it where you can feel like yourself!

YOUR STORY,
YOUR CHOICE.

“You will enrich your life immeasurably if you approach it with a sense of wonder and discovery, and always challenge yourself to try new things.”

Nate Berkus

GOING TRAVELLING (REAL-LIFE LESSONS)

I thought I was going to come back and feel satisfied with what we had seen and that would be it for life. The reality was that I just got more ideas for places I need to see and experience. Oh man...

Don't just read or watch films about it. You need to go and see it!

The fact that I met so many different people from such a variety of countries in London, I got hungry to see and learn more. The prescribed blueprint of getting a degree and then getting a job I stay in forever, gave me the idea to travel before I land one. After I finished my Bachelor's degree, Charlie and I worked for a year, saved up, and with a one-way ticket to Canada, we started our year-long trip around the world.

We had no idea what to expect. We started with a very rough plan to start in Canada because we know someone there, go around the US and Central America. The dream was to go to Australia and New Zealand as well and if we could fit in some of Asia, that would be great. We got travel insurance for a year but in reality, we just hoped we would be able to travel for 6-8 months and see at least North and Central America.

Let me remind you. Everything is possible. Dream big. Make the decision to chase your dreams and you'll figure it out as you go!

What was our experience in the end? (Money spent was the equivalent of an average person's yearly salary)

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YOU ARE THE CREATOR OF YOUR STORY.

From the very first moment our parents realise they are expecting a baby, they start dreaming about what we will be when we grow up. They think about how they would like us to do this and do that, and what career path they want us to take,

They think about how we will follow in their footsteps or maybe even take over their company because, of course, they want to pass it onto someone who equally cares about it.

With the greatest heart and without even realising it, people create thorough expectations for their kids.

Then as we're growing up, there are expectations not only from our parents but also from society and everyone around us. We get through childhood where we want to try absolutely everything, to school and then university where we're told the exact way to do everything.

It feels awesome because we don't have to figure anything out ourselves. We know exactly what follows and how our lives should look.

Kindergarten, school, high school, university, job, get married, buy a house, have kids, make sure you keep the job and wait until retirement to have the fun. *Spoiler alert: By the time you retire, you have a big family and your grandchildren come to visit you to get money to have fun. So you give it to them because you want them to come again.*

The problem is that so many of us do what is expected of us our

whole lives. We are not happy with our lives or our jobs, but the financial security of the jobs we don't enjoy overpowers all the excitement of potentially doing what we love. We never take control of our own lives. It's easier.

Let me tell you something.

You are the creator of your own story. The captain of your ship.

Every single one of us needs to take ownership of our own lives. We let people tell us where to go and put our lives on automatic mode. Unless you twist your mindset to own your story, nothing will change. *Frankly, you will have to figure out where to hide all the money for retirement so you can actually have the fun you've been saving for.*

Before we go into the next chapter, I want you to think about your career as something of your choice. Not as a thing you do because you are good at it or because it is expected of you. If there was nothing to stop you, what would you like your career to be?

TAKE THE BEST OUT OF YOUR PAST TO CREATE THE LIFE YOU WANT.

We often get stuck in the past, dwelling on the bad things that happened to us, and being unforgiving to what someone said. The only thing that it does to us is make us miserable. *And frankly, that is our choice.*

We look for excuses to be annoyed or angry at someone. Perhaps it makes us feel in power by doing so. Or maybe it's easier than talking about the problem. We have two choices. We can either give the person the benefit of the doubt because they probably didn't mean it. *It's just words and we sometimes misuse them (even easier when you speak a second language).* Or, *each word might mean something else to different people.* Or, we can find a different approach to the conversation and talk to them about it.

It's not about the experience, it's about what you take from it.

Even though I haven't really got any good memories with my father and talking about this part of my childhood brings a lot of negative feelings, there is a lot to be grateful for.

For a long time, I was aware that I could help other people by sharing my story, but it's not an easy topic to talk about. *Sometimes, I even thought that my story was not 'tragic enough' to inspire people. Some people have gone through much harder situations than I did.* I hope that my vulnerability will help you open up and overcome hard moments in your life. Or perhaps it will help you come to terms with your past.

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