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YOU SAY

YOU WANT A

REVOLUTION

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No. Definitely not. I can't write this book. Nobody is interested in these wacky, out-there ideas. They sound extreme, even radical. My book won't be good enough. And even if it is, I don't want to write a self-help book. I don't want to be thought of as some pseudo-spiritual, anti-intellectual, wannabe motivational guru. I want to write a smart book that challenges its readers to think (and one that my father will approve of). But people (agents, publishers, booksellers, and book buyers) only want easy-fix books, so what's the point? And, hey, I've already written three successful business books. Do I really want to risk my reputation on this one? And, do I really have more to say that's worth reading?

That's me—thinking small.

All of us think small thoughts from time to time or maybe even more often than that. But all of us have the potential to think big much if not most of the time. And it is about time we started doing so. No more excuses. I, for one, have stopped making excuses for myself. I finally wrote this book.

The Think Big Manifesto has been a long time coming. I held back. I waited for something I might never have recognized. I thought it was not time, that my ideas were not important. I wanted to do the book perfectly

or not at all. Even though I am the leader of the Think Big Revolution, like everyone, I get sucked into thinking small. And I think that is natural.

Oh, you haven't heard of the Think Big Revolution? You will. Do you think that sounds arrogant or delusional? It's neither. It's me thinking big, yes, and seeing the future for what it can be, not getting bogged down by the past. So, what is this Think Big Revolution and who am I to be leading it?

THE THINK BIG REVOLUTION (AND ME)

One evening, years ago, I was brainstorming with some other business consultants. We were all throwing out ideas about how we wanted to brand ourselves. When I was put on the spot, I said the first thing that came to my mind, "I'm the guy to call when you're tired of thinking small." The entire room became silent, until one of the women said, "Yes, that is so you!" Still, I immediately second-guessed myself, worrying that the tagline sounded too cheesy, stupid, arrogant, or worse, wasn't true.

Yet the more I floated the phrase to others, the more positive the response was. "You make us feel capable of doing bigger things," people said. "That's why we hang

around you.” I had never fully realized the impact I was having on other people. It created a cycle of accountability. If they were relying on me to inspire them to think bigger, then I needed to keep on thinking bigger. Until then, I had always tried to think big in my life—not that it wasn’t a challenge, not that sometimes I didn’t think small. But if other people were looking to me for their motivation to think big, it made it all the more important that I keep working hard at thinking big in my own life. Because my big thinking wasn’t just about me, nor should it be. Thinking big is about me, you, and so many other people—reaching out, inspiring and being inspired, and working together to meet the challenges of our times, to make change, and to create new opportunities.

An important point—so I’ll repeat it right away—is that I do not think big every day. I can’t. It’s unlikely anyone could live by this manifesto every moment. But I try. This is not just our manifesto, the manifesto of everyone who is and wants to think big, it’s my personal manifesto, too. I want to live by this every day. And although it’s unlikely I can live up to quite that standard every minute, publishing this manifesto and leading the Think Big Revolution are ways to hold myself to the standard of thinking big. Just as important, or even more so, to

me is that I will help others think big. My (not so) secret hope is that my son Jake will read this manifesto one day (when he's learned to read) and that he'll live by it, thinking as big as he can about what he has to offer the world.

This is how I became accountable to thinking big. I began hosting a weekly telephone call in which people could come together and share the challenges and successes of thinking big. The number of participants multiplied exponentially, expanding beyond the borders of the United States. Soon the call was so big that I started to call it a revolution to reflect the enormous collaborative power that was being unleashed by the ever-increasing numbers of people who had experienced their own personal revolution from small thinking to big thinking and were now working together with others. Already, the ThinkBigRevolution.com is an online (and offline) social networking community with thousands of members and growing bigger every day.

This manifesto is part of that revolution. Reading this is one piece of a larger puzzle. To get the whole picture you need to get online and become involved. At ThinkBig Revolution.com you'll find revolutions in progress that you can join—issues like health, wealth, spirit, money,

business, fitness, psychology, leadership, and creativity. Revolutions led by some of the most forward-thinking leaders of our time. Maybe you'll be one of them. Nothing there that interests you? Start your own revolution. Bring people together around the issue that challenges you.

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**It's all about thinking BIGGER about who you are and what you
OFFER the world—so start offering the world bigger things in
the form of a new REVOLUTION in progress.**
.....

ThinkBigRevolution.com is just the starting point, a place where you'll get comfortable mingling with other big thinkers. Your town hall or any other online or offline community and networking location may be the next good place to share your big thinking and encourage others to join the revolution. But you've got to start somewhere. And, this manifesto is your ticket, backstage pass, and handbook. Membership is free; it will always be. No one owns big thinking. Try it right now.

Yes, now.

Go to ThinkBigRevolution.com and become a Revolutionary.

I'll wait here.

...

...

You're back. That's great. Onward.

Now that you are tuned in, you are going to start seeing a lot more of that word—*revolution*. It reflects the mood of many in our country. As Toni Morrison wrote in a 2008 letter to the country, "... [T]his is one of those singular moments that nations ignore at their peril. I will not rehearse the multiple crises facing us, but of one thing I am certain: this opportunity for a national evolution (*even revolution*) will not come again soon" [my italics].

Revolution is more than just a political necessity. It is a personal necessity.

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REVOLUTION is about one person at a time experiencing their own personal **EMPOWERMENT** against an existing, deficient (small thinking) system. The deficient system may be something as big as a whole political **SYSTEM**, or more local, like the system of a family, job, or relationship structure. It may just be the way you think about **YOURSELF** and your capabilities.
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Any revolution, global, local, or personal, is about being fully self-expressed in the face of all the forces that conspire to pacify your drive, your hunger to be the most you can be. At first, others may not even know about your revolution. It starts inside you. And that's how it should be. This is your revolution—to think bigger about yourself and what you are capable of. Yet it is inevitable that your transformation will set an example for others. The rest is organic. As people experience personal revolutions, they will join with others to bring about bigger, more sweeping changes. Although this revolution will start with each one of us changing the way we think, this is not a revolution about individual thinking and personal success (though you will achieve more than you imagined possible when you start thinking big); this is a revolution that will bring us together to achieve something even bigger—the changes we need to make a better world.

Like the term *revolution*, *think big* is a phrase we're seeing a lot of now. Kevin Costner's film, *Swing Vote*, imagined the ideal political candidate as a *big thinker*.

It's even showing up in obituaries. Dr. Julius Richmond, who died in July 2008, accomplished many great things

during his lifetime. Among them were founding Head Start, perhaps one of the most successful social programs in the country, which provides educational day care for preschoolers from poor families; testifying in class action suits by plaintiffs who developed lung cancer from secondhand smoke; and taking a stand for gay rights. In lauding his accomplishments, his obituary concluded with these words: “He thought big.” Indeed he did. He started revolutions and rallied others around critical issues.

That’s what the Think Big Revolution is about.

THE THINK BIG MANIFESTO

This book is the manifesto of the Think Big Revolution. You might think that word, *manifesto*, sounds quaint, or worse—dense and overwhelming, but it has never been more apt (and though this book deals with some heavy issues, it does so with lightness).

We live in challenging times. Often, the world seems a dark and dangerous place, with little hope: We are at war; there is an environmental crisis looming on the

horizon; too many people live in poverty; our health care system is failing; intolerance and hatred toward others with different points of view continue to plague us; and the insidious effects of racism have yet to be eliminated. Sure, we always want to improve our personal lives, but we want more than that. We are looking, too, for a way to understand our place in the larger world and to tap the power we possess to change not only ourselves, but also the community we live in. We are hungry to belong. We want to feel that we are part of something bigger than ourselves, that what we do individually matters and has an effect in a larger sense. The television show *Heroes* has been the biggest new hit in the past five years. Its tagline? “Save the cheerleader, save the world.”

The idea of one person at a time, of one person making a difference, is what we are looking for right now. You don't need to wait until you've made your millions at Google to change the world. (Actually, the folks at Google *did* change the world.) You can do it now (just as there's no sense in waiting until you've lost the weight to start your exercise regimen). We, each of us, can make a difference. Only a manifesto truly responds to our desire to make the best of our world. If *we*

don't change the world, who is going to? And if we want to change the world, we need to start with ourselves. And if we change ourselves, changing the world will start to come naturally.

In these pages is a *personal* manifesto for thinking bigger about who we are and what we offer the world. It's a *professional* manifesto, too, of course. After all, your profession is as much a part of your hopes and dreams as your personal life, or it should be if you're thinking big. Even more, here is a *political* manifesto for doing big things with others. No, this has nothing to do with politics as we know it (red states and blue states and all that noise). Before politics became a dirty word, tarnished by an endless stream of self-interested power seekers feeding at a trough of money and influence, it meant something noble. Plato's politics described the process by which groups make decisions. This is a manifesto in that Platonic tradition—one of collaboration, of politics in the best and most effective sense. It is not about one person thinking big alone on the secluded island of their dreams. It is about one person thinking big and showing family and friends and colleagues and others how to think big, and on it goes.

Inspiring others to think big is perhaps the single most important act of any one individual thinking big.

As you think bigger, you will necessarily bring others into the fold. To think big is to desire above all else to help others to think bigger about themselves and what they can do in the world. The Think Big Revolution is about coming together with others to do big things in the world. It is about building a community founded on big thinking. Now.

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