

# BIG BLOKE,

*small decisions*

Lose the weight without diets, gyms or BS -  
from a bloke who dropped 48 kilos and kept it off



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**WAYNE HOPKINS**

# **BIG BLOKE, SMALL DECISIONS**

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who dropped 48 kilos and kept it off*

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*For Meredith -*

*who arrived once some of the inner work was done,  
and is the reason it will never be finished.*

*You make me want to be better.*

## **THE DISCLAIMER**

*The information in this book is general in nature and reflects one bloke's experience and years of coaching observation. It is not medical advice, and it's no substitute for it. Before changing your diet or exercise, especially if you have existing health conditions or take medication, see your GP - in fact, this book actively tells you to, twice. The author and publisher disclaim any liability arising from use of this information. Individual results vary - that's Promise Two.*

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION - FROM ONE BIG BLOKE TO ANOTHER

CHAPTER 1 - SHE'LL BE RIGHT (NO, IT WON'T)

CHAPTER 2 - YOUR FINAL 20 SUMMERS

CHAPTER 3 - WHY NOTHING'S WORKED BEFORE

CHAPTER 4 - YOU'RE NOT GOING ON A DIET, YOU'RE CHANGING BLOKES

CHAPTER 5 - THE SMALL DECISIONS ENGINE

CHAPTER 6 - FOOD WITHOUT THE BS

CHAPTER 7 - MOVE LIKE A BIG BLOKE

CHAPTER 8 - THE DANGER ZONES

CHAPTER 9 - FALLING OFF WITHOUT NICKING OFF

CHAPTER 10 - NUMBERS THAT MATTER

CHAPTER 11 - THE LONE WOLF DIES COLD

CHAPTER 12 - KEEPING IT OFF (THE CHAPTER NOBODY WRITES)

CHAPTER 13 - ALONE OR TOGETHER

FINAL WORD - DAY ONE OF THE REST OF YOUR SUMMERS

START HERE MONDAY

QUESTIONS FROM BLOKES

THE 13 SMALL DECISIONS

APPENDIX - THE STARTER FOOD LIST

NOTES & REFERENCES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# INTRODUCTION - FROM ONE BIG BLOKE TO ANOTHER



*Bay of Islands, New Zealand - Christmas 2010. 130 kilos. The before photo.*

There's a photo of me standing in a car park in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand. Christmas 2010. Green cap, black shirt, hand resting on the hire car, grinning like a man without a care in the world.

I weighed 130 kilos. Minutes after that photo was taken, I set off on a five-kilometre walking track. I made it 300 metres. I felt a pulse hammering in my forehead and I honestly thought I was going to die on that trail - 41 years old, on a holiday paid for by my father's inheritance, six months after we buried him.

I'm smiling in that photo. Of course I am. Blokes like us always are. The camera gets the thumbs up. The hotel room gets the truth.

That night I sat on the end of the bed with my head in my hands and asked myself the question I'd been outrunning for forty years: how the hell did I get here?

If you're reading this, maybe you've had a version of that night. Or maybe it hasn't arrived yet - but you can feel it coming. The belt notch. The stairs. The photo you untagged. The doctor's appointment you keep moving.

Mate, I want to tell you something before anything else: when I was you, I had no idea where to start, and I didn't know anyone who could help. Nobody who'd actually been there. Nobody who'd carried it. That's why this book exists. It's the book I needed and couldn't find.

Let me tell you who you're dealing with, so you know I'm not another bloke with abs shouting at you from a screen.

I was born average - 3.6 kilos, nothing special. Nobody is born a big bloke. Mine was built the usual way: a family where you didn't leave the table till your plate was clean, smorgasbords where you got your money's worth, and a genuine love of food that I carry to this day. By school I was "the big guy." I learnt to make the joke about myself before anyone else could - got pretty good at it, too. Class clown, terrible student, bullied in ways I never told a single soul about until a few years ago. My own mum didn't believe it happened. Oh, it happened. I just buried it and kept going.

Burying it and keeping going became my whole system. It's probably yours too.

I did every diet you've done. Shakes, Lite n' Easy, blood type, whatever someone swore by. And here's the thing nobody says: they all worked. I lost weight every single time. And every single time it came back, because I kept changing my menu and never changed the bloke doing the eating.

I was a roof tiler doing brutal physical work - and I grew. So don't tell me you work hard and that should cover it. I've lived that maths. It doesn't add up.

At 27 the weight helped end my career. At 38 my life fell apart and I ate my way to 130. In between there were wins, businesses, even a marriage - and through all of it, one bloke I could never quite face: the one in the mirror.

Until that car park.

This book is everything I know - everything I did to lose 48 kilos, and everything I've learnt since coaching other big blokes to do the same. Today I'm lighter than I was at fifteen, and my blood work at 57 reads like a bloke in his early forties. I just spent three weeks in Europe eating pasta, pizza and gelato every single day, came home, and was back to my weight within three days - no panic, no punishment, no fear. That's not discipline, mate. That's freedom. That's what's actually on offer here.

A few promises before we start.

I will never tell you to stop loving food. I love food more than you do - I wanted to be a chef, I still do most of the cooking in my house. We're not breaking up with food. We're changing the relationship.

There's no gym membership required, no shakes to buy, and nothing in these pages is for sale. Everything you need to do this on your own is in this book, and you're capable of it.

And I'll be straight with you the whole way - about the bits that are simple, the bits that are hard, and the one mistake that cost me more years than any pie ever did: trying to do the whole thing alone.

You don't need to be ready for all of it today. You just need to turn the page.

That's a small decision. It's how every big result I've ever seen got started.

- Wayne

*NEXT: Chapter 1 - "She'll Be Right (No, It Won't)"*

# CHAPTER 1 - SHE'LL BE RIGHT (NO, IT WON'T)

*Mark started our program the week of his sister's funeral.*

*Let that sit for a second, because "the timing isn't right" might be the most popular verse in the she'll-be-right songbook. Mark was 54, weighing 137 kilos, with a measured body age of 61. His own description of his life at that point: "Just lack of energy. Lack of motivation. I just know nothing else than my day-to-day work, and that was it." Work, home, collapse. Repeat. And then the worst week of his year arrived - and that's the week he began.*

*Twenty-seven weeks later, 32 kilos were gone, and 72 centimetres off his body - 30 of them off the waist alone. At a mate's mum's funeral, blokes he'd known for years didn't recognise him. The morning of our catch-up call he'd already done 12,000 steps before breakfast, the shopping, some jobs at home and a bike ride - this from a man who used to go to work, come home and basically collapse, every day. He was closing in on being under 100 kilos for the first time since his footy days in the late nineties - more than a quarter of a century - and his daughter had talked him into training for an aquathon alongside her: a 1,500-metre swim and a 40k ride.*

*Why him? Why then? Ask Mark and he points at his wife, who'd started a couple of months ahead of him: "I saw how committed she was, and I just said - I just need to step up."*

*No perfect week ever came. He went anyway. That's this whole chapter in one bloke.*

For a couple of years of my life, I ate dinner every night in a mining camp mess hall in central Queensland. Unlimited food, all paid for, and me - a bloke who could put it away with the best of them - going back for seconds and thirds with a hundred other blokes doing exactly the same thing.

If you'd asked any of us how we were going, you'd have got the same answer: "Yeah mate, good. Flat out. She'll be right."

I was 130 kilos. I was not right. And somewhere in the back of my head, behind the jokes and the thumbs up, I knew it. I just had a system for that sort of knowledge: bury it, and keep going.

I'd been running that system my whole life. When I was bullied at school, I never told a soul - my own mum found out forty years later and didn't believe it had happened. Oh, it happened. I just never brought it home. Buried it, kept going. When the weight piled on, same system. When the knees started talking, when the snoring got worse, when I quietly stopped doing things I used to love - buried it, kept going.

Sound familiar?

Here's the thing about "she'll be right." It's a great national motto for flat tyres and burnt snags. It is a terrible health plan. Because on this one, mate - and I say this with love, from one big bloke to another - she won't be right. She never was, and left alone, she never will be. The weight doesn't plateau on its own. The knees don't improve on their own. There is no version of this story where doing nothing ends well, and somewhere in your guts, you already know that. It's why you picked up this book.

## **THE VOCABULARY OF A BLOKE IN TROUBLE**

We've all got the phrases. I used every one of them for decades, so I can spot them from space:

"I carry it well." - Maybe. But your heart doesn't know that. It's doing the cartage either way.

"I'm big boned." - Mate, I was 3.6 kilos at birth. Dead average. Nobody is born a big bloke. I checked.

"I'll sort it out after footy season / Christmas / when work settles down." - There is always another season. There is always another Christmas. Work never settles down. I said this for twenty years and the only thing that changed was my belt size.

"I work hard, I'm on my feet all day - that's my exercise." - I was a roof tiler. Brutal, physical, sweat-through-your-shirt work, six days a week. And I GREW. You cannot outwork what's happening at smoko and dinner. I've run that experiment with my own body. The maths doesn't work.

"At least I'm not as big as him." - The bloke playing the same game at the next barbecue is pointing at you.

None of these are lies exactly. They're something sneakier: they're permission slips. Little notes we write ourselves so we don't have to look at the thing. And blokes our age are world champions at not looking - we were raised on it. Don't whinge. Don't make a fuss. Harden up. Bury it, keep going.

That training made us good workers, good providers, blokes who show up. And it's killing us. Because the strategy that works for a rough day on the tools does not work for a body that's writing cheques it can't cash. Some things buried don't stay down. They compound.

## **THE BIT NOBODY SEES**

Here's what I never told anyone at that mess hall, and I'd bet the house there's a version of this in your head too.

I was the funny one. The big fella with the quick wit, always first with the joke - especially the joke about myself. I learnt that trick at school: if I say it first, it doesn't hurt as much when they do. Thumbs up in every photo. Life of the party.

And privately? I hated what I saw in the mirror so much I'd mostly stopped looking. I knew which chairs to avoid. I knew which shirts told the truth and which ones kept the secret. I knew, at a beach, exactly how to hold a towel. I did the seatbelt check on planes before anyone was watching. Every camera got the grin. The hotel room got the truth.

If that's you - mate, I need you to hear this next part with your full attention, because nobody else is going to say it to you:

You are not weak. You are not lazy. And you are not broken.

You're a bloke who got programmed early - clean your plate, get your money's worth, food is love and food is reward - and then got dropped into a world engineered to feed that programming at every servo, every smoko van, every drive-through, every Friday night. You ran the only strategy you were ever taught: bury it, keep going. It's not a character flaw. It's a strategy that's out of its depth. There's a difference, and the difference matters, because you can't shame a man into changing - I know, because plenty tried it on me, and all it ever did was send me back for thirds.

But you CAN level with him.

## **THE LOOK**

So here's where we start. Not with a diet. Not with a gym. Not with a single food rule - I promise, we're not touching the fridge yet.

We start where I started, in a hotel room in New Zealand with my head in my hands: with one honest look.

Because here's the rule that everything else in this book is built on: you can only fix what you're willing to look at, and you can only be

accountable to the extent you're willing to be honest with yourself. Every diet you've ever done skipped this step and went straight to the menu. That's why the weight always came back. The menu was never the problem. The looking away was.

## ONE SMALL DECISION

Before you read another page, do this. Ten minutes, tops. Nobody sees it but you.

Grab your phone or a scrap of paper and answer five questions, dead honest:

1. What do I actually weigh right now? (If you don't know - and I didn't, for years, on purpose - write that down instead: "I've stopped looking." That's an answer too, and it's a big one.)
2. What are three things I've quietly stopped doing because of my size? Not dramatic things. The beach. The team photo. The kick in the park with the kids. Squeezing into the grandstand seat.
3. What's my phrase - the permission slip I use? Write the actual words.
4. When did I last feel GOOD in my own body? Just the year will do.
5. And the big one. If I was sitting across from you right now and I asked you straight: "What's the one thing you already know you're doing wrong?" - what's your answer?

You didn't even have to think about that last one, did you. It was there before you finished reading the question. It always is.

Write it down, mate. You just told yourself where this journey starts.

She won't be right on her own.

But you can be. And it starts with looking.

*Next: what the weight is actually costing you - and no, it's not what you think. It's not years off the end. It's summers out of the middle.*

## CHAPTER 2 - YOUR FINAL 20 SUMMERS

*The morning Rick hit his goal, he earned it twice.*

*He'd been chasing 90 kilos for weeks - a number that, five months earlier, he didn't believe was possible ("I think I said 100 first... I'd have been pretty happy just under 100"). That morning the scales said 90.2. So he skipped his morning cuppa, went out and walked his steps, came back: 90.05. His wife asked what he was doing as he laced up again. "Today's got to be the day. I'm going back out." Twenty more minutes. Back on the scales: 90.0.*

*Twenty kilos, gone in under five months. Nearly 40 centimetres off his body. Visceral fat down seven points. Work shirts down from 2XL to Large - he'd just spent five hundred bucks on new uniforms, two sizes smaller, because the old ones were hanging off him. A hundred and fifty days without a drink, which he counts as a badge of honour, "for someone who likes a beer."*

*But here's the part that matters. Ask Rick what the reward was - what all of it was actually for - and he doesn't say a number. He says: "To go swimming with my family, without my shirt on." There's a Cairns trip booked. As he told me, grinning: "This summer's the summer."*

*And ask him why he started when he did, and the answer has a father in it. Rick's dad only gave up the drink in his early fifties - after the diabetes arrived. Diabetes got him anyway, and cancer after that. Rick made his move before the catastrophe, not after it. Same family. Different timing. Everything.*

*"The thought of it was a lot harder than actually doing it," he says now. "Once I committed - I'm doing this."*

*This chapter is about what Rick figured out: the weight was never costing him kilos, mate. It was costing him summers. Let's count yours.*

On the 23rd of December 2009, two days before Christmas, I got the phone call.

My dad had lung cancer. The doctors gave him six months.

He died on the 23rd of June, 2010. Six months to the day. Whatever else you want to say about the man, he was punctual.

I was 40 years old, living in a mining camp, carrying 130 kilos, and about to learn the only lesson about time that ever really sticks - the one they

can't teach you in a seminar, though a bloke in a seminar years later would give me the words for it. He said: "The call is coming."

Not IF. When. For every single one of us, at some point, the phone rings and life divides into before and after. Mine came two days before Christmas. Yours might have come already. If it hasn't - it's coming, mate. That's not me being dark. That's just the terms and conditions of being alive.

Here's what I did with my six months, and I'll be grateful for it until they put me in the ground: I spent them with him. We drove the Great Ocean Road together, just the two of us, Geelong to Apollo Bay. Nothing flash. We talked. We laughed about the old road trips from when I was a kid. He got so much of a kick out of it he couldn't wait to get back to the pub and tell his mates. That drive cost almost nothing and it's worth more to me than anything I own.

But there's a part of that story I've never put in a book before.

I did that drive at 130 kilos. I was there - and I'm forever glad I was there - but I was there in a body that was flat-out failing me. Getting in and out of the car was a production. Walking any distance was a negotiation. Six months after we buried him, I couldn't finish 300 metres of a walking track on the holiday his inheritance paid for. I thought I was going to die on a tourist trail, mate. At forty-one.

And standing in that reality, a question found me that I want to hand to you now - the question this whole chapter exists for:

When your call comes - the one where somebody needs you - what kind of bloke is going to answer it?

## **THE ARITHMETIC OF SUMMERS**

Let's do some maths. Not scary maths. Just honest maths.

The average Aussie bloke gets somewhere around 81 years. Say you're 52 right now. That's 29 summers left. Twenty-nine. You can count them on your fingers in three passes.

But here's the bit nobody does: those 29 summers are not all the same quality. There are summers where you can swim in the surf, climb the hill, wrestle the grandkids, walk the golf course, throw the swag in the ute and go. And there are summers where you watch other people do those things from a folding chair - present, but not IN it.

The dividing line between those two kinds of summers, for most blokes, isn't age. It's the body they bring to it. I know 72-year-olds in our

community doing things 50-year-olds can't. I've BEEN the 41-year-old who couldn't do what most 70-year-olds can.

Every extra kilo you're carrying is spending your good summers early. Not the ones at the end - the ones in the MIDDLE. That's the thing the doctors' warnings never quite land: the weight doesn't just threaten to shorten your life someday. It shrinks it RIGHT NOW. It already has. You wrote the list yourself in Chapter 1 - the three things you've quietly stopped doing. Mate, those are summers being spent while you're still alive.

And the load is real, physical, measurable. When you walk, every step puts roughly four times your weight through each knee. Carry 30 extra kilos and your knees are absorbing an extra 120-odd kilos of force, step after step, thousands of steps a day. Your knees aren't "going" because you're getting old. They're going because they've been doing removalist work every day for twenty years without being asked.

Your heart, same deal - it doesn't know you "carry it well." It's pumping for a bigger worksite on the same original equipment, every minute, including right now while you're reading. The snoring your missus has stopped mentioning. The 2am toilet runs. The energy that used to be there. None of that is age, mate. Most of it is cartage.

## **THE BIT THAT STUNNED ME**

When I got home from New Zealand, I did something I'd been avoiding for years: I went to the doctor and got my bloods done.

Prediabetic.

Now - looking at everything I've told you, that result should have surprised me about as much as sunrise. And yet I sat there absolutely STUNNED. Because there's knowing in your guts, and then there's seeing it in ink with your name at the top of the page. They're different animals. The guts you can bury. The ink doesn't negotiate.

And here's the part I need you to hear, because it's the hopeful part: that number moved. I'm not prediabetic anymore - haven't been for years. The asthma I'd had my whole life, the Ventolin I carried every day since I was a kid? Gone - I don't even own one now. I used to catch everything going around; I haven't been properly sick in years. At 57, my blood work reads like a bloke in his early forties.

I'm not telling you that to skite. I'm telling you because the machine you're driving is SELF-REPAIRING - extraordinarily, stubbornly self-repairing - and it starts repairing shockingly fast once you stop the damage. The summers you think you've already lost? A good chunk of

them are refundable, mate. Mine were. But you can't get the refund without doing the sums first.

## **DATA OVER DRAMA**

So this chapter ends the way the last one did - not with a diet, but with a look. Last chapter you looked in the mirror. This time we look at the ink.

*One more set of numbers before you decide this chapter is being dramatic. Krystel, one of the women in our community, grew up in a proud Samoan family - the kind where everything is celebrated with food, and plenty of it. In her extended family in New Zealand there were twins - two boys she'd known her whole life. Both died of heart attacks, a couple of years apart. Neither made it to thirty. "A heart attack before 30," she says, and lets it hang. "I don't want that for me, or for my kids - but I also don't want it for anyone else in my family. I know that doesn't have to be how it is." She's 28 kilos lighter today. Her summers arithmetic changed the day she decided it didn't have to be how it is. Yours can change tonight.*

## **ONE SMALL DECISION**

This week - not after footy season, not in the new year - book a blood test. Ring your GP, or book online, and get the full workup: blood sugar, cholesterol, blood pressure, the lot. It costs you one morning and a needle.

Then when the results come in, sit with them. Don't panic. Don't spiral. Just replace the story with the numbers. Because here's what I've learned on both sides of this - as the bloke who got stunned in a doctor's office, and as the coach who's watched hundreds of blokes do the same: you cannot beat an enemy you refuse to measure, and the numbers are never as scary as the not-knowing. Even when they're bad, they're better than the dark - because a number can be moved.

There's a saying I've carried with me since my business years, and it's been true of every dollar, every step and every blood result I've ever tracked: WHAT GETS MEASURED IMPROVES. The moment a number is on the page, it starts to matter. The moment it matters, it starts to move. I've watched a 72-year-old move her kidney function from 35 to 65. I've watched blokes come off medication their doctor told them was forever. Every one of those stories started with a needle and a printout.

Your call is coming, mate. The one where your wife, your kid, your grandkid, your mate needs you - needs you strong, mobile, THERE.

Book the test. Find out what kind of bloke is currently rostered on to answer it.

Then keep reading - because next, I'm going to show you why nothing you've tried before ever stuck. Spoiler: it was never because you're weak. You've been running three traps your whole life, and nobody ever showed you them.

*Next: Chapter 3 - Why Nothing's Worked Before: the Start-Stop Trap, Misinformation Overload, and Lone Wolf Mode.*

## CHAPTER 3 - WHY NOTHING'S WORKED BEFORE

*Jayne, 43, mum of two boys, had done them all. Weight Watchers. The 12-week transformations. The 28-day programs. High-protein this, low-everything that - in her words, "a million times over." By the time she found us she was struggling to lose one or two kilos "if I was lucky, and constantly going backwards." She arrived sceptical, and she'd earned it.*

*So listen to what she says now, and notice who's talking - the most experienced dieter in this book: "This program is like nothing you've ever done before. I feel like I can say that only because I feel like I've done them all. All of those programs are missing the accountability part. You really feel like you're being held."*

*Fourteen and a half kilos in about four months - 89.6 down to 75 - and she hit her goal a day early, carrying a back with degeneration at L4/L5 and a compressed nerve the whole way. The scale wasn't even the first thing to move: her skin changed inside the first week, the brain fog lifted in the second - "Hang on a minute. I'm starting to feel really good. I think this guy's onto something."*

*Her verdict on the whole journey: "I'm not going to say it's a diet, because I don't feel like I've been on a diet since the end of September. I feel like I've completely changed my life."*

*Jayne didn't fail Weight Watchers, the 12-weeks or the 28-days. They failed her. This chapter is about exactly how - and why none of it was ever your fault either.*

I'm going to tell you something about myself that sounds like a brag and isn't:

I am one of the most successful dieters you will ever meet.

Shakes? Done them - lost weight. Lite n' Easy? Worked a treat. The blood type diet? Lost weight on that too, don't ask me how. Over forty-odd years I did every program, plan and protocol that anyone ever swore by, and I lost weight on every single one of them. Add it all up and I've probably lost a couple of hundred kilos in my lifetime.

Trouble is, I only ever kept off the last 48.

If losing weight was the skill, mate, I'd have been finished in 1989. And so would you - because I'd bet you've lost plenty of weight in your time too. You already know how to lose weight. Every bloke reading this does. That's the dirty little secret of the whole industry:

You don't have a losing-weight problem. You have a keeping-it-off problem. And they are not the same problem.

Diets attack the first one. Nobody ever showed you the second. So the weight came back - not because you're weak, not because you're lazy, not because you "fell off the wagon" - but because you were caught in three traps that nobody ever named for you.

I ran all three for four decades. Let me name them now, because a trap you can see coming stops being a trap and starts being an obstacle. And obstacles, mate - obstacles we can handle.

## **TRAP 1: THE START-STOP TRAP**

You know this one by its other name: Monday.

It goes like this. You start - properly, all in, obsessed. You're weighing food, walking at dawn, knocking back the beers at the barbecue. It works, because it always works. Then one day life happens - a blowout, a bad weekend, a work trip - and the little voice says the four most expensive words in weight loss: "Well, that's ruined now." And because it's ruined, you may as well finish the chips. And the weekend. And since the week's shot, you'll start again Monday. Or the first of the month. Or January - and mate, here's how predictable this trap is: the fitness industry has an actual name for the day New Year's resolutions die. Quitter's Day. The second Friday of January. They can mark the failure on a calendar before you've even started. That's not a judgement on you - that's proof the start-stop machine runs on rails.

Here's what I finally understood after doing that loop for decades: the blowout was never the problem. One big meal costs you a day. It's the "already ruined" fortnight that follows - that's where the damage lives. The stopping isn't a pause, it's a compounding event. All-or-nothing sounds like high standards; it's actually a demolition clause. You wrote it into your own contract, and it triggers every single time you're human.

Blokes with 40 kilos to lose don't need a perfect run. They need a plan that expects the bad weekend and survives it. In our community we've got a catchcry for it, and I want you to start carrying it now: PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION. You'll hear it again in this book - it's load-bearing.

## **TRAP 2: MISINFORMATION OVERLOAD**

Quick quiz. Are carbs bad? Is fat bad? Should you be fasting? Is breakfast the most important meal of the day or the first thing to cut? Keto, 5:2, paleo, carnivore, shakes, seed oils, "just move more" - mate, I've watched the gospel change more times than the footy rules.

Here's what that avalanche of contradiction does to a bloke: it gives him a perfect, bulletproof reason to do NOTHING. "The experts can't even agree" - I said it myself for years, usually with a pie in hand. And when I did act, the confusion made me a fad-hopper: six weeks of this, a crack at that, always chasing the new thing, never long enough on anything for it to become who I was.

Now ask yourself why the confusion never ends. Follow the money, mate. An industry that solved your problem permanently would be out of business by Friday. Confusion is the product. Every January needs a new revolution to sell, which means last January's revolution has to get demoted.

Meanwhile, here's the thing that finally set me free: the boring basics that actually work haven't changed in fifty years. There's maybe a handful of things that matter, they're not complicated, and no one can sell you a breakthrough about them because they're free. We'll get to them, and when you read them you'll be almost disappointed - they're that unglamorous. Good. Unglamorous is what sticks.

### **TRAP 3: LONE WOLF MODE**

This one's ours, mate. This is the bloke trap.

When I finally decided to lose the weight, do you know how many people I told? None. Not a soul. I did it in secret - and if you look at it honestly, the reason is a bit sad: I kept it quiet so that nobody would know if I failed. I was protecting the exits. Thirty years of being "the big guy" who made the joke first had taught me never, ever to be caught trying.

Sound familiar? We're trained for it from the schoolyard: don't whinge, don't make a fuss, handle it yourself. Bury it, keep going. So we diet in secret, white-knuckle it on willpower alone, and fight every single battle - the servo at 3pm, the fridge at 10pm, the "go on, have a beer" - completely alone, in our own heads, where nobody can see the score.

And here's the bit that makes Lone Wolf Mode almost rational: the culture doesn't just leave you to change alone - it actively polices the exits. A mate of mine in western Queensland knocked back a beer at a barbecue a few years back. True story: someone asked him if he had CANCER. Think about that, mate. In this country, a bloke turning down one beer reads as a terminal diagnosis before it reads as a decision. He didn't have cancer. He'd simply made a different decision, chasing a different outcome. But when that's the interrogation waiting at every barbecue, is it any wonder we change in secret - or don't change at all?

Here's why the secrecy fails, though, and it's got nothing to do with toughness. When no one's watching, every decision gets renegotiated. Every smoko is a fresh debate with a very persuasive bloke who lives in your head and loves pies. Willpower isn't a tank you're short of - it's a muscle that exhausts, and alone, it's the only muscle you've got. And when the slide starts - and it always starts quietly - there's no one positioned to notice for months. By the time it's visible, you're ten kilos back and deep in Trap 1.

I am the last bloke on earth who can judge you for this one. I did my first big loss - 35 kilos - completely alone, with a booklet and a pedometer. It worked. It also nearly didn't hold, more than once, and I spent years quietly afraid of the creep because the only bloke guarding the result was the same bloke who caused the problem. There's a chapter coming on what finally ended that fear. It's the most important one in the book.

## **THE MACHINE OF THE THREE**

Now watch how the traps work together, because they're not three separate problems - they're one machine:

The misinformation gets you chasing a new extreme plan. The extremity guarantees a start-stop blowout. The blowout produces shame, and shame drives you deeper into lone wolf secrecy - where nobody can catch the slide, so it runs all the way back to the start, plus a couple of kilos for interest. Around and around, for decades, while you blamed the only component in the system that was never faulty: yourself.

Read that again, mate: the machine was rigged, and you were never broken. Take the shame off your shoulders - it was never yours to carry, and it never helped you carry anything else.

But I'm not going to leave you wrapped in a warm excuse either, because that's not what this book is, and it's not what I'd say to you across a table. So here's the line I need you to hold onto, and it's got two halves that only work together:

## **THE TRAPS WERE NOT YOUR FAULT. BEATING THEM IS STILL YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.**

Fault looks backward, and there's nothing for you back there but guilt - and guilt, mate, is useless. It's just shame doing laps. Responsibility looks forward, and it's a completely different animal: it's power. Nobody built this machine to hurt you, and nobody else is coming to walk you out of it. Not your missus, not your doctor, not me. There's a line I've lived by for thirty years: if it is to be, it is up to me. The bloke who blames himself stays stuck. The bloke who excuses himself stays stuck too - he's just

more comfortable. The bloke who owns the next decision - not the last forty years, just the next decision - that's the bloke who moves. That's all responsibility means here: you take the wheel from today, guilt-free, eyes forward.

## **ONE SMALL DECISION**

Get the pen out again. Think back over your last three serious attempts - the ones where you really had a go. For each one, answer honestly:

Which trap killed it?

Was it the blowout-that-became-a-month (Trap 1)? The fad that fizzled or the confusion that stalled you (Trap 2)? Or did it die quietly, alone, with nobody even knowing you'd been trying (Trap 3)?

Most blokes find one trap with their name all over it - their primary trap. Write yours down under your answers from Chapter 1. That's not self-criticism, mate; that's reconnaissance. You've just mapped the enemy.

And now that you know what's been beating you, we can finally start building what beats IT. But fair warning about the next chapter: we're still not touching the fridge. Because the first thing we build isn't a menu.

It's the bloke.

*Next: Chapter 4 - You're Not Going on a Diet, You're Changing Blokes.*

## CHAPTER 4 - YOU'RE NOT GOING ON A DIET, YOU'RE CHANGING BLOKES

*Ten weeks into our program, seventeen kilos down, Andrew caught himself thinking something remarkable.*

*"I had this story in my head. I kind of went: hang on a minute - but I can't lose weight."*

*Say it out loud and you can hear how absurd it is. A man carrying seventeen fewer kilos than he was ten weeks earlier, mid-transformation, photos to prove it - and the old program was still running in his head: I can't lose weight. He'd carried that story for what he calls twenty, thirty years, with the full supporting cast: "Oh, but I've got big bones. And metabolism..." All the classics.*

*Then came what he calls the winning conversation: "While it was hard, it was also like - yeah, but that's not true. Because I just did. And I still am. And I now know how."*

*By the time we recorded his story he'd lost 20.3 kilos in ten weeks and 35 centimetres off his body - a ruler plus a bit. Or in Andrew's preferred unit of measurement: he'd worked out a shoebox holds about sixteen 500-gram blocks of butter, so - "I've lost two and a half shoeboxes." A clever, corner-cutting businessman his whole life, he'd stopped cutting corners for the first time ("I just followed the bouncing ball"), and the bloke who spent three decades believing he couldn't lose weight now says: "I now have a process I can use anytime, going forward."*

*Nothing about Andrew's body was broken. A story was. This chapter is about finding yours.*

Five months after that hotel room in New Zealand, I stood on the scales and watched a number come up that started with a nine.

Under a hundred kilos. For the first time in TWO DECADES. Thirty-five kilos, gone in five months. You'd think I stood there feeling like a new man.

I'll tell you what I actually felt, mate, because it's the whole reason this chapter exists: I felt like THE FAT KID WHO'D PULLED OFF A TRICK.

Because that's who I was. Not on the scales - in my head. I'd been "the big guy" since primary school. Forty years of it. The armour, the jokes, the towel at the beach - you don't hang all that up because a number changed. Somewhere in those forty years I'd stopped HAVING a weight problem and started BEING one. I'd told you earlier in this book: I was

resigned to it. I had always been the fat kid. That wasn't a description of my body, mate. That was my identity. And identity doesn't read scales.

And it doesn't read mirrors either. I'll tell you how deep this goes: I was down FOUR PANT SIZES and when I looked in the mirror, I still literally saw the fat kid looking back. Not felt like him - SAW him. My own eyes were so programmed to the old bloke that they edited the new one out. It wasn't until someone put side-by-side photos in front of me that I could actually see what everyone else had been seeing for months. Four decades of programming doesn't surrender to a mirror, mate. Remember that - because later in this book, when I tell you to take photos you don't want to take, this is why. Your eyes are the least reliable witness you've got.

Here's why this matters more than anything you'll ever put on a plate:

Every diet you've ever done changed what you ate. None of them changed the bloke doing the eating. And the bloke always wins in the end. You can force a new menu onto an old identity for six weeks, twelve weeks, even five months - I did it plenty - but it's an occupation, not a homeland. The moment life wobbles, the old bloke walks back in, opens his fridge, and resumes normal programming. That's why the weight always came back. You weren't weak. You were OUTNUMBERED - one meal plan against forty years of a bloke.

So before we touch food - and I promise we're nearly there - we change the bloke.

## **THE PARADOX THAT PROVES IT**

Here's something that might sting a bit, because I lived it too.

You're probably not a bloke who fails at things. I'd bet you're good at your work. Maybe you've built a business, raised kids, run crews, handled things that would fold most people. I was the same - while I was carrying 130 kilos, I was also succeeding in careers, doing deals, backing myself in rooms I had no right to be in. Confident as anything... OUT THERE.

So why could I rebuild my confidence in business and stay the fat kid in my body for another twenty years?

Because identity is built room by room, mate. The work I did on believing in myself professionally never once crossed the hallway into how I saw myself physically. In one room I was a bloke who backed himself. In the other room, the 1975 dinner table was still running the show - clean your plate, get your money's worth, you're the big guy, that's just who you are. Different room, different bloke, and no amount of boardroom confidence ever changed a smoko order.

If you've ever wondered how you can be so capable everywhere else and so stuck here - that's how. It's not a character contradiction. It's just a room you've never renovated.

## **SELF-TALK, FOR BLOKES WHO THINK SELF-TALK IS SOFT**

Now let me be dead clear about what I'm saying and what I'm not, because I can feel some of you bracing. I'm not a bloke who believes you can sit in a corner, chant, rub crystals and manifest a new body. (If that's your thing - no judgement, mate, you do you.) I'm a bloke who believes something much more boring and much more powerful: if you keep telling yourself a story for long enough, you will start to behave like the bloke in the story. Tell yourself "I'm fit, strong and healthy" often enough, and you'll start making the decisions a fit, strong, healthy bloke makes - not by magic, by alignment.

And how do I know that works? Mate - because you're doing it right now. You've been running this exact system, flawlessly, for decades. You told yourself you were the big guy, no discipline, always the fat one - and look at you: behaving precisely like the bloke in that story, year after year, decade after decade. You're not sceptical of self-talk. You're PROOF of it. The system works perfectly. You've just had it pointed the wrong way.

Every time you called yourself the fat bastard before anyone else could - that was self-talk. Every "I've got no discipline," every "I always stuff this up," every joke at your own expense that got the laugh and left a bruise - self-talk, self-talk, self-talk. I was the national champion. I'd been making myself the punchline since the schoolyard, remember - say it first so it hurts less when they do. Forty years of it. And here's the thing about a commentator who bags the same player every week, mate: eventually the player starts playing like the commentary.

So no - I'm not asking you to START talking to yourself. I'm asking you to notice the bloke who never stopped, and change the script he's reading. Not to fairy floss. To the TRUTH. Because here's what I learned: the attack ads aren't honest. "I've got no discipline" - mate, you've held down jobs for thirty years, you show up in pain, you've kept promises to everyone you've ever loved. No discipline? It's not even ACCURATE. The only bloke you've ever consistently broken your word to... is you. That's not a discipline problem. That's a priority problem, and priorities can be changed this afternoon.

## **VOTES**

Here's the mechanism that makes this practical instead of woo-woo, and it's the engine this whole book runs on.

Every small decision you make is a VOTE for one of two blokes.

The pie or the sandwich - a vote. The lift or the stairs - a vote. Park close or park far - a vote. Nobody's watching, none of them matter on their own, and no single vote decides anything - that's what makes them feel safe to waste. But mate, identity is nothing more than the RUNNING TALLY. You believe you're the fat kid because the fat kid has been winning elections in your head, uncontested, since 1979.

You don't need a new personality. You don't need to become a fitness bloke, and God knows nobody's asking you to buy lycra. (Unless being a lycra looney turns out to be your thing, mate - full disclosure, it became mine. There was a stretch where I was knocking out 100-kilometre rides with a good mate every Saturday morning, lycra and all... until a woman knocked me off my bike on the Gold Coast. But that's a story for another chapter, and the point stands: the fat kid from 1979 ended up in lycra by choice. Anything's possible.)

You just need the OTHER candidate to start getting votes. And here's the beautiful, sneaky thing I discovered: the tally turns faster than you'd believe. You cast enough small votes for the new bloke and one day - for me it was somewhere between the scales saying 99 and a stranger calling me "mate" instead of "big fella" - you realise the commentary has changed channels. Not because you forced it. Because the evidence did.

That's why this book is called what it's called. The small decisions were never about calories, mate. They're votes. And you're always voting.

*And in case you think this chapter only speaks with a bloke's accent: Krystel carried her version of the story from childhood. "I grew up as an overweight child, and I just thought I was big boned. Or I had Samoan thighs. But I'm seeing that's not actually it. I don't have to be big boned. I don't have to be large." Twenty-eight kilos later, the story went with the weight. Big bones, slow metabolism, "it's just who I am" - different bodies, different accents, same lie.*

## ONE SMALL DECISION

Two parts tonight, and neither goes anywhere near the fridge.

First: for the next 48 hours, just CATCH THE ATTACK ADS. Every time you hear the commentator bag you - out loud in front of your mates or silently in your own skull - don't fight it, don't fix it. Just clock it: "there's one." Most blokes are genuinely shocked by the count. You can't change a script you've never heard.

Second: write one sentence. Not an affirmation - a PLATFORM. It starts with "I'm the kind of bloke who..." and it has to be something you can say

without your own bullshit detector going off. Not "I'm a lean machine" - you'd laugh yourself out of the room. Something true enough to build on: "I'm the kind of bloke who keeps his word - including to himself." Or: "I'm the kind of bloke who's getting his summers back."

Write it down under everything else. That's the candidate, mate. Tomorrow, cast him one deliberate vote - one - and when you do, say quietly in your head: "that's a vote."

That's it. That's the whole ask.

Election's already on, mate. It's been on your whole life.

Might as well run a second candidate.

*Next: Chapter 5 - The Small Decisions Engine: how tiny votes compound into a landslide.*

# CHAPTER 5 - THE SMALL DECISIONS ENGINE

In my first book, I liked to offer people a choice: I'll give you a million dollars cash right now - or one cent today, doubled every day for 31 days. Most people grab the million. It's the wrong answer. The cent, doubled daily, comes out at over TEN MILLION DOLLARS. But here's the detail everybody misses, and it's the detail this whole chapter - honestly, this whole book - turns on:

On day 16 - halfway - the cent is worth \$327.68.

Half the month gone. Three hundred bucks. If you didn't know how compounding works, you'd say the experiment was failing. You'd quit. And if you quit on day 16, you don't get half of ten million, mate. You get nothing.

Now swap the currency. Because your body runs on exactly the same maths.

A ten-minute walk is worth NOTHING today. Swapping the Coke for water at smoko - nothing. One decent night's sleep - nothing. You can't see any of it on the scales tomorrow, and that's precisely why you've always cancelled these deposits and gone looking for something dramatic instead. But stack those nothing-decisions daily and let them double quietly in the background, and they become the 48 kilos, mate. They become the blood work of a bloke fifteen years younger. They become Europe with gelato and no fear. Every result I own was purchased one worthless decision at a time.

The trap is that the middle looks like failure. Day 16 always looks like \$327. Week three of walking always feels pointless. That's not a sign it isn't working - that's what working LOOKS like from the middle. Every compounding curve on earth is boring at the front, invisible in the middle, and vertical at the end. The blokes who transform aren't tougher than you. They're just the ones who kept making deposits through the boring bit.

## NINE HITS PER HUNDRED

Let me give you the margin we're actually playing for, because blokes wildly overestimate what's required.

Tony Gwynn is one of the greatest hitters baseball ever produced - a Hall of Famer, a legend. Career batting average: .338. The AVERAGE major

leaguer hits .250. So the difference between an immortal and a bloke nobody remembers is 34 hits per hundred versus 25.

NINE EXTRA HITS. PER HUNDRED ATTEMPTS. That's the whole gap between average and all-time great.

Not perfection. Not even close to perfection - Gwynn FAILED two times out of three. Just nine better outcomes per hundred, repeated for twenty years.

Now count your food decisions. And I don't mean meals, mate - the 35-odd scheduled meals in your week are just the fixtures list. The real game includes the snacks, the smoko van, the servo run, the boredom eating in front of the telly - some researchers reckon we make a couple of HUNDRED food decisions a day without even clocking them. And then there's the special category: the decisions you make with a few frothies under your belt. You know the ones. You sit down all virtuous at dinner planning the salad with the nice lean protein and - yeah right, we both know how that story ends: the greasy 2am kebab. Well... at least it did when you were younger. These days you've been asleep for six hours by then, so the kebab misses you on a technicality. (Take the win, mate. That's a vote too.)

Point is: with that many decisions on the board, you don't need to win them all. You never did - that was Trap 1 talking. You need nine more wins per hundred. Swap a Coke here. Halve the chips there. Sandwich instead of the pie twice a week. Boring, invisible, laugh-proof stuff - Hall of Fame margins, mate. The big blokes I coach who lose 10 to 18 percent of their body weight in the first twelve weeks aren't living on lettuce and hate. They're hitting singles, every day, and letting the maths do the heavy lifting.

## **INTENSITY IS A TRAP WEARING A CAPE**

Now for the thing nobody says to blokes like us, and it might be the most freeing paragraph in this book:

Stop trying to be intense. Intensity is what's been killing you.

Every big attempt you've ever made was intense. The brutal January gym program. The starvation diet. The boot camp your brother-in-law swore by. All muscle-and-hate, all impressive for a fortnight, all dead by March - because intensity is a sprint, and you're in the longest event there is - it runs for the rest of your life. You don't need a program you can survive for six weeks. You need a way of living you'd happily trade your entire life for - because that's exactly what you're doing.

Crash diets are the get-rich-quick schemes of the body, mate: built on hype, not habits, and they end the same way every scheme ends - back where you started, minus the fee, plus interest.

And for a big bloke specifically, intensity isn't just fragile - it's dangerous. At 120 kilos, the boot camp doesn't forge you, it INJURES you, and there's no faster road back to the couch than a busted knee with a side of "I told you this was stupid."

Here's the engine's rule, and I want it on your fridge: CONSISTENCY BEATS INTENSITY, EVERY TIME, OVER ANY DISTANCE THAT MATTERS. The bloke walking ten minutes every single day buries the bloke doing boot camp three Januaries in a row. It's not close. I've watched it hundreds of times from both sides - I was the January bloke for thirty years. The day I became the every-day bloke instead is the day the whole thing turned.

## **YOUR ONE THING**

So here's how we build your engine. Not a program - a floor. And the floor is exactly one tile.

You're going to pick ONE DAILY NON-NEGOTIABLE. One. Not three, not some influencer's 45-step morning routine with the ice bath and the journal prompts, not a "new lifestyle." One deposit, made every single day, no exceptions. Gary Keller wrote a whole book about this principle - it's called The ONE Thing, and in our community that's exactly what we call it: your One Thing. The question we ask is his: what's the ONE thing you can do, such that by doing it, everything else becomes easier?

The entire trick is in how small you make it. The rule: your One Thing has to be so small you could do it on your WORST day. Sick, flogged, flat, filthy on the world - you can still clear this bar. If there's any day imaginable where you couldn't do it, it's too big. Shrink it. A ten-minute walk. The water. One page of this book. Small enough to be laugh-proof - the laughing stops around week six, I promise.

Because here's the job of your One Thing, and it was never fitness: ITS JOB IS THE VOTE. Once a day, every day, you keep a promise to yourself. Thirty days in, that's thirty kept promises from a bloke whose commentator has spent forty years telling him he's got no discipline. The commentator can't survive thirty receipts.

And when the first One Thing has become so automatic it's just who you are - that's when you add the next one. One at a time, stacked, for life. That's how a floor becomes a foundation.

Want to know what the finished foundation looks like? In our community, the whole engine eventually stacks into a morning routine that's ten words, and every one of them starts with W.

WAKE - 6:00am. You snooze, you lose. WEE - you know why. WEIGH - naked, digital scales, same conditions every day. The scales don't need to see you at your best. WRITE - the number goes down in the book and off to your accountability partner before 8:00am. Data shared is data honest. WATER - a big glass. Black tea or coffee if you want it, no sugar. WALK - 5,000 steps before breakfast, an audiobook in your ears if you like. WATER again - this round with fibre. WASH - and while you're in there, say something to yourself that isn't an insult. You've done more before 8am than most blokes manage all day. WHIP UP breaky - real food, off your list. WORK - and get to 12,000 steps by knock-off.

That's it. That's the entire routine, and it quietly knocks over half the tools in this book before most blokes have checked their phone: the scales (data, mate, not drama - we'll get there), the tracking, the water, the walk. No ice baths, no 5am club, no incense. Ten W's.

But hear me clearly: that's where you're HEADED, not where you start. Day one is one W. Pick it.

The scales won't notice your One Thing for a while. Day 16 is coming, and it'll look like \$327, and the old bloke will whisper that it's not working. When he does, you'll know exactly what that whisper is: the middle of the curve, right on schedule.

Keep making deposits.

*And if you want proof the engine holds when life gets messy, ask the community. Jayne ran hers through the chaos of school graduations and work deadlines: "When shit hits the fan, as long as you've got everything already organised, there's no reason for the slip." She was taking protein bars to graduation ceremonies, mate. And Caroline, who's kept 25 kilos off for over two years, will tell you exactly what sits underneath it all: "It starts with a decision, and the commitment to yourself. And then you follow a process. If you're not going to follow the process, it ain't going to work."*

## ONE SMALL DECISION

Tonight: write down your One Thing. Under your platform sentence, under the traps, under all of it. Test it against the worst-day rule - if you couldn't do it hungover, flattened or flat-out, shrink it until you could. Then run it seven days straight, and each time you clear it: "that's a deposit."

One promise. Seven days. That's the engine turning over for the first time.

And now - NOW, finally - the bloke's changing and the engine's idling. Next chapter, we open the fridge.

*Next: Chapter 6 - Food Without the BS: the handful of things that actually matter, from a bloke who loves food more than you do.*

## CHAPTER 6 - FOOD WITHOUT THE BS

*Calum was sceptical, and he'll tell you so himself.*

*"You're telling me I can eat every hour, hour and a half - and I'm just like, how's that going to lose weight?" He'd tried the usual diets, the usual eating regimes. This looked like the opposite of all of them. But he was ten-plus kilos into "going through the motions," unhappy with what he saw in the mirror, and out of better ideas. So: "All right. I'll follow it. I'll do it."*

*"And it just started happening. And I'm just like - this is so weird. But all right. It's working. Keep going."*

*Nine weeks later: 10.2 kilos gone. Visceral fat - the dangerous stuff around the organs, the hardest number to move - down from 12 to 9. Eleven centimetres off his chest, waist and hips. Biological age: three years younger than when he started. Never hungry once.*

*Then one day, training at a mate's home gym, Calum loaded 10 kilos into a weight vest and strapped it on. "Mind-blown with how heavy it felt - and how that's what I used to be carrying. On my body. Every day." He tried pull-ups in it and couldn't understand how he'd ever moved through life under that load.*

*His advice to the bloke reading this? "You might think, how is this going to work? It's counterintuitive. But it works. And I'm happy I took the step."*

*This chapter is the how. Stay sceptical, mate - Calum was. Just read on.*

Before we open the fridge, you need to know who's talking, because this matters more here than anywhere else in the book:

Nobody who hates food wrote this chapter.

I wanted to be a chef, mate - that was the dream before life got in the way. I still do 95 per cent of the cooking in my house, by choice, because I love it. Last month I spent three weeks in Europe eating pasta, pizza and gelato EVERY SINGLE DAY. I have loved food since before I could talk and I will love it until they carry me out. Eating less isn't a strategy to me - it's my worst nightmare. I would rather have root canal surgery than be hungry. I'm not exaggerating for the laugh. Ask my wife.

So when the bloke telling you how to eat is THAT bloke - and he's lighter than he was at fifteen - you can relax. We're not here to eat less joy. We're here to stop the joy running the show.

Now. Every diet book you've ever opened started with a list of what you're about to lose. No beer. No bread. No life. Your shoulders were braced before page two. So let's do the exact opposite. I'm going to hand you a series of invitations instead, and every one of them is going to sound too good to be true.

They're not. I'm the receipt.

## **IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE NOBODY TELLS YOU WHAT TO EAT.**

Where the old line - "this must be good for me, because it tastes like crap" - is dead and buried. Where no coach, no book, no app ever forces a food on you again.

Here's the truth behind that world, and it's just common sense wearing a lab coat: if I told you to eat something you don't like, you wouldn't do it anyway. Nobody ever has, in the history of diets. That's not weakness - that's being a human with taste buds. So instead, the method works like this: there's a list of foods that serve fat loss - a big list, decades of results behind it - and YOU build your own menu from it, out of the foods on it you already enjoy. You become the designer. And before you ask, mate: the list is IN this book. The full starter version, serves and all, is the appendix at the back. Flip there now if you like, then come back. And something quietly powerful happens when you do: you start learning what YOUR body responds to and what it doesn't. Not what some influencer's body responds to. Yours. That knowledge is permanent, mate. Nobody can un-teach you your own body.

## **IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE YOU'RE NEVER HUNGRY AGAIN.**

Society's programming runs one direction: eat less, eat less, eat less - and flog yourself in the gym two hours a day to earn the right. Mate, ain't nobody got time for dat.

And here's the dirty mechanical truth nobody tells you: HUNGER EQUALS BINGEING. Always has, always will. Every starve you've ever done MANUFACTURED the blowout that ended it - you didn't fail those diets, they detonated exactly as designed. Remember Trap 1, the start-stop machine? Hunger is its fuel line. Cut the hunger and the machine starts dying.

IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE I TOLD YOU I LOST 35 KILOS IN FIVE MONTHS - EATING 8 TO 12 TIMES A DAY.

Read it again. It's not a typo. Every 60 to 90 minutes, all day, every day - how many times depends on how long your day runs. I have never been hungry on this method, not once in nearly a decade, and I say that as the root canal bloke.

How can that possibly work? Here's the picture that made it click for me. Think of your body like a fire. When you build a fire, do you drop one enormous log on it and walk away? No - it smothers, smokes, burns lousy. You feed a fire SMALL AMOUNTS, REGULARLY, and it burns hot and clean all day. Your metabolism is that fire. Three big logs a day - or worse, one giant evening log after starving - smothers it. Small, regular fuel keeps it ROARING.

And there's a second part: what the fire burns. Most blokes' fires run on carbs and sugar - not because they're weak, but because modern food has sugar hidden in EVERYTHING, so society lives there by default. The method's whole job is to flip your body from a CARB-BURNING MACHINE into a FAT-BURNING MACHINE - a fire that, between those small regular feeds, turns to the fuel you're carrying around your middle and burns THAT. Which brings up something important: the goal was never "weight loss," mate. THE GOAL IS FAT LOSS. They're different things - the scales can't tell fat from muscle from water, which is exactly why we'll measure more than scales when we get to the numbers chapter. You want to keep the muscle, feed the fire, and burn the fat. That's the entire game.

One rule inside the rhythm, and it's non-negotiable: EVERY TIME YOU EAT - every single one of those 8 to 12 - YOU INCLUDE SOME PROTEIN. And before you picture a 350-gram ribeye ten times a day: no, mate. A smallish portion. An egg. Some chicken. A bit of tuna. Protein comes to every sitting; it just doesn't need to arrive in a wheelbarrow.

Now, I can already hear somebody jumping up and down in the back row about "all that protein being a problem." Settle, mate - this isn't HIGH protein. It's ADEQUATE protein. Most people are walking around in a protein-deficient state and haven't got a clue - the jumping-up-and-down crowd included. And here's why this one rule earns its non-negotiable status: the protein is the reason this way of eating burns ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY BODY FAT while holding onto your lean muscle. Remember - fat loss, not weight loss. The scales just report "less bloke." The protein makes sure the bloke you're losing is the fat, not the muscle. That's the way we eat, and it's the whole difference.

One more thing about hidden sugar, and I say this as the bloke whose share house bought TEN 2-LITRE BOTTLES OF COKE A WEEK: the fastest carb-burner fuel of all comes through a straw. Liquid calories are food that never fills you - they just keep the fire burning sugar and the fat

locked in storage. This is why the routine runs on water and the coffee goes black, no sugar. If you did nothing else from this chapter but move your drinks to water, mate, you'd feel the fire change inside a fortnight.

**IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL FAT-LOSS TOOLS KNOWN TO MAN IS FREE, AND COMES OUT OF YOUR TAP.**

No powder, no subscription, no discount code. Water, mate. The target is 2.5 to 3.5 litres a day, spread across the day - and before you tell me that's a lot, remember you used to knock over two litres of Coke without blinking. You've already got the capacity; we're just changing what's in the glass.

Why does it matter so much? Because the fire we're building - the fat-burning machine - runs wet. Burning fat is work your body does with water, and a dry engine burns lousy. And here's the practical kicker every big bloke needs tattooed somewhere: a fair chunk of what you've been calling hunger is actually thirst wearing a disguise. Next time the 3pm "hunger" hits, drink a big glass of water and wait ten minutes. You'll be shocked how often the hunger was a bloke who just needed a drink.

That's why water opens the morning routine and shows up twice in it. Easiest votes you'll ever cast - they're free and they're wet.

**IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE THE PROBLEM WAS NEVER WHAT YOU ATE.**

Back in Chapter 1, I asked you the question you didn't need to think about: what's the one thing you already know you're doing wrong? Fair's fair - here's my answer, the one that ran my whole life: "I eat reasonably well. I just eat WAAAAY too much."

Sound familiar? Most big blokes aren't living on rubbish. We're living on DOUBLE SERVES of decent food - programmed at the 1975 dinner table to clean the plate and get our money's worth. Which is why every program that only talked about WHAT to eat missed us completely. The lever is WHAT AND HOW MUCH - the list pairs foods with serves, so you're never counting calories. Calorie counting doesn't work, mate - nobody logs lettuce in an app for forty years. Knowing your serves is a skill you learn once and own forever, like knowing your shout at the bar.

**IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE NOTHING IS BANNED.**

No food group exiled. No carbs-are-poison sermon. No list of foods you'll never touch again. Because here's my flat rule after watching hundreds of journeys: ANY PROGRAM THAT EXCLUDES AN ENTIRE FOOD GROUP IS PROBLEMATIC AND UNSUSTAINABLE. Your body genuinely

needs a bit of everything - and more to the point, so does your LIFE. A method that can't survive a birthday, a barbecue or a bowl of pasta in Rome isn't a method, it's a sentence. You've served enough of those.

## **THE DISAPPOINTING TRUTH**

I warned you back in the traps chapter that when you finally saw what actually works, you'd be almost disappointed. Well, here it is: eat foods you like from the proven list in the back of this book, in the right serves, with a bit of protein every time, every 60 to 90 minutes, drink the water, keep the fire burning. No secrets. No revolution. Nothing to buy. Just levers - the same boring, unglamorous, compounding levers that took 48 kilos off the root canal bloke.

Good. Unglamorous is what sticks.

## **ONE SMALL DECISION**

Tonight, before bed: build TOMORROW'S MENU - one day, that's all - straight off the starter list in the appendix at the back. Write down foods you **ALREADY ENJOY** that you also know, honestly, serve you (you know the difference, mate - Question 5 proved it). Put a small portion of protein in every eat. Space them so you're eating something every 60 to 90 minutes of your working day. And keep the water bottle going - 2.5 to 3.5 litres across the day.

Then tomorrow, run the day and notice one thing and one thing only: **YOU WERE NEVER HUNGRY.**

That's it. One designed day. Because a bloke who's eaten well for one day without suffering has just lost his last excuse - the belief that this has to hurt.

It never did.

*Next: Chapter 7 - Move Like a Big Bloke: why we start with walking, not gyms - and the step numbers that actually matter.*

# CHAPTER 7 - MOVE LIKE A BIG BLOKE

*Dave, 53, has ridden a pushbike across Australia. Twice. Perth to Newcastle, over 4,000 kilometres, about a month in the saddle each time - 165 to 170 k's a day, day after day. One of those rides raised close to a million dollars for kids' charities. And before each crossing sat 18 months of training. This is not a bloke who's afraid of hard work.*

*Six and a half weeks into our program, Dave stepped on the scales and went quiet. He was the same weight he'd been at the end of that ride - the weight that had taken 18 months of training plus a continent's worth of pedalling to reach.*

*"Wow. Okay. So I didn't have to ride across the country for that."*

*Ten kilos gone in under seven weeks, a month ahead of the goal he'd set himself. And the exercise that did it? A morning walk with his wife. Every day, rain or shine - and Perth people are not used to rain. Forty-five days in, they hadn't missed one. Five thousand steps minimum, before the day got its hands on them.*

*If a bloke who's crossed Australia twice on a pushbike didn't need to smash himself to lose the weight, neither do you, mate. This chapter is about the walk.*

Let's start with a bloke I know well.

At 41, he couldn't finish 300 metres of a flat walking track. Pulse banging in his forehead, thought he was going to die on a tourist trail in New Zealand while families with prams strolled past him.

A few years later, that same bloke was knocking out 100-KILOMETRE BIKE RIDES on a Saturday morning. Lycra and all, mate - full kit, no shame. Same legs. Same heart. Same bloke who'd spent forty years believing exercise was a punishment his body couldn't cash.

I'll tell you how he got from one to the other, and I'll warn you now: it's going to sound too small to work. That's the point. Everything in this book sounds too small to work. That's WHY it works.

## FIRST, THE DIVORCE

Before we take a single step, we need to end a toxic marriage - the one between exercise and food that every failed program officiated. You know the deal: exercise to "burn off" what you ate. Earn your dinner. Punish the pizza. The treadmill as confessional.

Mate, we're divorcing those two, today, forever. Here's the settlement: THE FOOD DOES THE FAT LOSS. THE MOVEMENT BUILDS THE BLOKE. They work different jobs on different sites.

You already know the proof from my own life: I was a roof tiler - brutal, physical, six-days-a-week work - and I GREW. You cannot out-move your fork; the maths has never once worked in the history of big blokes. A pie is ten minutes in the mouth and ninety minutes of hard walking, and nobody's ever paid that invoice consistently. So if movement is a lousy eraser - and it is - then every program that sold it to you as one set you up to fail TWICE: once at the eating, once at the punishing.

So what's movement actually FOR? Five things, and not one of them is burning off dinner: it STOKES THE FIRE (a body that moves regularly keeps that fat-burning machine from Chapter 6 idling hot instead of cold); it PROTECTS THE MUSCLE while the fat leaves - movement plus that protein-at-every-eat rule is the tag team keeping your engine intact; it CLEARS YOUR HEAD - more on that in a second, because it may matter most; it REBUILDS THE MACHINERY - joints, back, balance, all the stuff you'll need for those summers we counted; and it casts a DAILY VOTE for the new bloke, on legs, in public.

## **WHY WALKING WINS**

Now, which movement? For a big bloke starting out, the answer isn't the gym. It's not boot camp, not the boxing class your brother-in-law loves, not an app with a shirtless bloke yelling.

IT'S WALKING. And not as a consolation prize - as the deliberate first choice, for reasons that are specifically about US:

Your joints are already doing removalist work - remember the maths, roughly four times your bodyweight through each knee per step. At a walk, they can handle the shift and STRENGTHEN. At a run or a jump-squat class, a big bloke's knees and back are one bad landing from six weeks on the couch - and the couch is where every comeback dies. Walking is the strongest move precisely BECAUSE it's the gentlest one.

There's no audience. Half the reason blokes our size never darken a gym door is the feeling of being watched (nobody's watching, but try telling the commentator that). A walk has no mirrors, no lycra requirement - that comes later if you're unlucky - no membership, no burpees. It's just you, shoes, and the street you already live on.

And it passes the worst-day test. Remember the One Thing rule - small enough to do on your worst day? Nobody's ever too flogged, too crook or

too filthy on the world for ten minutes of walking. Which means it might be the strongest One Thing candidate in this whole book.

## **THE NUMBERS**

Here's the progression, and note the shape of it - floors that grow, never bars that break:

**START: TEN MINUTES A DAY.** That's it. Out the door, five minutes away, five minutes home, same time every day so it welds itself to something you already do - for most of our community, it's first thing, straight after the scales, before the day can raise objections. And if ten minutes is genuinely beyond today's body, then hear this and hear the tone it's said in: **WALK TO THE LETTERBOX.** I'm not joking and I'm not being cute. The bloke who walks to the letterbox every single day beats the bloke planning a 5k for next Monday. Every time. Votes, not distance.

**BUILD: 5,000 STEPS BEFORE BREAKFAST.** Not this week - eventually. The morning walk grows on its own; ten minutes becomes twenty because you feel good and the podcast wasn't finished. In our community the morning number lands around five thousand steps, done before most blokes have checked their phone.

## **WHY BEFORE BREAKFAST? (A LITTLE SCIENCE, NO LAB COAT)**

There's a reason the morning walk happens before you eat - in our community we call those steps **B4B: BEFORE BREAKFAST** - and it comes down to a perfect storm of two things.

First: you're in a fasted state. Overnight, the fire's burnt through its fuel - the tank is empty. So when you walk before breakfast, your body reaches for the only fuel it's got left: **BODY FAT.** The exact stuff we're here to burn, first in line, no queue.

Second - and this is the bit that'll surprise you - the pace matters, and for once it's in your favour. Your best fat-burning happens at a gentle heart rate: around **60 PER CENT OF YOUR MAXIMUM.** Quick maths: 220 minus your age gives your max. I'm 57, so mine's 163 - and 60 per cent of that is around 96 to 98 beats a minute. Mate, that's a brisk walk. That's it. Go much harder and your body actually switches systems - you're training cardio fitness, which is a fine thing but a different job, and you've walked yourself right out of the fat-burning zone. The deepest fat burning lives in zones 1 and 2 - the gentle ones. No watch? Use the talk test: if you can hold a conversation but you know you're working, you're in the slot.

Put the two together - empty tank, perfect heart rate - and B4B is the cheapest, easiest fat-burning window of your entire day. And savour this, big fella, because it'll never happen again: this is the first program in history where the scientific instruction is "SETTLE, MATE. SLOW DOWN." The slow bloke burns more fat than the fast bloke. Walking wasn't the consolation prize after all - it was the weapon.

LIVE AT: AROUND 12,000 FOR THE DAY. The morning does the heavy lifting and ordinary life does the rest - and this is where I tell you that EVERYTHING COUNTS, because movement isn't an event, it's a setting. Park at the far end. Take the stairs. Walk the course instead of taking the cart. Mow your own lawn. Kick the footy with the kids instead of umpiring from the deck. None of it is "a workout" - all of it is the machine, running, the way it was built to.

Your phone counts steps already, mate. That's your scoreboard - and you know the rule by now: what gets measured improves.

## **THE WALK PAYS TWICE**

Here's the part I never expected when I started: the walk fixed my head before it fixed my body.

There's something about a bloke, alone, moving, first thing - the phone in your pocket, the day not yet started - that quietly does what all the burying never did. Problems un-knot on a walk. Tempers settle. The commentator pipes down. I've solved more business problems and buried more stress on morning walks than in any office I've owned. For blokes who were raised to never talk about the hard stuff, the walk IS the therapy we'll actually attend.

And I'll tell you something from the coaching side that still stuns me: the number of clients who own a genuine shift in their MENTAL HEALTH - their words, not mine - just from adding the morning walk to the equation, is crazy. I won't pretend to know the science behind it. But I'll tell you what I reckon it is: it's ticking off a WIN, EARLY, BEFORE THE WORLD COMES AT YOU - which it always does. An American admiral, William McRaven, became famous for telling a graduating class that if you want to change the world, start by making your bed - one small completed task before the day starts swinging. The B4B walk is your made bed, mate. By seven in the morning you've already won once. The world can come at you after that - it will - but it's coming at a bloke who's already on the board.

And you can make the walk pay a third time: plug in something worth listening to. I've walked through hundreds of hours of books and audios that rebuilt my thinking while my feet rebuilt everything else - the same

habit that got me reading again got me learning again. Or ring your mum. Or take the dog, who has been lobbying for this program his whole life. And down the track there's a fourth payment - the walking mate - but that's Chapter 11's business.

## **A WORD ABOUT WEIGHTS (LATER, NOT NOW)**

Here's a promise about your future, and it's one of the strangest side effects of this whole journey: once the fat starts stripping off your frame, your energy doesn't just improve, mate - it SKYROCKETS. And a bloke with energy starts WANTING to do more. Nobody's more surprised by this than the bloke it happens to.

When that day comes, some resistance training will definitely be in your future - because holding onto lean muscle as we age isn't vanity, it's ESSENTIAL. It's the difference between carrying your own shopping at eighty and asking for help, between getting up off the floor and staying there. The protein's already protecting your muscle from the kitchen; down the track, a bit of resistance work protects it from the calendar.

But hear the sequencing loud and clear: NOT TO START WITH. Day one is the letterbox, not the bench press. The iron can wait until the bloke who wants it shows up.

And he will. That's the promise.

## **WHERE THE ROAD GOES**

I promised you the bike story. Once the walking became who I was, it grew legs of its own: walks became rides, rides became a Saturday-morning 100-kilometre habit with a good mate, full lycra, the works - the fat kid from 1979, cornering through the Gold Coast hinterland at dawn. That chapter ended the day a woman knocked me off the bike.

But the walking never stopped. And I need you to hear where it went, because you're standing at the start of the same road.

A while back I walked the KOKODA TRACK in Papua New Guinea. If you know, you know - 96 kilometres of mud, mountains and jungle that humbles fit young soldiers, on ground our grandfathers made sacred. I walked every step of it in a body I'd once needed rescuing from on a flat tourist path.

And then I walked the CAMINO ACROSS SPAIN. NINE HUNDRED KILOMETRES. THIRTY DAYS. Thirty-odd kilometres a day, every day, for a month, across an entire country, on the same two legs that gave out 300 metres into a stroll at Lake Taupo.

Sit with those two numbers for a second, mate: 300 METRES. THEN 900 KILOMETRES. Three thousand times the distance. Nobody transplanted my legs. Nobody issued me a new heart. The equipment is identical - the bloke driving it changed, ten minutes at a time.

Now - I'm not telling you to book Kokoda, and God knows I'm not telling you to become a cyclist. I'm telling you what's on the other side of ten minutes a day: OPTIONS. A body that says yes. Yes to the ride, yes to the jungle, yes to Spain, yes to whatever your version turns out to be. That's what you're walking toward. Not a step count. A yes.

One more thing about the walk, and it might be the best thing I can tell you about it.

Some of the most rewarding feedback we get from blokes on this journey has nothing to do with weight. It comes from the ones whose partners join in, or simply get behind what they're doing. The feedback on how much the relationships improve is phenomenal. I can't tell you how many times I've heard it now. A bloke comes in to shed a few kilos and winds up with a significantly better marriage. Who knew that was possible?

It makes sense when you sit with it. That 30 to 40 minute walk together is time the two of you didn't have yesterday. No phones. No telly. No kids hanging off you. Just two people side by side, talking about everything and nothing while the sun comes up. Some couples get more real conversation done in a week of walks than they managed in the whole year before. You met Dave at the top of this chapter. Ask him what those mornings with his wife were actually worth. The ten kilos might not make his top three.

So here's my question, and answer it honestly: when was the last time you and your wife spent 40 minutes together, uninterrupted, just walking and talking?

If you can't remember, that's all right. You've just found one more reason to lace up. The walk's waiting for both of you.

## **ONE SMALL DECISION**

Tomorrow morning - not Monday, tomorrow - TEN MINUTES. Out the door before the day can argue. Same time, every day after, welded to something you already do. If ten's too many, the letterbox. If the weather's rubbish, the weather's rubbish - big blokes are waterproof.

And when you're out there tomorrow, somewhere around minute seven, notice something: you're a bloke who's MOVING - not to erase a meal, not to punish anything. Just a bloke, walking, casting a vote.

The fire's lit. The fuel's sorted. The machine's moving.

Which means you're ready for the real battlefield, mate - because none of this happens in a book. It happens at the pub, at the barbecue, in the work ute, at your brother's 50th. Next chapter: the danger zones, and the playbook for every single one of them.

*Next: Chapter 8 - The Danger Zones: the pub, the barbie, the work trip, footy season  
- scripts included.*

## CHAPTER 8 - THE DANGER ZONES

There's an old military saying: no plan survives first contact with the enemy. Mike Tyson put it better: "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth." This chapter exists because both of them are right.

Every diet you've ever done was written in peacetime, mate. Sunday night, belly full, motivation high - you drew up a beautiful plan. And then Wednesday arrived, and the plan met the enemy: the pub, the barbie, the work trip, the smoko van, your brother's 50th. And it folded like a camp chair - not because you were weak, but because the plan had never once been introduced to your actual life.

Here's the difference this time. This chapter IS the introduction. We're going to walk the battlefield before the battle, zone by zone, and hand you a play for every one of them. Because your transformation doesn't happen in this book, and it doesn't happen in your kitchen. It happens out there - at the exact five or six recurring events where every previous attempt of yours went to die.

### **THE MASTER PLAY: DECIDE IN THE UTE**

One rule sits above every zone, and if you take one thing from this chapter, take this:

You never make the decision at the venue. You make it on the way there.

The bar, with a menu in your hand and mates in your ear and a persuasive bloke in your head who loves pies - that is the WORST negotiating room on earth, and you've been walking in without a position for forty years. So from now on, the decision happens in the ute: before you arrive, you decide WHAT YOU'LL DRINK, WHAT YOU'LL EAT, AND WHAT YOU'LL SAY. Three decisions, made in peacetime, thirty seconds of work.

Why does something so small work? Because you already know: the bloke who decides once beats the bloke who negotiates all night. At the venue you're no longer choosing - you're just executing. And execution under pressure is something blokes like us have been good at our whole working lives.

## **THE SECOND PLAY: PRE-LOAD YOUR LINE**

Remember my mate from western Queensland - knocked back one beer at a barbecue and got asked if he had cancer? The interrogation IS coming, mate. So don't wing it. Walk in with your line loaded.

You've got options. There's the deflection tier: "I'm driving." "Early start." "On the antibiotics." All fine, all serviceable, none of them require a single follow-up. But when you're ready for it, there's a better one - the one my mate had earned the right to say:

"DIFFERENT DECISIONS, CHASING DIFFERENT OUTCOMES, MATE."

Say it easy, say it once, then ask him how his footy team's going. Nobody argues with it, because there's nothing in it to argue with - no sermon, no judgement of HIS beer, no invitation to debate. Just a bloke, deciding.

And here's the truth about the stir that nobody tells you, from hundreds of blokes through our community: THE STIR HAS A SHELF LIFE OF ABOUT TWO WEEKS. After that, the mates who matter go quiet on it. And then something happens that you will not believe until you live it: one of the stirrers finds you on your own - at the ute, at the bar, away from the group - drops his voice, and asks how you did it. EVERY BLOKE WHO STIRS YOU IS WATCHING YOU. The heckle is surveillance, mate. Wear it accordingly.

Now - the zones.

### **ZONE 1: THE PUB**

The beers get the blame, but run the tape honestly: it's the SYSTEM around them. Beers loosen the ute-decision, then the kitchen closes in on you - the parmy, the chips for the table, "may as well" dessert. The plays:

Decide your number in the ute - whatever it is, even if the number's zero, even if the number's three. A decided three beats an undecided two every time, because the undecided bloke is negotiating with each round. Eat before you go - a bloke on the 60-to-90 rhythm arrives at the pub FUELLED, and a fuelled bloke orders like a spectator instead of a starving man. Order first when you can - before the table's momentum decides for you. And in a shout? Nurse it, mate. No law says the glass has to be empty when the next round lands.

One more thing about the beers, and hear the spirit of it, because I'm going to say this exactly once: WE ARE NOT THE FOOD AND DRINK POLICE. Your number is your number - that's the whole system. But I'd be robbing you if I didn't tell you what I've watched happen, over and over, in our community: blokes who'd had a beer most days of their adult

lives deciding - their call, nobody's sermon - to run an experiment and park it for twelve weeks. And here's the part that gets me every time: after the twelve weeks, most of them barely go back. Not because anyone told them to stay off it, but because of what they found on the other side - how unbelievable they feel, how clear the thinking gets, and the quiet realisation that they never actually needed it. For some of those blokes and their families, that's been the single biggest transformation of the whole journey - bigger than the kilos. I'm not prescribing it, mate. I'm just leaving the door open and telling you honestly what's behind it.

## **ZONE 2: THE BARBECUE**

Home ground advantage exists at a barbie - because you're allowed to BRING A PLATE. So bring one that serves you: decent snags, good steak, something off your own list. The bloke who brings protein is never stranded in white-bread-and-chips territory, and - bonus - half the barbie ends up eating better because you showed up. You didn't preach a word; you just brought better food. That's leadership by esky.

Beyond that: arrive fed (same play, every zone - hunger is the enemy's recruiting officer), stand AWAY from the food table (proximity eats, mate - the bloke leaning on the snack table grazes all arvo without noticing), and watch for the 1975 programming: nobody at a barbecue is impressed by a cleaned plate. That war's over. You can put the fork down.

## **ZONE 3: THE WORK TRIP**

The sneakiest zone of all, because it whispers the most dangerous sentence a travelling bloke can hear: "nobody knows me here." Airport food, servo runs, hotel buffets, client dinners, a schedule that isn't yours - four days of anonymous eating and the belt knows all about it.

The plays: PACK THE GLOVEBOX - protein you chose in peacetime (jerky, nuts, whatever's on your list) so the servo never catches you starving at 3pm with nothing but hot-box options. At the hotel buffet, PROTEIN FIRST - build the plate off the eggs end, not the pastry corner, and remember you're the bloke who knows his serves now. KEEP THE WALK - it travels free, it's the best way to see any town on earth, and it holds the whole routine's spine in place when everything else is out of whack. Same rhythm, different postcode.

## **ZONE 4: THE BIG DAYS**

Footy finals. Weddings. Christmas. Your mate's 50th. Mate - these days are not the enemy, and this book will never tell you to sip water in the

corner at your brother's birthday. That's not a life, and we already agreed: a method that can't survive a celebration is a sentence.

The play here is different: CHOOSE, DON'T GRAZE. Before the day, pick the two or three things you're genuinely going to enjoy - the pav, the good beers with your brother, whatever earns its place - and enjoy them properly, chosen, guilt-free. What kills big days was never the chosen indulgence; it's the unchosen autopilot - the handful of chips every lap of the table, the picking at platters you don't even like, eating because it was THERE. Eat what you chose. Skip what merely existed.

And when the moment is one that matters - you're at your daughter's birthday and the cake's being handed around - mate, we have a saying for exactly this, and it's non-negotiable in our community: EAT THE DAMN CAKE. Don't sweat it. Don't regret it. And do not, under any circumstances, miss out. You are not building a life where a bloke sits at his own daughter's party refusing her birthday cake - that's not discipline, that's a new way to be absent, and we've done enough of that. This whole thing runs on NO REGRETS: the cake you chose at her party will never cost you the journey. The joyless bloke hovering at the edge of his own life? He quits by August. Eat the damn cake.

Let me give you the full version of that campaign, because I documented every day of it on Instagram, in public, where I couldn't hide.

Three weeks, half a world away. Singapore to Frankfurt, Frankfurt to Salzburg, my favourite city in Europe. Then Ljubljana, which promptly made it a tie. Then Florence, Siena, Pisa, Rome, Dubrovnik, Montenegro, Bosnia. The flight home took 49 hours. And I'll tell you exactly what I decided before we left: I am not travelling literally halfway around the planet to focus on my carb count, especially through some of the most extraordinary food nations on earth.

So I didn't. Pasta, pizza and gelato every single day. Every plate chosen, none of it autopilot. Day one in Florence set the bar: salted caramel gelato with chunks of chewy caramel flowing through it. OMG is the technical term, and I stand by it. The bar held all the way to the final dinner in Dubrovnik with my gorgeous wife, one of the highlights of the whole trip, washed down with probably the very best gelato of the lot. I enjoyed every mouthful and apologised to nobody, least of all myself.

I landed 3.2 kilos heavier. Sit with that number for a second, because it's the honest price of three weeks of total food freedom: about a kilo a week. Then I stepped straight back into the routine you already know. The walk. The water. The list. The rhythm. Three days later I'd dropped 3.8 kilos. Every gram Europe gave me, gone, plus a little change. It's all sitting on my Instagram with dates on it, if you'd like to check my homework.

That's what the unglamorous weeks buy you, mate: a body that knows the way home. Fear of the danger zone does more damage than the zone ever will.

Which brings us to the last thing, and it's the one that makes every zone survivable:

## **THE ZONE ONLY WINS IF IT FOLLOWS YOU HOME.**

Read that again, because it's the whole secret. A big night costs you almost nothing - we did that maths in the traps chapter. What costs you is the TAIL: the "well, that's ruined now" fortnight, the Monday that never comes. A danger zone is an EVENT, mate. Your old habit was turning events into ERAS.

And here's the beautiful maths the rhythm hands you, and I want it stuck to your fridge next to the consistency rule: NO MATTER WHAT THE BLOWOUT IS - pretty much no matter what you eat - YOU ARE ONLY 60 TO 90 MINUTES AWAY FROM FIXING IT. That's not a pep talk, that's the timetable. Your next eat is already scheduled, mate. It's coming within the hour and a half regardless of what just happened, and the moment it arrives and you eat it off your list, you're back. Not Monday. Not tomorrow. NINETY MINUTES. The old way, a mistake opened a fortnight-long door. This way, the door practically can't stay open - the next small decision is already rostered on.

The bloke who has a big Saturday and walks Sunday morning has lost nothing - and I mean NOTHING - in the long arithmetic of this journey.

Which is exactly where we're headed next, because it's time for the chapter no diet book has ever had the guts to write properly: what to do on the morning AFTER you blow it. Not if, mate. After. It's coming for both of us, and there's a play for that too.

## **ONE SMALL DECISION**

Open your calendar right now. Find the next danger zone - there's one inside the next seven days, there always is. A dinner, a barbie, Friday drinks, a trip.

Now write the ute-plan for it, three lines, thirty seconds: WHAT I'LL DRINK. WHAT I'LL EAT. WHAT I'LL SAY. That's it. Then go live the event - enjoy it, mate, that's an order - and afterwards, notice how it feels to walk out of a danger zone with the scoreboard intact for the first time in your adult life.

Planned beats perfect. Every single time.

*Next: Chapter 9 - Falling Off Without Nicking Off: the restart protocol, and why Monday doesn't exist.*

# CHAPTER 9 - FALLING OFF WITHOUT NICKING OFF

When a bloke comes into our community, I make him two promises before anything else happens. I've made them hundreds of times, and I've never broken either one.

PROMISE ONE: if you follow the program and you've got weight to lose, **YOU WILL LOSE WEIGHT**. Not might. Will. I've watched it too many times to hedge it.

PROMISE TWO: **IT WILL NOT BE A STRAIGHT LINE**. You will have tough days. You will have challenges. You will have struggles. That's not a risk, mate - it's a certainty. It's **LIFE**.

Now sit with the second promise for a minute, because I'd bet nobody has ever made it to you before. Every program you've ever joined sold you the straight line - the brochure graph, down and to the right, smooth as a boat ramp. And then real life delivered the actual graph: jagged, plateaued, up two hundred grams for no reason you could name - and because you'd been promised a straight line, you read every zig as evidence that **YOU** were broken. You weren't broken, mate. **THE PROMISE WAS**. The straight line has never existed for any human being in history. So I promise you the zigzag up front - because when the tough week arrives, I don't want you thinking the system's failed. I want you thinking the one thing that changes everything: **RIGHT ON SCHEDULE**.

You cannot fail a program that promised you'd struggle. The struggle **IS** the program, arriving exactly when it said it would.

## **THE RULE: NEVER MISS TWICE**

Here's the entire restart protocol, and it fits on a beer coaster:

## **MISSING ONCE IS AN EVENT. MISSING TWICE IS THE START OF AN ERA. SO: NEVER MISS TWICE.**

You blew out at the barbecue? Event. The question that decides your whole journey is what happens at the **NEXT** decision - and thanks to the rhythm, the next decision is never far away. You know this from last chapter: you're only 60 to 90 minutes from fixing pretty much anything you eat. The next eat is already rostered on. The morning walk is already rostered on. Which means the restart isn't something you have to summon from willpower, mate - **IT'S ALREADY IN THE SCHEDULE**. All you have to do is not cancel it.

And this is why Monday doesn't exist in this book. Monday was always the con - the restart pushed to a ceremonial date so the era in between could run wild, "may as well" eating its way through the gap. There is no Monday. There's only the next small decision, and it's closer than the fridge.

## **THE DISAPPEARING ACT**

Now for the real reason this chapter exists - because the protocol above is simple, and yet blokes with simple protocols still vanish. Let me tell you what actually happens when a big bloke wobbles, because I did it for forty years and I've watched hundreds do it since:

He disappears.

He misses a day, then a weekend. And the shame rocks up - the old commentator, straight on the mic - and shame gives him exactly one instruction: HIDE. Don't mention the diet again and maybe nobody else will. Skip the weigh-in. Go quiet in the group chat. Bury it, keep going - the schoolyard system, one more time, pointed the wrong way. In lone wolf mode, that vanish works PERFECTLY: nobody knows you were trying, so nobody notices you've stopped. The slide runs for months, unwitnessed, all the way back to the start.

Mate, hear this clearly: NOBODY QUILTS THIS JOURNEY ON THEIR GOOD DAYS. Every single bloke who's ever vanished, vanished on a tough one. Which means the tough days - the exact days Promise Two guaranteed - are the ONLY days that actually decide anything. Anyone can do this when it's easy. Anyone. The whole game is who's still there on the Tuesday after the blowout.

## **WHO CATCHES YOU**

And that's where I have to tell you what I've learned about getting caught - because I've wobbled both ways.

I told you about my ten-kilo creep - the one that snuck back while I was loved-up and comfortable. I fought that one ALONE, the same way I'd done everything: in secret, fuelled by fear, nobody even knowing there was a fight on. I won it - but mate, it was grim, white-knuckled going, and I carried the fear of the next creep for YEARS, because the only bloke guarding the result was the same bloke who'd caused the problem.

Now watch the other version, the one I've seen play out hundreds of times in our community. A bloke has a shocker of a week - the certainty arrives, right on schedule. And instead of vanishing, he's VISIBLE: there's a daily check-in with his name on it, an accountability partner who

notices the silence before it's three days old, a crew who've all had their own shockers. So the message he's dreading sending - "mate, I've had a rough one" - goes out. And what comes back isn't the judgement his shame promised him. It's "been there, mate. Walk tomorrow? We've got you."

That's it. That's the whole difference between an event and an era: WHETHER ANYBODY'S POSITIONED TO CATCH YOU INSIDE THE FIRST 48 HOURS. Anyone can prop a bloke up when he's flying. It's when it gets tough that a community comes into its own - the exact moment most blokes disappear is the exact moment ours are HELD. No judgement, no criticism. Just support, encouragement, and a hand on the shoulder pointed at the next small decision.

The wobble was never the danger, mate. The WITNESS-FREE wobble was.

I say this to people all the time, and it might be the most honest sentence in my coaching: IF YOU GO OUT TO GET HEALTHY ON YOUR OWN, IT'S BEYOND HARD - IT'S DAMN NEAR IMPOSSIBLE - BECAUSE THE WORLD IS NOT SET UP FOR YOU TO SUCCEED. IT'S SET UP FOR YOUR FAILURE. You've seen the evidence all through this book, mate: the sugar hidden in everything, the smoko van, the shout, the stir, the quit-day they can mark on a calendar in advance. None of that is neutral ground. It's a doctored pitch on the subcontinent with three spinners in the line-up. And you've been batting on it alone, your whole life, blaming yourself for the scoreline.

That's why, in our community, the commitment runs both ways: you do your part, and we will always do ours - above and beyond. And when I ask the blokes who'd failed alone for decades what actually changed this time, the answer comes back the same, over and over: THAT'S the game changer. Not the food list. Not the walk. The never-being-alone. All we say to you is this: you have to be willing to participate in your own rescue.

*Two voices from our community to keep in your back pocket for the bad week.*

*Cilla lost a serious amount of weight with us - "far out, half a person there" was her own reaction when I put her before-and-after photos up on screen - and then life did what life does: a run of deaths in the family, weeks overseas, completely out of routine. Some weight came back. Here's what she wants you to know, reported live from the middle of her comeback: "You sort of fall off a bit. But getting back on is easy - because I've learned so much, I never forget. It just takes remembering why you're doing this. And you just kick in."*

*And Dave - Chapter 7 Dave, the bloke who rode across Australia - explains why the 50-kilometre mark of a 190-kilometre day never scared him: "At the 50k peg, you might not be feeling great. But that's okay. You just hang in there - do all the stuff that you did the first 50 k's, and what you did yesterday." Same road, mate. Pedal.*

## **ONE SMALL DECISION**

Tonight, in peacetime, write your restart protocol - three lines, so it exists BEFORE you need it, same as every play in this book:

When I blow it - and I will, it's been promised - I will: eat my next scheduled feed off my list (within 90 minutes, it's already rostered). Walk the next morning, no negotiation. And tell one person.

That third line is the one that matters most, so finish it properly: WRITE THE NAME. The person you'll message on the tough day - your missus, a mate, your brother, whoever's earned it. One name. Because the bloke who's pre-decided who he tells has already dismantled the disappearing act before it ever starts.

And if you just read that and realised there's no name to write - no one in your corner for this - then mate, the next two chapters were written specifically for you. Keep reading.

*Next: Chapter 10 - Numbers That Matter: how to read the scoreboard so a wobbly week never lies to you again.*

# CHAPTER 10 - NUMBERS THAT MATTER

Let me show you the difference between a wish and a plan, because I watched the difference for forty years and lived on the wrong side of it.

Ask a bloke starting a diet - any bloke, any diet - two questions. How much are you going to lose? "Ah... dunno. A fair bit." By when? "Mate, I dunno... soon as I can?"

That's not a plan. That's a WISH LIST - and wishes are what I made every January for four decades while the belt kept moving the wrong way. I wrote a whole book about money before this one, and the first chapter was about exactly this: nothing real ever gets built from "I want more." It gets built from a number and a date and a mapped path between here and there. Your body is no different, mate. So this chapter builds your scoreboard - and I promise you, it measures almost nothing the way you think it will.

## THE BATHROOM SCALE HAS BEEN LYING TO YOU

Start with the villain. That old bathroom scale - one number, blinking up at you like it knows something.

Here's what that number actually is: the combined weight of your fat, your muscle, your bones, your breakfast, and about how much water you're holding after last night's salty dinner. One number, five stories, zero detail. It cannot tell fat from muscle. It cannot tell a genuinely bad week from a big glass of water. And because it's the only witness most blokes ever consult, it's been running a misinformation campaign your whole life: panicking you on perfect days (water), flattering you on shockers (dehydration), and - worst of all - reading dead flat during the weeks your body was quietly swapping fat for muscle, which is the scale reporting NOTHING HAPPENING during the exact weeks EVERYTHING was happening.

What gets measured improves - you know that rule by now. But it comes with a rider: MEASURE THE RIGHT THINGS. So here's the full scoreboard, four instruments, none of them complicated.

INSTRUMENT ONE: PROPER SCALES. Not the old liar - modern smart scales, the kind that read your body's composition, not just its cargo weight. They're cheap now, mate - home versions cost less than a carton and give you data that used to need a clinic. Any decent home body-composition scale does the job: you want one that reads visceral fat, lean

muscle, hydration and biological age, and there are plenty of good ones under a hundred bucks. And suddenly, instead of one blunt number, you're reading the stuff that actually matters: VISCERAL FAT - the fat packed around your organs, the genuinely dangerous stuff, the number your doctor actually cares about. LEAN MUSCLE MASS - the engine, the thing the protein and the walking are protecting; watching this hold steady while the fat leaves is proof the method's working exactly as designed. SUBCUTANEOUS FAT - the stuff under the skin, the cargo you're shipping out. HYDRATION - keeping your 2.5-to-3.5-litre honesty. And my favourite: BIOLOGICAL AGE - the scoreboard's opinion of how old your body actually is. Mate, watching that number sink BELOW your calendar age is one of the quiet great joys of this whole journey. Mine says I'm a decade and a half younger than my birth certificate. The fat kid never saw that coming.

Weigh daily - you know the drill from the W's: naked, digital scales, same time, same conditions, first thing. And let me be dead honest with you about this one: I don't care what the number is. Truly, I don't. I'm looking for the data and nothing more. Every morning's weigh-in is one data point, and one data point can't hurt you. What we're actually building is the daily discipline of stepping on the scales. The routine is the prize. The number's just along for the ride. Daily isn't obsessive when you know how to read it, and reading it right is coming up.

INSTRUMENT TWO: THE TAPE. Three measurements, thirty seconds, once a week: CHEST at nipple height, WAIST at the belly button, HIPS at the biggest part of your butt. That's it - three. And here's why the tape earns its place. There's a line in our community: THE SCALES CAN LIE TO YOU ON ANY GIVEN DAY, BUT THE TAPE MEASURE NEVER LIES. When the scales plateau - and Promise Two guarantees they will - the tape usually KEEPS MOVING. The tape is how you catch your body mid-renovation when the scale's asleep at the desk. More than one bloke in our community has been talked off the ledge of a "stall" by a tape measure that had quietly surrendered four centimetres.

INSTRUMENT THREE: THE CAMERA. Back in Chapter 4, I told you I was four pant sizes down and still SAW the fat kid in the mirror - that my own eyes edited the new bloke out until side-by-side photos forced the truth on me. This is where that story becomes an instruction: TAKE THE DAY ONE PHOTOS. Front, side, back. Yes, today's body. Yes, you'll hate doing it - I know exactly how much, and I'm asking anyway, because your eyes are the least reliable witness you own, and in a few months, when the commentator tells you nothing's changed, those photos will be the only witness that can't be argued with. You're not taking a photo of what you are, mate. You're taking the BEFORE shot of what you're about to do.

INSTRUMENT FOUR: THE INK. The bloods, from Chapter 2. If you booked them - good man, that's your baseline. If you didn't, book them now, because everything above measures the journey, but the bloods measure the STAKES: the sugar, the cholesterol, the numbers that turn into medication or don't. These are the figures that moved so far for me that a doctor's office once stunned me in the GOOD direction.

## **THE MAPPED PATH**

Now - the part that turns your scoreboard into a plan. Because here's what years of data across hundreds of journeys lets our community do, and what I can share the shape of with you:

A bloke with real weight to lose, following this way of eating and moving, loses 10 TO 18 PER CENT OF HIS BODY WEIGHT IN THE FIRST 12 WEEKS. That's not a number plucked from the air, mate, and it's not a marketing promise - it's what we've watched happen over and over and over, so consistently that we plan around it. For a 120-kilo bloke, that's 12 to 21 kilos by week twelve. Which means for the first time in your life, you can do what you've never done: set a number, set a date, and draw the actual line between them. Not "I want to lose weight." Instead: "I'm 122 today; the data says 105-ish is realistic by [date]; here's the weekly line that gets me there." A wish just became an engineering project - and blokes like us are GOOD at engineering projects.

## **THE BLOKES WHO "FAILED" AT TWELVE WEEKS**

Let me tell you about some blokes who came to me at the twelve-week mark absolutely filthy on themselves. The scale hadn't moved like they'd imagined, and they were doing what we do best: beating themselves up.

So we read the full scoreboard together. Better hydrated. Visceral fat - the dangerous stuff, around the organs - down significantly. Lean muscle UP. And a couple of pant sizes gone. Mate, every single instrument said the same thing: this is a healthier human, mid-renovation. But because the one lying instrument - the scale - didn't match the number in their head, they'd declared the whole project a failure.

Here's the physics they were missing, and let's kill a myth on the way through. People say "muscle weighs more than fat." Not true, mate - a kilo of fat and a kilo of muscle weigh exactly the same. It's a bloody kilo. But they take up different room: muscle is dense, fat is fluffy, and the same kilo of fat takes up around 20 per cent more space. So a bloke swapping fat for muscle shrinks while the scale shrugs - the tape moves, the belt moves, the pants move, and the scale sits there like nothing's happening. That's not a stall. That's the renovation, mid-pour.

So burn in the two reading rules: JUDGE THE TREND, NEVER THE DAY - the weekly average is the truth-teller, the daily weigh is just one dot in a promised zigzag. And WHEN THE SCALE GOES QUIET, CONSULT THE HONEST INSTRUMENTS - because your best gauges were never on the bathroom floor anyway: HOW YOUR CLOTHES FIT, HOW YOU FEEL, AND WHAT YOU'RE STARTING TO SEE IN THE MIRROR. Those three don't hold water, don't care about last night's salt, and can't be argued with by a bad Tuesday.

## **THE NUMBER THAT WAS NEVER THE POINT**

And now I'll tell you the secret hiding inside this whole chapter.

Our program is disguised as a weight-loss program. It isn't one. IT'S AN OPTIMAL-HEALTH AND HABIT-FORMING PROGRAM - the weight loss is just the most photogenic side effect. Look at what your scoreboard actually tracks: organ fat falling, muscle holding, hydration honest, biological age winding backwards, blood work improving, a bloke keeping promises to himself every 60 to 90 minutes, every morning, every week. THAT'S what's being built, mate. The scale number - the one you've stared at in fear your whole life - turns out to be the least interesting number on the readout.

You were never 15 kilos from happy. You were a set of habits away from healthy - and habits, unlike wishes, can be measured.

## **ONE SMALL DECISION**

This week, build the scoreboard - one shopping trip, one evening, done:

Get a set of home body-composition scales (they cost less than a carton, and they'll outlast every gym membership you never used). Take the three tape measurements - chest, waist, hips - and write them down. Take the Day One photos - front, side, back - and file them somewhere private. And if the bloods still aren't booked: book them, tonight, before you close this book.

That's your baseline, mate. Whatever it says - and I mean WHATEVER it says - write today's date next to it. Because from this exact page forward, every number only has one direction that matters, and you already know the rule that governs all of them:

## **WHAT GETS MEASURED IMPROVES.**

*Next: Chapter 11 - The Lone Wolf Dies Cold: why blokes go it alone, why it kills results, and the conversation that changes everything.*

# CHAPTER 11 - THE LONE WOLF DIES COLD

*Deanna thought she was doing okay. "This is the funny thing - I thought, I'm pretty happy. I'm a happy sort of person. But I've realised... that was just not the reality. I'd convinced myself that's what it was."*

*Ten weeks after she stopped convincing herself: nearly 12 kilos gone. Twenty centimetres off her waist - 104 down to 84. "That's nearly a ruler. Holy - " ...well, you can finish that one yourself. Her visceral fat - the dangerous stuff packed around the organs - dropped from 11 to 8, back into the normal range. Her biological age fell from 57 to 54. Three years back, in ten weeks.*

*But here's why Deanna lives at the top of THIS chapter. One miserable morning she was crook, and heading out for her walk anyway - and her husband, a man with two replaced knees, got up and came with her. "He was like, 'You shouldn't be going. I'm gonna come and keep you company, make sure you're okay.'" His knees were sore afterwards. He went anyway. That, right there, is what a running mate looks like.*

*And the ripple kept moving outward, the way it always does. Watching her change, her grown-up son started asking about doing it himself - and her pitch to him is the best one-liner our community has ever produced: "Please - can you trust me? I didn't want this either, honey. But it works. I'm telling you."*

*Nobody does this alone. Not you, not Deanna, not a bloke with two new knees walking beside the woman he loves. This chapter is about building your pack.*

Let's finish a story I started in the traps chapter.

When I finally decided to lose the weight - properly, after New Zealand - I told NO ONE. Not a mate, not my family, no one. I did the whole thing with a booklet, a pedometer, and a locked door. And you already know why, because it's the same reason you'd do it: I was protecting the exits. If nobody knew I was trying, nobody would know if I failed. Forty years of being the big guy who made the joke first had taught me that lesson to the bone.

And here's the thing, mate - it WORKED. Thirty-five kilos, solo. I'm living proof the lone wolf can hunt.

But I carried something through those years that I've never fully owned until this book: FEAR. Because when you do it alone, the only bloke guarding the result is the same bloke who caused the problem, and deep

down you know it. Every wobble was fought in secret. Every creep was a private war. I white-knuckled a ten-kilo comeback without a single soul knowing there was a fight on. I won - and it was the loneliest win of my life, and it changed nothing about the fear, because the next fight was always coming and I'd be alone for that one too.

Then, years later, I ended up inside a community - and I found out what the fear had been costing me. Same program. Same bloke. Different container. Another thirteen kilos came off WITHOUT EVEN TRYING, the fear dissolved, and a decade on I've given away the suits I was keeping "just in case." The program never changed, mate. THE ALONE CHANGED.

So this chapter is about the single biggest performance upgrade available to you - and it isn't a food, a supplement, or a training method. It's people. Specifically, two kinds: the one in your house, and the ones in your corner.

## **THE RUNNING MATE IN YOUR OWN HOME**

Let me hit you with the number first, because it reorganised how I coach: IN OUR COMMUNITY'S EXPERIENCE, RESULTS ARE UP TO THREE TIMES BETTER WHEN YOUR PARTNER IS ON THE PROGRAM WITH YOU. Three times, mate. Not a few per cent more. There is no supplement on earth, no training protocol, no piece of gear that delivers a fraction of that - and it's sleeping next to you.

Now, I know the objection, because I hear it every single week: "Oh, my wife doesn't need to lose weight."

Mate - remember Chapter 10. Weight loss is the BY-PRODUCT. What we're actually doing is building great habits and eating genuinely healthy food, and here's the beautiful thing about eating the way we eat - it's almost like the Hippocratic oath: FIRST, DO NO HARM. Nobody on earth is harmed by real food, in proper serves, with adequate protein and plenty of water. Your wife doesn't need to lose a gram for this to be one of the best things she ever does - better energy, better health, better habits, and a bloke she loves getting his life back next to her. She's not joining your diet. You're both upgrading your house.

And I have to tell you the other side, because I've watched it derail good men, and there's not a drop of blame in what I'm about to say. When your partner ISN'T on the same page - not against you, just not in it - the house itself can quietly become the danger zone. The pizzas and KFC still landing on the bench a couple of nights a week. The cupboards stacked with kryptonite. None of it malicious, mate - she's living the life you both always lived, the one YOU built with her. But you're trying to rebuild

decades of habits in the exact building where they were installed, and every night you're doing it three metres from an open cupboard of your personal kryptonite. That's not a fair fight - for either of you.

Which is why the conversation matters so much. Not "you should do this with me" - that's a sales pitch, and you're not selling. Try something closer to the truth: "Love - I'm serious about this one. Not another diet; I'm trying to actually fix it this time. I'm not asking you to change a thing - but it'd mean the world to have a running mate." Mate, I'm sure your wife loves you. I'm sure she's noticed more than she's ever said - worried more than she's ever said, too. The odds that she's anything but RELIEVED AND EXCITED that you're finally passionate about being the best version of yourself - for you AND for your family - are about zero.

And if you want proof of what alongside looks like - it's the reason I'm lighter than I was at fifteen. When Meredith came across the community with the very program I'd succeeded on solo years before, I joined ALONGSIDE her - to support HER, mate; I do 95 per cent of the cooking, so it was easier to make one menu anyway. I wasn't even trying to lose weight. She dropped sixteen kilos and felt phenomenal. I dropped another thirteen BY ACCIDENT. Same kitchen, same table, same team. That's what a running mate in your own home does - the results just happen to both of you.

## **THE ONES IN YOUR CORNER**

Beyond your front door, the machinery is simple, and you've already seen it work in the wobble chapter: a daily check-in with your name on it. An accountability partner - a mate in your corner who knows the actual plan, not the vague "getting healthy" version - who notices your silence before it's three days old. A crew who've all had their own shockers, where the tough-day message gets "been there, mate - walk tomorrow?" instead of judgement.

What does all that actually do, mechanically? Four things: YOU CAN'T VANISH (visibility is the antidote to the disappearing act); STRUGGLE GETS NORMALISED (Promise Two is easier to believe in a room full of blokes living it); YOU BORROW BELIEF ON FLAT DAYS (some mornings you run on the crew's certainty until yours comes back); and - the one nobody expects - YOU BECOME THE EVIDENCE FOR SOMEBODY ELSE. Remember the stirrer who ends up quietly asking how you did it? In a crew, you're on both ends of that exchange for life. There is no motivation on earth like a bloke two months behind you saying "mate, if you can do it..."

## **THE REFRAME THAT SETS YOU FREE**

One last thing, for the bloke whose jaw is still tight about all this - the one thinking "needing help means I'm weak."

Mate, run the audit. Every strong thing men do, we do in teams. Footy has eighteen on the field and an entire bench. The army builds everything on the unit - no soldier in history was ever called soft for having a platoon. Your worksite runs on crews. When a mate moves house, six blokes show up with utes, and nobody hands in their man card. In every arena men respect, **THE TEAM IS THE STRENGTH**. There is exactly one place we've been conned into believing a man must go it alone - his own health - and it happens to be the arena with the worst solo success rate of the lot.

And while we're at it, let me torch one of my all-time pet-peeve sayings: the "SELF-MADE MAN." Mate, there is no such thing - not in business, not in sport, not in health, not anywhere, and there never has been. Every single person who's ever succeeded at anything had help: a mentor, a mate, a wife, a teacher, a stranger who opened a door. Every one. And I'll tell you my honest rule of thumb: any bloke who claims he did it all himself is probably careless with the truth about other things too. **EVERYONE** needs help - different help, at different times, with different things. That's not the asterisk on being human, it's the definition of it. So let's say the quiet part in full: thinking you can do it alone isn't the sign of strength you were raised to believe it is. It's the weakness, mate - dressed up in a flanno, costing you decades.

You'd never frame a house alone. This is the biggest build of your life.

Get a crew.

## **THE POINT MAN**

And now the part of this chapter I've been busting to write, because it's about what's waiting for you on the far side of your own transformation.

There's a film I love - Pay It Forward - where a young kid, Trevor McKinney, sets out to change the world with a simple engine: do something genuinely special for three people who can't repay you, and instead of paying it back, they each pay it forward to three more. Kid maths, world-sized results.

Mate, that's exactly how I believe we get the world healthy - and it's how our community actually runs. Because once you've walked this road - once you've been caught mid-wobble, propped up on a flat Tuesday, believed-in before you believed in yourself - you'll get the opportunity to turn around and be the **POINT MAN** for the next bloke standing where

you're standing right now. The one who says "been there, mate. Walk tomorrow?" and means it, because you have.

And I'll tell you something from the far end of this journey, as honestly as I've told you anything in this book: I have loved every part of getting my own life back. The kilos, the summers, the bloods, Spain, all of it. But nothing - NOTHING - has given me more satisfaction than becoming that person for someone else. Because I know the struggle from the inside, and there is no feeling on earth like watching a bloke walk out of it on a road you helped clear.

That's what's really on the other side of the fork ahead, mate. Not just a smaller bloke. A bigger one.

## **ONE SMALL DECISION**

This week - and if you're honest, tonight - HAVE THE CONVERSATION. If you've got a partner: the running-mate ask, in your own words, straight down the middle. Show her this chapter if it's easier - I wrote half of it to her anyway.

Flying solo? Then take the name you wrote in Chapter 9 and upgrade them: not just "the person I'll tell when I wobble," but a proper ask - "I'm doing this thing. Check on me once a week. Don't let me go quiet." One sentence, mate. That sentence is the difference between the wolf and the pack.

Because here's the truth this whole chapter has been circling: the lone wolf isn't stronger. He's just colder. And you've been cold long enough.

*Next: Chapter 12 - Keeping It Off: the chapter nobody writes - the suits in the wardrobe, and the day the fat kid finally moved out.*

## CHAPTER 12 - KEEPING IT OFF (THE CHAPTER NOBODY WRITES)

*The week before Caroline and I sat down to record her story, she was at sea - hauling ropes on a 30-metre tall ship in 25-knot winds, gusting 30, through three-metre swells.*

*Now rewind three years. Caroline was an oncology nurse - forty years of looking after everybody but herself - who had just marked her 58th birthday. She stood 157 centimetres and weighed 87.3 kilos, walked out of every shift "creaking and groaning and in pain," and this is how she describes the woman in her before photo: "I used to think about myself as a fat old lady heading for a mobility scooter." Doing up her shoelaces was tricky. Digging in the garden hurt.*

*She drew a line in the sand. Set a goal of 68 kilos - then, as the evidence stacked up, lowered it to 64. Then 62. Then 60. "Not because I thought the program didn't work - because I felt I couldn't do it." Nine and a half months in, she'd lost 23 kilos. Then she pushed past it to 25.*

*Here's why she opens this chapter: that was February 2024, and she's still there - two years and counting, within a couple of kilos of her lowest, straight through a year that genuinely tested her. And what has staying there bought? The Brisbane to Gladstone yacht race, crewing a gaff-rigged schooner: "There's not a winch on the boat. It's an absolute manual process - pulling and heaving." Seasick the whole way up. Did it anyway. "There's no way on God's earth I would have done that" at her old weight, she says. Next on the list: her skipper's ticket, and the Mont Blanc trek she's wanted her whole life - "I might have to do a watered-down one, but I'm not gonna water it down just yet."*

*Losing weight is a project, mate. Keeping it off is a life. Caroline's is what the second one looks like.*

Here's the statistic the entire diet industry hopes you never sit with: for up to 95 PER CENT of people who lose weight on a diet, the weight comes back.

Ninety-five. Now hold that against something I told you back in the traps chapter: every diet I ever did WORKED. Both things are true, and together they say the quiet part out loud: LOSING WEIGHT WAS NEVER THE HARD BIT. You've done it. I'd done it a dozen times before I turned forty. The hard bit - the bit that beats 95 in every 100 - is what this chapter is about, and it's the reason no diet book ever writes it: because the answer isn't a diet.

And before you despair at that number, ask the question nobody in the industry wants asked: why would it be any different? Mate - REGAIN IS THE BUSINESS MODEL. Every commercial weight-loss outfit on earth builds its success on you being a repeat customer: the January re-join, the next round, the comeback special. If their method made your change permanent, they'd be out of business by Friday. So the 95 per cent isn't a failure rate. It's a SUBSCRIPTION MODEL - and you've been a loyalty-card member your whole life.

Let me show you why nothing changes, with an experiment you can run yourself. Walk down any street in Australia and ask 100 people: "What have you got to do to lose weight?" I reckon 95 of them give you the identical answer: eat healthy and exercise. Mate - RIGHT THERE is why nothing changes. Everybody already knows. The knowledge has been public property for fifty years, and we're heavier than we've ever been. So if knowing the answer fixed anything, there'd be nothing to fix. The problem was never the WHAT. It was never information.

You have to address the thinking.

## **THE TWO CHANGES**

In our community we talk about the journey having two components, and the order matters.

The first is the PHYSICAL CHANGE - the food, the walking, the water, the serves. Everything in Part 2 of this book. And here's the confession, now that you've come this far: THAT'S THE EASY BIT. Genuinely. Follow the method and the physical change arrives almost on schedule - remember Promise One.

The second is the one barely anyone even recognises exists, and it's the MOST IMPORTANT: what we call the CHEMICAL CHANGE. The rebuild of the thinking. The stories, the self-talk, the identity, the programming installed at the 1975 dinner table - the underlying story that led you to the crossroads in the first place. Every diet you've ever done treated the symptoms and left the story untouched, which is why the story simply reasserted itself the moment the diet ended. You can't put a new menu on an old bloke and expect it to hold. We settled that in Chapter 4.

And now I can tell you something about this book that you may have already noticed: THE REBUILD STARTED BEFORE THE FOOD DID. The mirror, the traps, the identity, the votes - Part 1 wasn't a warm-up, mate. It was the main event, running quietly underneath everything since page one. The diet industry does the physical and skips the chemical. We did the chemical FIRST. That's the whole difference between the 95 and the 5.

Here's the exact mechanism, and you'll recognise it from your own history: most people lose weight to hit a NUMBER ON A SCALE. And the moment they hit it - ding! - the number hands them a certificate and permission to "go back to normal life": the old menus, the old rounds, the old cupboard. Now, I'm no rocket scientist, mate, but if you go back to the old habits that built the old body... I reckon the old body accepts the invitation, right? It's not even a gamble. It's a reunion.

There's a line often credited to Albert Einstein - and even if he never said it in quite these words, it's dead true: YOU CANNOT SOLVE A PROBLEM WITH THE SAME LEVEL OF THINKING THAT CREATED IT. The thinking IS the problem. Which is why the finish line was never a number - a number can be reached by a bloke whose thinking hasn't moved a millimetre, and the 95 per cent prove it every year. The real finish line is something else entirely, and here it is:

## **WHO YOU ARE, NOT SOMETHING YOU DO**

We want this to be who you are - not something you do.

Sit with the difference, because everything hangs on it. Something you DO can be stopped, paused, quit, "fallen off." Something you ARE can't - there's no wagon, because there's no vehicle separate from the bloke. Nobody asks me how I "stay motivated" to eat this way any more than they ask how I stay motivated to be right-handed. That's what a permanent habit actually is, mate: a behaviour that got promoted into an identity. And when you're there, the maintenance question - "will it come back?" - quietly dies. It can't come back on its own. It would have to be INVITED, in broad daylight, by a bloke who knows exactly what he's doing. And the new bloke doesn't send the invitation.

## **STAY IN THE WEATHER THAT GREW YOU**

So how does a behaviour get promoted to an identity? Time - in the right environment. And this is the part I need you to hear with both ears, because it's the closest thing to a secret in this whole chapter:

You stay around the environment that led to the success - FOR LONG ENOUGH THAT IT BECOMES YOUR NEW REALITY. How long? Mate, I genuinely don't know what the number is for you. I'll tell you mine: it's been YEARS, and I'm not going anywhere - because I know exactly how important it is.

You've heard the old saying - you're the sum of the five people you spend the most time with. Want to be wealthy? Hang around five wealthy people; you'll be the sixth. Well, it's precisely as true here: HANG AROUND FIVE HEALTHY PEOPLE AND YOU WILL BE THE SIXTH. Not

through willpower - through WEATHER. Around our community, eating well isn't discipline, it's just Tuesday. The walk isn't a program, it's what we do. The check-in isn't accountability, it's mates. You stop swimming against the current because you moved to a river that flows your way.

And I'll let you in on the inversion that still makes me smile: people assume I stay on track because I'm the coach. It's the exact opposite, mate. THE COMMUNITY KEEPS ME. I'm visible in it every single day - every client, every check-in, every bloke I've ever asked to trust the process is, without knowing it, holding ME to it. I genuinely want to thank every one of them, because they make sure I'm here forever. A decade in, the bloke who once white-knuckled every wobble alone hasn't fought a solo battle in years. That's not discipline. That's architecture.

## THE SUITS

Now let me tell you the story I've been saving the whole book, because it's how you'll know - really know - when the chemical change is finished.

For years after the weight came off, I kept my old suits. Beautiful, tailored suits - I'd had them taken in as far as the fabric would allow, and even then they hung on me like sacks. Utterly useless. And I kept them anyway. Year after year, wardrobe after wardrobe.

Do you understand what those suits were, mate? They were the fat kid's room, still made up, rent paid. JUST IN CASE. Forty-eight kilos gone, blood work of a bloke fifteen years younger, a decade of evidence - and somewhere in the back of my head, a voice still whispering "you'll be back." The scales had changed. The wardrobe hadn't got the memo.

And then one day - after the years in the environment, after the identity had finally, fully settled - I took every one of those suits out and gave them away. Blessed some other bloke with beautiful tailoring. And I can tell you the exact quality of the knowing that let me do it, because there's only one way to say it: I KNOW THAT I KNOW THAT I KNOW the weight can never come back.

Not hope. Not confidence. KNOWING - the kind you never argue with. The day the suits left the house is the day the fat kid finally moved out. Europe, a couple of years later, was just the victory lap: three weeks of gelato, home to my weight in three days, and not one flicker of fear about any of it. It took years longer than the kilos did, mate. That's the chemical change. That's the part the 95 per cent were never given.

## THE GIFT YOU KEEP

One more thing you carry out of all this, and it might be the most practical sentence in the chapter. Long after the program becomes who you are, the KNOWLEDGE stays switched on - the awareness of your body, your serves, your patterns, your fire. And here's the gift, exactly as I say it to every bloke who's been through it:

ONCE YOU'VE LEARNT THIS, EVEN WHEN YOU'RE STUFFING UP - YOU KNOW YOU'RE STUFFING UP. AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, YOU KNOW HOW TO REMEDY THE STUFF-UP.

That's the end of the old blindness, mate - forever. The 130-kilo version of me could drift for two years without consciously clocking it. That bloke is extinct. You can never again NOT know - and a bloke who always knows, and always knows the remedy, and is never more than 60 to 90 minutes from the fix, is a bloke the old statistics simply don't apply to anymore.

*The community says the same thing in different accents. Krystel, 28 kilos down: "Something I've loved is that I've maintained that weight, regardless of what has happened. Life gets busy - but I've still remembered how to eat, what to eat, when to eat." And Dave, our cross-country cyclist, on why he was never interested in a three-month miracle: "I've seen so many people go on diets. They look really fantastic for the first three months, and then three months later, it's like they never went on it. It's got to be achievable, and it's got to be something that's gonna last." That's this whole chapter's argument, delivered by two people out there living it.*

## ONE SMALL DECISION

This one's different - it's not for today. It's for you to SET UP today.

Go find your version of my suits. The "just in case" you're keeping - the fat clothes in the bottom drawer, the loose belt, whatever object is quietly holding the old bloke's room open. Don't throw it out - you're not ready, and that's fine, I wasn't either for years. Just NAME it. Write it at the bottom of your page: "My suits are \\_\\_\\_."

Because one day - after the environment's done its work, after the knowing arrives - you're going to give that thing away. And when you do, you'll know exactly what it means, and you'll think of me and my sacks of beautiful tailoring, and you'll grin.

That's not a decision for today, mate. Today's decision is just to know your graduation ceremony exists - and that it's already scheduled.

*Next: Chapter 13 - Alone or Together: everything you need is in these pages. Here's the honest truth about both roads.*

# CHAPTER 13 - ALONE OR TOGETHER

Right at the start of this book, I made you a promise: *everything you need to do this on your own is in these pages, and nothing in them is for sale.*

I've kept it. Look at what you're holding: the honest mirror and the five questions. The bloods. The three traps, named. The platform sentence and the votes. Your One Thing and the worst-day rule. The food - your list, your menu, your serves, protein every eat, every 60 to 90 minutes, the water, the fire. The letterbox, the B4B, the 12,000. The ute-plan and the pre-loaded line for every danger zone. Eat the damn cake. Never miss twice, and the 90-minute fix. The four instruments and the mapped path. The running-mate conversation. The suits, waiting for your graduation.

That's the complete system, mate. Not the teaser version - the whole thing. You could close this book right now, start tomorrow morning at the letterbox, and change your entire life. **You are capable of doing this yourself.** I need you to know I mean that, because everything else in this chapter depends on you believing it.

Because now we're at the fork, and I owe you the last piece of honesty in this book.

## **The experiment I ran with my own life**

You know my story in pieces - let me lay the two halves side by side, because I'm the rare bloke who ran the experiment both ways on the same body, with the same program.

**Round one, I went alone.** A booklet, a food list, a couple of audios, a pedometer, and a locked door. And it *worked*, mate - 35 kilos in five months, first time under 100 in two decades. If you choose the alone road, I am living proof it can be done, and I'll never pretend otherwise.

But here's the full invoice from the alone road, the part that took me years to admit: it was fragile. Every wobble was a secret war. A ten-kilo creep nearly took it all back, and I fought that fight with nobody even knowing there *was* a fight. I plateaued at "pretty good" and stayed there for years. And underneath the whole decade ran a quiet hum of fear - *will it come back?* - because the only bloke guarding the result was the bloke who'd caused the problem. I kept the suits, mate. That's what alone looks like when it's winning: still keeping the suits.

**Round two, I was in a community** - and I wasn't even trying. Same program. Same bloke, older. Different container. Thirteen more kilos gone without chasing them. Lighter than I was at fifteen. The fear -

*dissolved*. The suits, given away with absolute knowing. Europe with gelato, later, and not a flicker. A decade of maintenance that costs me almost nothing to hold, because I'm not holding it - the environment is.

Same program, both times. **The program was never the variable. The container was.** And every piece of data I've gathered since - the up-to-three-times partner effect, the blokes who vanish alone versus the blokes who get caught in 48 hours, the 12-week transformations I watch every cycle - says my two rounds weren't luck. They were the pattern.

## **So here's the fork, straight**

**Road one: alone.** Take this book and run. Everything works. And if that's your road - mate, genuinely, go with my whole heart. You'll be walking the exact road I walked, and I'll tell you what I'd tell a mate: guard the wobbles, tell at least one person, watch the good times as closely as the bad, and read Chapter 9 twice a year. Some blokes make it alone. I did - mostly, for a while, at a cost I've been honest about. You might too. **You can guess how it goes for you - that's not an insult, it's just what trying something one bloke at a time is: a guess.**

**Road two: together.** Plug into something proven and predictable - a community that's walked hundreds of blokes down the exact path in this book, where the environment does the heavy lifting, the wobbles get caught early, your missus gets a running mate too, and one day, when you're ready, there's a point-man spot waiting with your name on it. Where you don't guess, because the path's already mapped and the data's already in.

That's it. That's the whole pitch, and you'll notice it isn't one. I'm not going to tell you which road to take, because the deepest lesson of this whole book is that *you* make the decisions now - small ones, daily, owned. This is just the biggest small decision in the book.

But I'll leave you with the sentence my whole business was built on, years before I ever coached a single bloke, because it's the truest thing I know about help: **you are absolutely capable of doing this yourself - or we'll do the do with you.** Nobody on earth can do it *for* you, mate - not me, not any program, not the jab, not your wife. But you never, ever had to do it *alone*. Those are two different things, and forty years of my life got burned learning the difference.

If you want the together road, the door's on the last page of this book. It's not a funnel, it's a doorbell. Ring it or don't - I'm in your corner either way.

## One Small Decision

The last one of the book, and it's exactly what it looks like: **choose your road**. Tonight. Out loud or in ink: *alone* or *together*.

*Before you choose your road, two last pieces of evidence.*

*First: who's watching. Dave's nearly-18-year-old son came to him unprompted: "Dad, I'm so proud of you. I've even told my mates." Krystel's ten-year-old packs his own lunchbox now and checks he's got protein with every meal - a kid who, in his mum's words, "doesn't have to grow up big-boned or overweight." And her horizon runs longer than her own kitchen: "In my generation there are 20 of us. I don't want my children, in 20 or 30 years, talking about someone who had a heart attack too young."*

*Second: what the alone road is actually like. Rick drove it for years, and he'll give it to you straight: "It truly is too hard by yourself."*

*Your decision was never just yours, mate. It never is.*

If it's alone: set your Day One - tomorrow, not Monday - text your Chapter 9 name, and start at the letterbox. If it's together: turn to the last page, and ring the bell.

Either way, mate - *decide*. Because the only road that's ever guaranteed to fail is the one you keep standing at the fork of.

*Either road you pick, your first seven days are already mapped: Start Here Monday is waiting at the back of this book.*

# FINAL WORD - DAY ONE OF THE REST OF YOUR SUMMERS

There's not much left to say, mate, and that's the point - the reading part of your journey is over. What's left is a letterbox, tomorrow morning, and every small decision after it.

But I'll leave you with this.

Sixteen years ago, a 130-kilo bloke stood in a car park in New Zealand, grinning for a camera, hours away from the truth. He'd buried everything his whole life and thought that was strength. He'd guessed at every diet and blamed himself for every regain. He was sure - SURE - that the fat kid was just who he was, and that men like him didn't get the other kind of life.

That bloke walked 900 kilometres across Spain. That bloke's blood work reads fifteen years younger than his birth certificate. That bloke married Meredith at 45, after the inner work was done, and got the life he'd quietly given up on. That bloke gave away his suits.

## WHY BLOKES?

Before I let you go, I owe you one last piece of my heart - the answer to a question you might not have thought to ask: why did I write this book for big blokes, when everything in these pages works exactly as well for women? And it does, mate - more than 80 per cent of the people I coach are women, and they get every result in this book and then some. (If you're a woman holding this: every word here is yours too, and you're most welcome.)

*And if you want to know what's waiting on the other side of that welcome: Jayne, one of the mums in our community, spent years quietly stepping back out of every family photo. A few months into her journey she sent me a message I'll keep forever: "Thank you for helping me find my confidence to jump back into photos again." She's back in the photos now - with her boys, with her husband. That's what this is actually about. All of it.*

Here's the honest answer, and it breaks my heart a little every time I sit with it: BECAUSE THE BLOKES DON'T COME.

And it's not because we don't need to. The latest national health measurements say 72 per cent of Australian men are living with overweight or obesity, against 62 per cent of women, and the rates climb

right through middle age. That's more than two million middle-aged Australian blokes carrying the weight this book was written for.

Eight out of every ten hands that reach out for help are women's hands. And I know - I know that I know that I know - it's not because the men are okay. It's because I was one of them. I was the bloke who would never reach out. I lived a life of quiet desperation - smiling in every photo, funny at every barbecue, alone in every way that counted, losing a little more hope every year - and I'd have stayed that way forever rather than put my hand up. There are so many men living that exact life right now, tonight. Some of them are married to the women I coach. Some of them are reading this page.

So this book is my hand, reached out first - because I knew you weren't going to.

It's permission, mate. Permission to chase the best version of yourself - maybe a version you can't remember. Maybe one you've never seen. You don't need to know what he looks like yet. You just need to believe he's in there. I'm proof he is - and this means everything to me, because I was that man, and nobody came for me until it was nearly too late.

Consider yourself come for.

WHEN I WAS YOU, I had no idea where to start, and I didn't know anyone who could help. You now have both - the whole map is behind you in these pages, and the bloke who wrote it is in your corner.

Your call is coming, mate. The one where someone you love needs you strong and mobile and THERE. And your summers - the real ones, the in-it-not-watching-it ones - are being counted out right now, whether you spend them or waste them. A good chunk of the ones you think you've lost are still refundable. Mine were. Yours are.

And if you want company on the road - if the together fork is yours - here's the doorbell, the only one in this book: you'll find me and our community by searching WAMACTIVE ON FACEBOOK, or reach me directly at WAM@WLCW.COACH. No salesman will answer. Just a bloke who was you.

And the price of this free book? There is one after all: pass it on to one bloke who needs it. That's it. If you ever want to tell me what you thought, or whose hands you put it in, the page you got this book from has a spot waiting for exactly that.

Whatever you do next - make it a small decision.

And make it today.

- Wayne

# START HERE MONDAY

*The whole book, compressed into one week. You've read the why; here's the do.*

**Today (yes, today - Monday doesn't exist, remember):** Answer the five questions from Chapter 1, dead honest. Write your platform sentence: "I'm the kind of bloke who..." Pick your One Thing - laugh-proof small, worst-day proof.

**Day 2:** Ten-minute walk before breakfast. Water bottle going - work toward 2.5 to 3.5 litres. Tonight: build tomorrow's menu - foods you like, small protein every eat, every 60 to 90 minutes.

**Day 3:** Book the blood test. Run your first full designed food day. Notice: never hungry.

**Day 4:** Build the scoreboard - body-composition scales, three tape measurements (chest, waist, hips), Day One photos (front, side, back - you'll thank yourself).

**Day 5:** Find the week's danger zone in your calendar and write the ute-plan: what I'll drink, what I'll eat, what I'll say.

**Day 6:** The conversation - the running-mate ask, or the accountability name with a real job: "check on me weekly, don't let me go quiet."

**Day 7:** Write your restart protocol in peacetime: next feed off the list within 90 minutes, walk the next morning, tell my person. Then take stock of your first week - and make the biggest small decision in the book: alone, or together.

*Seven days. No perfection required. Progress, not perfection - welcome to the rest of your summers.*

*One more voice before you start - two blokes who've stood exactly where you're standing. Dave: "As soon as you've made the plunge, make the whole plunge. If you try to dance around the edges, it'll still work for you - but it won't REALLY work for you." And Andrew: "What I did this time that I've never done before? I just followed the bouncing ball." Boots and all, mate. See you at the letterbox.*

# QUESTIONS FROM BLOKES

**Questions from Blokes (*the ones I get asked every single week*)**

**"How fast will the weight come off?"**

With real weight to lose, following this way of eating and moving: **10 to 18 per cent of your body weight in the first 12 weeks**. That's not a marketing line - it's what we've watched happen, over and over, so consistently we plan around it. For a 120-kilo bloke that's 12 to 21 kilos by week twelve. And it will *not* be a straight line - tough days and stall weeks are guaranteed. That's not my guess, mate; that's Promise Two, and it arrives right on schedule.

**"I've got 60-plus kilos to lose. Is it too big? Am I too old?"**

Let me answer with receipts. Our program has helped people lose **in excess of 100 kilos** - real people, real life, not brochure numbers. I've personally coached blokes through losses beyond 60. **We are not intimidated by a number**, and you shouldn't be either - the 10-to-18 per cent maths works at every size, and the bigger the bloke, the bigger those first-twelve-weeks numbers are. Too old? I've watched people in their seventies come off medication their doctors called permanent. You've got exactly one deadline, mate: the summers. Start counting from today, not from 1985.

**"My knees are shot - I can't walk far."**

Then walk near - the letterbox rule was written for you. And if "can't walk far" is actually "can barely walk at all," hear this: I've coached people who were *awaiting full knee reconstructions* - people who could hardly cross a room - through significant losses, 15 kilos and beyond, before they ever reached an operating table. Real people, mate; I could give you names, theirs *and* their surgeons'. How? Because the **food does the fat-loss heavy lifting** - that was never your knees' job - and we've got other levers to pull while your legs are on light duties. Meanwhile, your hope maths: every kilo you lose takes roughly four kilos of force off each knee, every step. Plenty of blokes walk into surgery lighter and come out of it with an easier rehab. Start where your body actually is, not where your pride wants it to be.

## **"I do shift work / I'm FIFO."**

Mate, I hit 130 kilos *in a mining camp* - I know exactly what the mess hall does. The rhythm doesn't care what the clock says: your "morning" is whenever you wake, your B4B walk is before your first meal, and the 60-to-90 runs across whatever shape your day is. The mess hall is just a danger zone with a roof on it - walk in with the ute-plan already made.

## **"My missus does the cooking."**

Then you've got a head start, not a problem - go read the running-mate pages again. You're not asking her to cook separate meals: same food, your serves. Show her the list, tell her the why, and watch what happens when the whole house quietly upgrades. (And mate - cook occasionally. It's a good look.)

## **"Can I still have a beer?"**

Not the drink police. Your number is your number - the only rule is that you set it in the ute, not at the bar. And I'll just leave this here: the blokes in our community who've run the twelve-weeks-off experiment almost never go back to daily drinking. Not because anyone told them to - because of how they feel. The door's open; there's no pressure behind it.

## **"What do I actually need to buy?"**

For everything in this book: decent walking shoes, a set of body-composition scales, a tape measure, and a supermarket. That's the whole list. If anyone ever tells you transformation *requires* their product, hold your wallet and re-read Chapter 3. (Supplements? Different question, different road - it's next.)

## **"Do I need supplements?"**

Honest answer in two parts, mate, because there are two roads.

**For this book - the do-it-yourself road - no.** The promise stands: nothing in these pages requires a product, and that will never change. You can get a real result on real food alone. Blokes have.

**But if you come to our community and ask me to coach you, supplementation is part of how we work - and it's not negotiable.** You deserve to know why I'm that upfront about it, so let me tell you something that might surprise you: **I was taking supplements long before my health journey ever started. I was taking them at 130 kilos.**

Sit with that, because it tells you what supplements are and what they aren't. They are *not* a magic bullet - if they were, I'd never have needed a book's worth of lessons. No supplement makes your decisions for you. What supplementation is for, in my view, is closing the **nutritional gap**: with the way modern food is grown, transported and stored, I believe even a clean eater can fall short of what his body ideally needs. The research conversation here is genuinely interesting - one major medical journal review years ago concluded it was prudent for adults to supplement, while later reviews found typical shelf multivitamins achieved little. I reckon there's truth in both, and my own conclusion after decades is simple: **quality matters enormously, and in my experience you get what you pay for**. That's why our program is particular about what it uses: whole-food supplementation from a company that's been at this for over ninety years, grows its ingredients on its own certified organic farms, and is independently assessed by Euromonitor - the global market researcher - as the world's largest-selling vitamins and dietary supplements brand. I didn't choose it casually, mate, and I don't recommend it casually either.

A clear example of the gap: omega-3 - the essential fatty acids DHA and EPA. *Essential* means your body can't make *enough* of them; they have to come in from outside. Unless you're eating oily fish several times a week - and be honest, mate, you're not - you're likely running short. That's not a willpower problem. It's arithmetic.

In our community we have a line that says it all: **eat like you don't need to supplement - then supplement anyway**. Food always comes first. Supplementation, done properly, makes sure nothing's missing underneath it.

So: **the method makes the result. Complete nutrition helps make it optimal**. On your own with this book - real food, real results, nothing to buy, ever. In my coaching - I'm building a bloke for optimal health, and I do that job with the full toolkit. Either way, mate: talk to your GP, and remember everyone's results are their own.

**"What about the injections - Ozempic, Mounjaro and the rest?"**

The big one, so I'll give it to you straight and fair. First: I'm not the food police, and I'm not the medicine police either - that's a decision for you and your doctor, and if you're already on them, there's no judgement here. And *do not stop any medication without your doctor*. Full stop.

But you deserve the whole picture, because it's rarely given. These are serious drugs, and the documented side-effects list is real: nausea, vomiting and gut trouble severe enough that plenty of people quit them;

gallbladder disease; pancreatitis in rarer cases; cases of gastroparesis - stomach paralysis; a rare eye condition now noted on some labels; and a boxed warning about thyroid tumours from the animal studies. Two more matter enormously to everything this book teaches. One: studies show a big slice of the weight lost on these drugs - commonly a quarter to a third or more - is **lean muscle**, not fat, and you know from the numbers chapter exactly why that's a problem, especially as you age. Two: the trials show most people **regain most of the weight within a year of stopping** - because the jab changes your appetite, never your habits or your identity. It's the 95 per cent problem with a prescription attached. And honestly, mate: at this scale, these drugs are still young. The long-term story is still being written - and we're all in the study.

*Rick - Chapter 2 Rick, 20 kilos in under five months - gets the question in reverse all the time: "Everyone's gonna be thinking I'm on the Ozempic. I'm not." His results came from the walk, real food and a crew - "doing it the hard way," as he calls it. Then he corrects himself, because it matters: it's the first time in his life he's lost weight and it's STAYED lost.*

So here's my honest suggestion, coach to bloke. If you're *not* already on them: **give us 12 weeks our way first**. Twelve weeks of everything in this book - the food, the walk, the crew - and let your own results make the decision. If it genuinely doesn't work for you, then explore every alternative with your doctor, in order, with the jab as the *last* door, not the first. And if you're already on them: perfect - use this book to build the bloke *underneath* the result, so that when the scripts end, the man remains.

# THE 13 SMALL DECISIONS

1. The honest look - five questions, ten minutes.
2. Book the bloods.
3. Name your trap.
4. Write your platform sentence; cast one vote.
5. Pick your One Thing.
6. Design one day of food you like.
7. Ten minutes out the door tomorrow.
8. The ute-plan for your next danger zone.
9. Write the restart protocol - and the name.
10. Build the scoreboard; take the photos.
11. Have the conversation.
12. Name your suits.
13. Choose your road - alone or together.

# APPENDIX - THE STARTER FOOD LIST

*This is the list Chapter 6 promised: real foods that serve fat loss, with serve sizes, so you never have to count a calorie. Build your own menu from the foods here you actually like - small protein at every eat, every 60 to 90 minutes. Weigh meat, seafood and poultry raw, skin and visible fat removed. Grill, barbecue, roast, boil, or "fry" in a nonstick pan with cooking spray. Foods in bold are the best picks - build your menu's backbone from those.*

**PROTEINS** (one serve at every eat - this is the non-negotiable) **Chicken breast** (grilled or baked) 100g · **Turkey breast** 100g · **Lean beef (5% fat)** 100g · **Lean beef blade, grilled** 100g · **Veal or lamb, lean** 80g · **Kangaroo, lean** 100g · Pork, lean 80g · Lean cold cuts (98% fat free) 70g · **Eggs** 1 whole, or 2 egg whites · **Cottage cheese** ½ cup · Low-fat cheese 30g · Halloumi 55g · Low-fat milk 1 cup · Low-fat plain yoghurt ½ cup · Greek yoghurt 120g · Feta 100g

**SEAFOOD** (all champions - eat freely from here) **Barramundi** 100g · **Bream** 100g · **Cod** 100g · **Dory** 100g · **Haddock** 100g · **Snapper** 100g · **Salmon** 100g · **Tuna or sardines** 100g · **Prawns** 100g · **Scallops** 100g · **Oysters** 100g · **Crab or lobster** 100g

**VEGETARIAN PROTEINS** **Tofu, plain** 100 - 110g · Tofu, fresh fried 140g · Veggie burger (15g+ protein) 1 · Quorn pieces 50g · Quorn sausages 100g · Nutmeat 2 slices · Falafel balls (counts as protein + grain) 1 · Almonds 8 · Brazil nuts 3 · Macadamias 4 - 5 · Cashews, raw 8 · Walnuts 4 · Pepitas 28g · Hemp seeds 1 tbsp · Tahini 1 tbsp

**VEGETABLES** (generous serves - hard to go wrong here) **Asparagus** 1 cup · **Broccoli** 1 cup · **Carrots** ½ cup · **Celery** 1 cup · **Cucumber** 1 cup · **Mushrooms, raw** 2 cups · **Snow peas** 1 cup · **Spinach** 2 cups raw / 1 cup cooked · **Tomato** 1 small · **Zucchini** 1 cup · Cabbage 1 cup · Capsicum 1 small · Cauliflower 1 cup · Green beans 1 cup · Onion ½ cup · Bean sprouts 1 cup · Beetroot 1 cup · Avocado ½ cup · Sauerkraut 1 cup · Sweet corn ½ cob

**FRUIT** **Blueberries** ½ cup · **Strawberries** 1 cup · **Raspberries** ⅔ cup · **Orange** 1 small · **Watermelon** 1 cup · Apple 1 small · Apricots, fresh 2 medium · Banana ½ small · Blackberries ⅔ cup · Cherries 10 · Grapefruit ½ · Honeydew or rockmelon ½ cup · Mandarin 1 · Peach 1 medium · Pear ½ small · Pineapple ½ cup · Rhubarb 1 cup

**GRAINS & BREADS** Rolled oats / porridge 30g dry · Wholemeal toast 1 slice · Soy & linseed or wholegrain bread 1 slice · Hi-bran wheat biscuits 2 · Bran cereal 60g · Untoasted muesli 30g

**STARCHY CARBS** (*in moderation, and better later in your journey than day one*) Sweet potato 200g · Pumpkin 200g · Quinoa, cooked  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup · Brown or basmati rice  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup

**EXTRAS** (*a couple a day keeps food interesting*) Balsamic vinegar 1 tbsp · Mustard 1 tbsp · Horseradish · Chilli flakes · Jalapeños 2 · Shallots · Radishes  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup · Vegemite 1 tsp · Butter 1 tsp · Extra virgin olive oil 1 tbsp · Diet jelly  $\frac{1}{4}$  pack · Apple sauce 2 tbsp

**DRINKS** Water (2.5 - 3.5L across the day) · Tea, herbal tea, coffee - no sugar · Sparkling mineral water · Unsweetened almond, coconut or macadamia milk 1 cup

**ON PROTEIN SHAKES AND BARS:** a quality protein shake or a bar with 15-plus grams of protein and minimal sugar can stand in for a protein serve when you're caught out - the glovebox play from the danger zones chapter. Read the label like a sceptic: protein high, sugar low, serving honest.

# NOTES & REFERENCES

A short and honest list. This book leans on lived experience first - mine and our community's - but where I've stood on someone else's shoulders or quoted a number, here's where it came from.

"Quiet desperation" - Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854): "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."

The votes-and-identity framing in Chapter 4 draws on James Clear, *Atomic Habits* (2018) - "every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become."

The one-priority principle in Chapter 5 - Gary Keller with Jay Papasan, *The ONE Thing* (2013).

"What gets measured improves" (Chapter 3) - a maxim with many claimed parents, most often traced to the management writer Peter Drucker and his circle.

Make your bed (Chapter 7) - Admiral William H. McRaven, commencement address, University of Texas at Austin (2014); later the book *Make Your Bed* (2017).

Quitter's Day (Chapter 3) - analysis of user activity data by Strava (2019), which found New Year's resolutions most commonly fail on the second Friday of January.

The vitamins discussion in *Questions from Blokes* - Fletcher, R.H. & Fairfield, K.M., "Vitamins for Chronic Disease Prevention in Adults," *JAMA*, vol. 287 (2002), which concluded it "prudent for all adults to take vitamin supplements"; balanced against the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's 2022 statement finding insufficient evidence to recommend supplementation for the general population. Which is why our answer says what it says: food first, test, then supplement what's actually short.

The brand description in the supplements answer - "world's No. 1 selling vitamins and dietary supplements brand" - is published by Euromonitor International, as cited by the brand's manufacturer.

The injection side-effects summary in *Questions from Blokes* is drawn from Australian TGA product information, overseas regulator labelling, and published clinical trial data - including the studies on lean-mass loss and on weight regain after stopping.

Muscle versus fat (Chapter 10) - muscle is roughly 1.06 kg per litre, body fat roughly 0.9 kg per litre: the same kilo of fat takes up about 20 per cent more room. Not double. Precision matters, even in a good story.

The Einstein line in Chapter 12 is a paraphrase long credited to him without solid evidence. Treat it as folk wisdom with a famous haircut.

"Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth" (Chapter 8) - Mike Tyson, in the lead-up to the Tyrell Biggs fight (1987), and confirmed by the man himself many times since. Included exactly as he said it - mouth, not face - because in this book we check these things.

Pay It Forward (Chapter 11) - the film Pay It Forward (2000), from the novel by Catherine Ryan Hyde.

The "up to three times better with a partner" figure in Chapter 11 is our community's observed experience, not a clinical trial. Promise Two applies.

The Australian statistics in Why Blokes? - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Overweight and Obesity report, drawing on the 2022-24 National Health Measures Survey: 72 per cent of Australian men and 62 per cent of Australian women aged 18 and over living with overweight or obesity, with rates climbing through middle age. The "more than two million middle-aged blokes" figure applies those rates to Australian Bureau of Statistics population estimates for men aged 45-64.

All client stories appear with permission, first names only, told the way they told them to me. Their results are their own - remarkable, real, and no guarantee of yours. That part's up to you, mate.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



*2010, 130 kilos - and today, 48 kilos lighter.*

Wayne Hopkins was a 3.6-kilo baby who became a 130-kilo bloke - and then, one small decision at a time, became neither. He's lost 48 kilos, kept it off for close to a decade, walked the Kokoda Track and 900 kilometres of the Camino across Spain, and holds blood work his doctor reckons belongs to a man fifteen years younger. These days he coaches everyday Aussies through the same transformation, alongside a community he credits with everything. He lives in Queensland with his wife Meredith and their two cavoodles, Redford and Denzel, where he does 95 per cent of the cooking and 100 per cent of the eating the way he teaches. He is also the author of *Small Decisions, Big Results*. He was you once. He wrote this so you'd know the way back.



*Wayne today - coaching, speaking, and still doing the walk every morning.*