# THE CIRCLE

## Careers with Impact

A call to action providing a framework for thinking about your work

Parry Field Lawyers

Steven Moe

# THE CIRCLE

## CAREERS WITH IMPACT

**STEVEN MOE**

2025

First Printed June 2025
By Seeds Press
ISBN 978-1-7385894-8-7 (Softcover)
ISBN 978-1-7385894-9-4 (ebook)

**Contact**
stevenmoe@parryfield.com
and happy to connect on LinkedIn here

I shall be telling this with a sigh
somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by,
and that has made all the difference.

**Robert Frost**

"This book helped me reflect on my journey and inspired me to think deeply about how I can align my career with my purpose and values. It also reminded me that I am the leader and driver of my own life and this perspective reignited my excitement for the future."
Jasmine Muhlmann

A labour of love, **Seeds Podcast** now has more than 450 hour long interviews with inspiring people – you can join the community by subscribing in podcast apps, leave a review and maybe tell someone else about it?

You can also find lots more information including audio recordings from this book, downloads of my other books, articles, videos and more at theseeds.nz

I am a Partner in Aotearoa New Zealand's leading law firm supporting purpose-led organisations that range from companies to charities and hybrid structures.

Our Impact Team works across the country with 15 of us, and we have around 100 staff total across our five offices in both the South Island and North Island. Maybe our team can help you too? More at parryfield.com

# CONTENTS

The Circle . . . . . 8
Introduction . . . . . 10

Part I: Our source of identity . . . . . 12
Part II: Misconception about work . . . . . 19
Part III: Purpose and your values . . . . . 26
Part IV: Why all this impacts you . . . . . 33
Part V: Developing seed habits . . . . . 42
Part VI: Creativity and vulnerability . . . . . 49
Part VII: What are you building? . . . . . 55
Part VIII: Closing the loop of the circle . . . . . 61

**Resources**
10 tips for new graduates . . . . . 63
The best career advice you've ever got . . . . . 65
Interview for "The Heart of Practice" by Simon Tupman . . 70
Podcasts, Books, and more . . . . . 78
The Last Wonderer . . . . . 80

Biography . . . . . 81
Acknowledgments . . . . . 83

# THE CIRCLE

A circle stretches in one continuous arc, turning into itself.

We are each becoming someone.

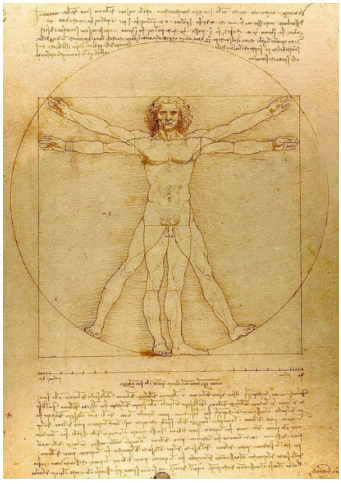
Just like how a circle is one connected line, we are both the person we are today and also the person we one day will become.

This book has been written with my younger self in mind at different stages of the circle of my own career.

That earlier version of me would have appreciated hearing some of these insights and reflections.

The stages of the circle include those who are studying, and those who are either just starting out in a career, those who have been working for a short time and those who have been working for a very long time or are nearing retirement.

I invite you to set aside some time to read through this book and deepen your thinking on your work.



*Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian man, 1490*

I've lifted up a thought for each of you and I hope for anyone who opens these pages, that both your mind and your heart will be ready for the challenges they contain.

May this reflection encourage you on your journey in some way and if it does, please consider who you could share it with as well.

# INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to involve impact in your work and career? Is what you do a job or a calling or a vocation? What might it look like practically to have impact at the heart of what you do in your work?

I was recently challenged to articulate a framework around how we might be able to answer these questions. This short reflection comes after reading extensively and having conversations with many others. It is also serves as a call to action.

I've included some personal stories and reflections to ground this in my own journey and share openly with you. Having now worked as a lawyer for 25 years and also talked to 450+ people for Seeds Podcast, a lot of different conversations have seeped into my approach to life and identity, and have helped my developing a sense of purpose.

This topic or our work is important to think about and get right, and yet it is not something we are taught in school. The reality is that since the Industrial Revolution we have been on a fast track of innovation and constant technological change which has propelled us generations forward with what is possible. We haven't had the time for introspection and reflection. We have neglected the fundamental questions which sought to connect what we do in our work with deeper meaning and impact.

When speaking, I often hold up an apple and ask what the *potential* is - maybe an apple pie, sliced into a salad, or some apple cider? No - the *true potential* are the seeds inside which might become a tree that produces thousands of apples. We just need a paradigm shift of thinking to see in a new way. I hope this book is like that for you when it comes to thinking about work.

When you plant a seed, there are certain conditions that are needed for it to grow – light, heat, nutrients, water and soil. Without even one of these factors, the plant will not survive. In a similar way, our understanding of these key factors will mean work life could either thrive or remain stunted.

Getting this framework right will allow us to spend the time in our work well. Having the wrong conception will see temptations become new gods for us in the form of pursuing money, influence or even an idolisation of our own job title. An identity primarily based on what you do will ultimately prove to be the wrong foundation to build on. By gaining a proper understanding of work, our careers will be enriched and purpose-filled.

Perhaps it would help to think about work in terms of an older word – vocation – which refers to, "a summons or strong inclination to a particular state or course of action". How might what you do (or a new role in future) become your vocation, so that you can embrace this part of who you are?

I hope this book will help your thinking on this important topic and that there can be more impact as a result for you after thinking deeply about your career, and how you use your time. Set your sights on becoming the type of person that you would like to meet!

# PART I
# YOUR SOURCE OF IDENTITY

*"Work is love made visible." - Kahlil Gibran*

I am not going to start by talking about your work or your job title. Instead, I think we need to start with another question that is relevant for us all. Where do you get your source of identity?

### *Your source of identity matters*

We have to start here. Is your identity built on the foundation of your job and position? Do you let your worth be judged by this identity? It's best to consider these questions early in our careers rather than realising seven years in, or twenty years in, or perhaps only when we retire. Think of your identity as a house built on the foundations of your work position. This foundation is like sand that will crumble away with wind, waves and rain. It isn't stable.

The danger is there and it is real, if we do not think about it. When is the right time to consider this? Right now.

### *My identity journey*

A lot of people hear my accent and it can be confusing. I was born in America but moved to New Zealand aged 7 in 1983 (to a small place called Papakaio in Otago, near Oamaru). As a child we also lived in Chile for a year in Puerto Varas. So I actually grew up in several places - where was I from? Well I grew up in Christchurch and went to high school and went to Canterbury University here, studying law and history - so it is where I feel most connected.

I remember my first job after law school very well. The excitement mixed with nerves of what it would be like and what opportunities I would get to try. It was February 2001 and after a break from finishing University I drove my car alone from Christchurch and caught the ferry to Wellington.

Law students often try to find a summer job at a law firm to get some experience. And, while I had applied, I did not do summer clerking during my degree apart from some short-term work at Parry Field Lawyers (where I would end up some eighteen years later).

Instead of a whole summer in a clerkship type role I went to Japan for a summer during 1998 and worked at a ski resort called Akakura. I had a working holiday visa which lasted for a year, and I ended up staying the whole time and teaching English in Osaka (right in the middle of my degree). This experience probably impacted me more positively than all of my time at University in terms of gaining an understanding of what I believed for myself. Later on, this understanding helped me grow my own set of values and beliefs rather than what my parents believed.

When deciding if I should go to Japan many people said I should stick to the known path: finish my degree, get a job, and start to pay off a mortgage. It was my Father and a friend who I was out hiking with to Lake Daniells in the beautiful Lewis Pass, who encouraged me to think about what my perspective would be when I was ninety – would I regret not going?

*I moved to Aotearoa aged 7 - here with younger sister Natalie near Aoraki Mt Cook among lupins about 1984. The patches on my knees show I fell down a lot!*

It was a good framing question and the realisation that I would regret it helped me make the decision and it this that has helped guide all my subsequent big life decisions. I think that OE (overseas experience) was very impactful as I learned so much from the Japanese people – not just the language but the way they act and treat others.

However, this year away also meant that I approached my final year at law school with a sense of unease. What would I do after five years of studying law? This unease became a weight on my mind, seeming to become heavier to lift the more I pondered on it.

When the letter came from a national law firm with the offer and a move to Wellington, I felt a sense of relief and satisfaction. But it also started an unhealthy addiction that began to skew my sense of identity and self-worth in a negative way.

Suddenly, if someone asked me about my plans, there was a story to tell and even nods of approval. "Congratulations!", "Well done!" – these were common reactions, and I found myself believing them and letting it start to shape what I thought of myself. I found that my own identity – slowly and over time– became interlinked with this role I had not even begun yet.

Getting that position was an achievement, but it was also a form of slow acting poison.

*Graduating with my Mother Marion in 2001*

This praise and approval grew into an addiction which fueled my sense of identity and how this role tied in with and reinforced

my ego. My identity became more and more directly related to this role, this position, and this place. I began to notice that I expected a type of reaction when I said where I worked, what I did, and therefore, the value I had.

This identity became woven into me, like threads in a multicoloured tapestry – this thread became an important element of who I was. Perhaps, it even started to be the dominant colour among those threads that made me.

That first job did not work out the way I had expected and it was painful - but with hindsight, it was also a powerful jolt that forced me to confront my source of identity. I would go on to a much larger international law firm and work in London, Tokyo and Sydney for 4 years in each place and more than a decade away from New Zealand.

Fortunately by then, I had come to grips with what I should actually build my identity with. That first role taught me something really important – if my identity was so intertwined with being a lawyer, I would lose myself in that.

I needed to rediscover where my true value and worth was. I needed a stronger sense of where my identity came from that was not based on my job and that would last, whatever would come in the future.

The job may come, and it may go, but with a solid understanding about what foundation your identity is built on, you can be grounded without losing your sense of self. And never give up on studying, challenging and growing. We are always learning.

This principle of being satisfied with who you are applies to relationships too. Don't seek fulfillment through other people because you want to be completed by them. Become comfortable and happy on your own and with who you are - then you will be ready to meet someone. Aim to become the type of person that you would like to meet.

***What if we get this wrong?***

So, what is the point here? Basing your identity primarily on something which can be taken away may leave you with nothing.

You might have an accident, an illness or something beyond your control could impact your ability to do your job. Or, if these things don't happen, at some point something else will kick in – time.

When you retire and are no longer doing this role, who are you then? I think many people realise this way too late, perhaps even after retiring. It is much better to think about it now.

If your job is the main source of your identity, you will crumble when it is taken away.

***So, where do you get your identity from?***

I think too often we move directly from high school, to study, to a job. We need to take time to learn who we are and where we get our joy. Maybe you have never done this and need to take a break to consider it. Do so.

However it is also worth reflecting on another point - when you are just out of high school you may not have had enough experiences to even be able to know what you want to do or what brings joy. My advice for you young people is to be curious and try things. My friend Craig Fisher put it this way:

*Expecting youth to know, with certainly, what path they should choose early on seems so ridiculous for all but the exceptional few. Having more time to seek with curiosity seems much more sensible. So many young and older folk don't know their desired (true?) path yet beat themselves up about it. It can be a very negative destructive loop. I used to have a self-talk that was very negative being: "I dont*

*know what I want to be when I grow up". When I was helped to reflect and analyse it, I switched it to: "How can I make this experience even better for myself and others?" Just that simple change to self-talk framing helped change my outlook to one of positive curiosity. It's been so valuable.*

Paul Brown is another friend of mine and wrote to me recently after reviewing a draft of this book, commenting, "*how many people give themselves the space to consider their identity? For many people their identity just happens. But there is a balance needed here: inspect it too much and you risk losing authenticity and fabricating identity. Identity may be shaped…but can it be created?*" Think about it carefully because your identity is the starting point for everything else. It won't be the same as me or someone else. For you, this may come back to family, faith, community, education, or something else.

Your identity should not be defined by what you do, but who you are.

## Reflection points

Take time with no distractions.

Think about what you base your identity on.

What is your source of identity?

## Moving Mountains

*Inspired by Mark Prain, who I interviewed for Seeds Podcast about his life and freindship with Sir Edmund Hillary. I used to write a poem for eacch guest (it got harder now there are 450+). This poem was focussing on how they came up with a new venture together that later helped start the Edmund Hillary Fellowship.*

Mountains cast long shadows across the land,
those who conquer them even more.
That day you shook a very mountain's hand
deciding together to take a stand.
Creating something unseen before.

Throw out your plan that's 'crazy'
for all at this table to see.
Don't worry if the vision is hazy
(unless you're a little bit lazy).
open their eyes to all it can be.

Consequences unseen wait round river bends,
as hope and hard work give birth.
For as yet unknown allies and future friends
all help as time, the future lends
Starting something of worth.

So don't be afraid of that half waking thought,
for all may not be what it seems.
Grab the idea tight, show what you've caught,
it may be exactly what they've also sought,
and become more than an echo of dreams.

# PART II
# BALANCE... OR INTEGRATION?

*"A ship is safe in the harbour - but that is not what ships are made for."*

You and I spend a majority of our life at work yet we seldom talk about it in a deep way.

My wife and I recently bought my daughter some goldfish after many months of requests. They swim around in a tank with a small world surrounding them – rocks, plants, a small sunken ship and a Japanese style building which they float in and out of. They breathe in the water and cannot imagine a world outside of that little tank, a world where people breathe the air and walk around.

Our perception of work is similar – limited by the culture we have grown up in and breathe, without even realising it. What are some of the root causes of misconception that originate in those cultural influences?

If they exist, it might impact our view of work and the role that it plays in our lives. Let's think about what those influences are more deeply.

### *A common misconception to challenge*

We need to reimagine the place that work has in our lives so that our work and our lives are not seen as totally separate things. It's not the primary foundation of identity but it is an important part of who we are.

In my own career, I have struggled with this a lot but have come to realise that I should not be one version of myself at work, another version at home and another elsewhere. The key is to have a consistent approach across every aspect of your life. So what is a paradigm of thinking which may lead many of us to have an incorrect mindset regarding our work?

***Balance … or integration?***

The current view is in evidence whenever we hear the common phrase "Work and Life Balance".

How often have you been asked about how your work and life balance is? Usually, the question is followed with how there is a juggle going on, how things are very busy at the moment, how that next holiday is going to be great…

I think the issue is that this idea of "balance" sets us up to think about work in the wrong way. It seeks to split our "life" from our "work" and achieve some sort of mythical 'balance' that somehow lies in between the two. Talking in this way is one sign that we have gotten our foundations wrong, and we need to challenge it.

Balance implies that the things that you care most about in your "life" is the most fulfilling and that there should be a divorce with your "work" (which often entails a negative connotation). That work must be separate and cannot contribute to life fulfillment. But what a shallow understanding of us as human beings and our potential, if we adopt this approach.

For most of us, work occupies the majority of our days and is something that likely keeps us very busy in our waking hours most of the week. This work/life balance mindset implies that we are on a seesaw, swinging up and down violently between the two and it can feel like we must only do the work to enable the thing we really care about - our life. Therefore, it is implied that the life part is what we do when we are not at work – hence the struggle to balance the two.

### *What does this mean?*

Just to clarify, this conception implies that we spend most of our waking days in a cycle of doing work which is only done to allow us to feel fulfilled outside of that work. What a poor scenario to aspire to and limited vision of the possibility of what work can be.

Your work is a vital and important part of your life, so it is wrong to split the two. Work is not something to be balanced against, but instead should be embraced as a part of your life. What you do and what you achieve is significant. Therefore, next time someone asks you about work/life balance, challenge the assumption that sits behind their question.

What is the alternative to this mindset? Well, let's shift the framework and think about it as work/life integration. In other words, your work is an important part of your life. Not separate to, or unrelated, or only a means to live your life. Adopting this new mindset means the ideology of "my work and life are separate" evolves into "the contribution I make <u>through</u> my work is a big part of my life".

Work/life integration gives us grounds to start talking about being focussed on impact as well. An integrated life will certainly lead to a more holistic view of who we are, what we do, and why we do our work.

### *An excuse to work more?*

Please do not mistake this new mindset as an excuse to justify overwork and not taking time out to spend with friends and family or doing fun activities. An integrated life recognises that work is only one important aspect of who you are and what your life consists of, freeing you to grow the other dimensions of yourself as well.

This mindset is not a rejection of having activities outside of work, but rather a recognition that the work you do matters and is part of your life. It is still just as important to take time to rest and pursue other interests outside of work. Don't let any moments slip by. As John Lennon once said, *"life is what happens while you're busy making other plans."*

Give yourself the space to explore and find moments of stillness to reflect. Seek out joy in simple things like the taste of food, the song your child sings, or the warmth of the sun on your face. Remember, there is a bigger life outside of your fish-tank world.

### *The integrated approach*

If you have an understanding of how important work is to who you are, your work then becomes an avenue for you to express your values. Work can be sought out for the energy it can bring and the good you can do with it, rather than just viewing it as a way to earn money to spend at the weekend.

There are many people out there who are stuck in a rut and work in a job that not only do they not enjoy, but they are also unable to exercise the talents they have. Ask yourself questions about the type of work you do. Does the idea of integrating work and life together excite you? Are you able to use your talents? Is your work helping you move in a positive life trajectory? How might this shift in mindset look in your context?

Depending on the answers to these questions, it may be time to consider change. Perhaps the prospect of trying a different area of work, a different environment, or company may stir some excitement and newfound motivation in you. There are so many options out there, do not settle for unsatisfying work. Your work is a valuable part of your integrated life.

### *Finding purpose*

After 15 years in large corporate law firms, I became cynical about the "busines" of law. Was I supposed to find joy in calling an already wealthy client, to tell them the deal went through so they could buy another Lamborghini? At the start of 2016, as I moved back to New Zealand, I chose to join Parry Field Lawyers and reinvent my career. I took all my skills and what I had learned and focussed them on purpose and impact as the umbrella under which I worked. Now, I lead New Zealand's leading impact focussed team of lawyers and having real impact in society. So I know a reimagining is possible for you too.

Learn from your past.

And don't be afraid to reimagine your future...

*Rakaia River from above, a braided river – taken on a flight to Queenstown*

### *Braided River Reflection*

How often have we heard someone who has graduated recently hoping that luck will guide them to a career with meaning. More sad is someone who is getting close to retirement. You have to make things happen – it is not magical.

A sense of purpose and meaning requires searching and experimenting and trying new things. It requires curiosity. It requires saying 'yes' to what seems uncomfortable – like trying out words in a new language. It may not work out but to remain silent there is no chance. What might you be curious about and explore?

This reminds me of a metaphor that may help. Braided rivers in New Zealand are unique as they change often, moving in the same general direction, but never staying exactly the same. They constantly change in flow, intensity and width. Eventually, all the water will end up in the sea, no matter which channel is used.

Trying to plan every aspect of your life means you'll miss out. To really see new opportunities, like a braided river, you have to be willing to let directions shift, and go with where the waters of new opportunities are flowing.

**Reflection points**

Is what you are doing bringing you joy?

Is there a way to find joy in it?

If you can't find joy in it, is it worth continuing?

Where might the braided river be taking you?

# PART III
# PURPOSE AND YOUR VALUES

*"When the person you are hoping to be, meets the person you are becoming, how is that meeting going to go?" – Seth Godin*

Having discussed misconceptions and integration in your work, let's take a moment to reflect on your purpose. Your life is not just one big decision. Instead, it is a series of small decisions that over time will transform who you are as you keep moving forward. Life is more like a unified circle than a straight line. In order to do that well, you need to consider what your values are and how they relate to your purpose in life.

### *Your personal values*

A challenge I would like to offer here is that as your reflect on your values, put purpose at the centre of your life. In the organisations we are involved in, we talk about purpose and vision but have you done this for your own life? Have you ever thought about what your purpose might be?

In her book "Dare to Lead", Brené Brown endeavours to show how people can frame their purpose. She suggests that people should be clear on their values, and articulates how people should conduct themselves and how they should approach decision making in their lives. She writes:

*"The daring leaders we interviewed were never empty handed in the arena. They always carried with them clarity of values. This clarity is an essential support, a North Star in times of darkness. Living into our values means we do more than profess our values, we practice them.*

*We walk our talk – we are clear about what we believe and hold important, and we take care that our intentions, words, thoughts, and behaviours align with those beliefs."*

A personal example, which I hope helps you visualise this, is that I have settled on three values. Even though Brené suggests two, I've always liked the power of three. My three values are:

1. **Catalysing positive change** in both my legal work and connecting people with each other.

2. **Courage** to stand up for what is right including defining points that make me unique like my beliefs and actively prioritising my family.

3. **Creativity** which infuses all that I attempt to do – without it, things become drudgery. I get energy from activities such as writing this and hosting Seeds Podcast.

Have you ever written down your purpose and personal values? What might they be? They will be different from mine and anyone else, which is a good thing. Once you have evaluated what your purpose and personal values are, live your life consistent with those values and it will give you great clarity as a filter to your decision making.

Your value does not primarily come from what you do and having a clear sense of your purpose and personal values will help to ensure that is true.

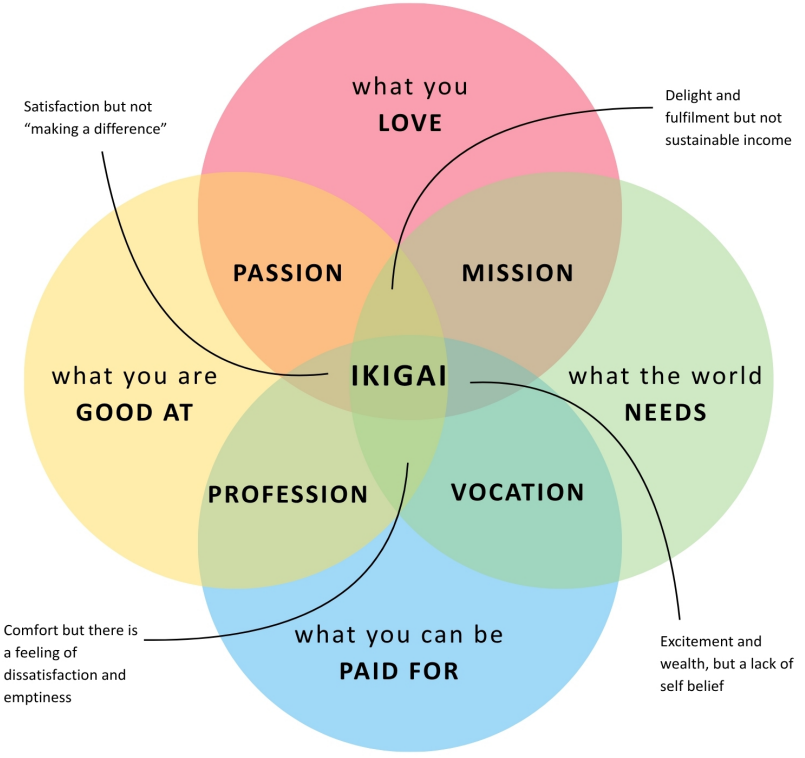
### *Ikigai and what we do*

Having lived in Japan for a year when I was just twenty-one and then later on for another four years affected me in many ways. One of the concepts that really stood out to me during my time in Japan was "Ikigai" which translates to "a reason for being".

The concept of Ikigai involves a very proactive approach to life and is about finding four elements that overlap with one another:

1. What you are good at
2. What is a need
3. What you love doing
4. What you can get paid to do.

Visually it looks like this:



Once you explore what those elements are for you, then in the centre of all this is Ikigai, your "sweet spot" when it comes to work. In the light of work/life integration, this could lead to a rewarding type of work. If what you do matters, you should consider exactly what Ikigai is for you. Don't settle for the first thing in your career if it does not fulfill you. For me, it has taken many years and lots of effort to find the area where I feel most empowered and comfortable with my role.

My work now focuses on purpose and impact, enabling me to help both companies and charities, speak at events, host Seeds, and write papers and books on topics that interest me.

### *Ringing the bell*

Think of searching for what resonates and brings fulfillment to you as being like a bell sitting on the ground. You cannot hear it when it is struck, but if raised and positioned correctly it will ring out for many to hear. Is your work right now similar to a bell ringing or is it muted and silenced?

Find an area you are passionate about, don't just settle for "I'm staying in this career because I am good at it". Your impact will be greater and more sustainable if you are operating in the flow of your Ikigai. To help envision your Ikigai, try to imagine what you want to be doing in say, ten or twenty years and then work back from there. What do you want to be known for? To build strong foundations in a certain expertise you are aiming for, start with writing about it and try to build relationships with key people. You are the driver of the car that is your career – grab the wheel of responsibility because no one will hand you a heaping plate of success, it takes determination and effort.

Also consider whether the concept of Ikigai may be applicable to organisations such as the company you work at. Think about how this concept could work in your organisation's context and whether it would be beneficial to introduce to your team. Ralph

Waldo Emerson once said, *"do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."* It's like the poem "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost from the start of this book where he writes, "*I took the one less traveled by*". Pondering on this, could this be a positive change which you could help pioneer and pave the way for in your organisation?

***More than a tool to find a job…***

There is a danger here of appropriating just the aspects that are convenient for this narrative on careers. But in fact, if we dive deeper the philosophy of Ikigai is more profound than just being a tool to find a job we like and are fulfilled in.

This philosophy is ancient and more wide reaching, coming from the Heian period (794 to 1185 AD). The term itself is "Iki" meaning to live, and "gai" meaning purpose. So, it has to do with "living on purpose" which is even more profound than finding the right job. In fact, a proper understanding permeates deeply like a long rain on parched soil, to understand that we can find joy in the details, in each of the little moments of life that otherwise pass by.

I've learnt about this from my Mother who often sends me little notes with observations – she remains curious in her 80s and is always looking with an attitude that finds joy in simple things. Like in nature, the bloom of a flower, its smell on the wind as you walk by, the sound of rain on the roof or the glow of embers from a fire. The sound of a child's laughter should bring us a smile and joy – especially if we had put our phones aside and focussed on them and helped that laugh to come.

So, finding or developing our own sense of Ikigai could be thought of as finding peace and fulfilment in the everyday. It also doesn't mean there will not be hard times, but it can help you navigate those.

Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles wrote a book on Ikigai and said: "Our intuition and curiosity are very powerful internal compasses to help us connect with our ikigai." What might this mean for your context and life?

### *Saying no*

It is important to remain focussed on the key points in our lives and not get distracted. This is easier said than done in an age of instant entertainment at our fingertips. The type of entertainment that depletes our energy and decays our drive, much like how candy's sweet taste corrodes our teeth.

We need to remember that it is important to say "no" and stay intent on what we are doing. Steve Jobs expressed it in this way:

*"People think focus means saying yes to the thing you've got to focus on. But that is not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are. You have to pick carefully."*

What are you picking – and who are you becoming by each of those small choices?

### *Who are we each becoming?*

Whatever your job title, don't forget that you are the leader of at least one person: yourself. You need to lead yourself well, keeping in mind who you are becoming. Think of what you were like five or ten years ago – you have grown and changed since then. We are not static and stuck in one place.

Will the person you are becoming be the best version you can be, or not? Your environment and influences will help determine the person you will one day be. This includes your friends, those in your close circle, as well as books, podcasts, television and many other influences.

Your future self is a real person – I often use this as a filter to think about my own life. Like that image of the circle at the start, that we are connected to who we will be. So who is the type of person I want to be when I am ninety-years old and how can I make choices now to become more like him?

Also, if you notice a quality you admire in someone else, why not learn from them? Someone speaks another language? You could too. Someone volunteers for a charity and contributes to community? You can also.

In science fiction movies characters that go back in time are always worried that a small change they make might influence the future. We seldom think about the fact that small changes today will influence who we and others become in the future, which is as yet unwritten.

As you become someone, choose well what influences you surround yourself with. It will have a major impact on who your future self will be.

## Reflection points

What are your three personal values?

What might these values mean for what you do?

How might you find your version of Ikigai?

# PART IV
# WHY ALL THIS IMPACTS YOU

*"Whatever your life's work, do it well … if it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures, like Shakespeare wrote poetry, like Beethoven composed music; sweep streets so well that all the host of Heaven and earth will have to pause and say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper, who swept his job well.'" - Dr Martin Luther King Jr.*

As you join with me to become a collective of impact-focussed people who have thought through the issues talked about in this book and are ready to bring our best selves to our careers, we must come together to build something new and encourage each other as we do this.

What could our country and our world look like if more of us had this approach? Imagine if all of us had a proper conception of what we do and our purpose framed by integration and Ikigai? We would be energised in our work and fueled to take action to help one another. With this approach, I think there is potential for it to be transformational. In all we do, we should ask "how can I add value?" and we can seek out ways to support and encourage others we know.

***Lets not forget our Communities...***

So far I have been talking about you as an individual and the personal introspection and reflection to undertake, and what is needed as you do this. However, it is worth making a point which I was reminded of by my friend Stella Hye Chung Jeon - that this is a very Western way of conceiving things.

This is because each one of us are also part of communities. These might be where we work, the city we live in, clubs, arts, sports or religious communities you are part of. You and I also each come from somewhere, so we are the current ambassadors of our ancestors as well and those who have come before us. We are also the guardians or kaitiaki of the future for our grandchildren. So in considering all that is in this book think about it for yourself but then also relate it to the fact that you are part of these bigger communities as well.

This Māori whakataukī is a proverb that conveys something of this: "Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi" which is, "With your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive."

So what we need to do is not focus just inward and do the work on ourselves, we also need to consider others and our communities as well. In fact, many of the principles being discussed here would apply to those communities as well.

The point here is we need to be on a journey to discover more than 'who you are' as an individual – its about how we also sit within our communities – the "we" is important to. I was grateful to Stella Hye Chung Jeon from Entangled Curiousities who expressed it this way when she read the first version of the draft of this book:

*"I'd love to weave in another thread from my own cultural entanglement: what if the alternative to a job title isn't just an individual 'I', but a collective 'we'? In many cultures, including my Korean heritage and Te Ao Māori, identity is fundamentally relational and woven through community, ancestors, and the complex web of responsibilities we have to each other (jeong).*

*It's less a solo journey of self-discovery and more about finding our unique place within the braid. Shifting the question from 'Who am I?' to 'Who are we becoming together?' might offer an even stronger, more resilient foundation when the professional storms hit."*

Of course as Seak-King Huang has reminded me: *"pursuing one's purpose, and perhaps taking that road less travelled, it may be necessary to actually depart from one's community of origin or the different communities one finds oneself in along the way. But it will be one's values that helps one make the decision whether to step out and away."*

### *Te Ao Māori*

I write this from Aotearoa New Zealand and want to acknowledge that in line with the last point there is a great wisdom in indigenous approaches that we can learn from. Not in an extension of colonialism to take for our needs but to genuinely rest with and listen to. For me this has involved cultivating a greater appreciation of Te Ao Māori – the Māori world view.

One aspect to highlight among many is that there is an interconnectedness that is part of the fabric here, a way of being that does not see ourselves in isolation from nature but instead a part of nature. That does not view a person's achievements as their own but recognises it is the community that empowers an individual to achieve and they can only do so on behalf of others. It explores and provides a richer understanding of ownership not as resources being "mine" but that we hold them as kaitiaki, guardians, for those who will come. Some of my Iwi clients talk of their 500 year plans – imagine if we had that mindset when making decisions as organisations?

### *Our privilege*

As I have the time to be able to work on and write this book and you have the time to read these words, I am also reminded that we have a privilege that many around the world have been denied. So many are unable to access education and opportunities, things that we can very easily take for granted. I have always thought of studying law as being like getting a

key which opens up doors that may otherwise have remained shut (whether in private practice, in house, as an academic or in business). Whatever you have studied, it is a great means of unlocking opportunities, and has the potential to teach you new ways of thinking.

There are many people who dream of studying but are unable to do so because they have immediate needs that must be met, like finding a job to support their families. Even though they would love to study, they don't have the time or resources to do so.

Our privilege is in the ability to study and learn, which consequently means we should use our training well. Whatever our job is, we have a responsibility to serve others as well. Your training and new skills can help enable others to have opportunities that they may not otherwise have.

### *Practical responses*

Dan Millman writes: "*The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.*" Throughout this reflection I have been weaving in challenges and points for you to be considering. As you take those on board, I would like to switch to the practicalities and consider what all this means and how to respond.

Having the correct posture and appreciation towards your work may free and empower you to catalyse the maximum amount of impact through what you do. Here are some of the ways I can think of how a mindset shift might change your approach. You might think of more but these are just to help you get thinking.

**Identity:** As I have said earlier in this book, we should ensure that the foundation of our identity is based on <u>who we are</u> and not what we do. Ground your value on the right foundation and don't build with material that can easily break down or be taken away (whether through unforeseen life events or eventually retirement).

**Stress:** Our roles often involve stressful situations due to time pressures or a variety of factors which can cause complications – almost every situation will have its own quirks and circumstance which can turn stressful. How will you deal with that stress proactively? How do you unwind and ensure you get enough sleep, good food and exercise?

**Community:** There are others out there who are going through similar things to you. If you are not connected with others on the same journey, seek them out, attend conferences, or start your own small group of people in your area. You might need to leave your current community to find them. One of the reasons I include this point is to normalise that everyone is going through something. An example of how I try to connect people is every few months I host "impact lunches" to gather people together, eat food, and encourage one another. Why wait to be invited to things? Be proactive and host your own. Become known as a connector.

**Exercise:** Hitting a wall on that project you are working on? Go for a walk. If you are stressed take more time to exercise, not less. I sometimes forget this as I rationlise that I have too much to get done to exercise - wrong mindset. Watch out for bad drinks and food habits. They are subtle, but what goes in your body is key as it is the fuel you need to stay healthy.

**Curiosity:** Treat everyone you meet without partiality or preference and be curious about them. That person has a story too, and you can unlock it by being curious and asking questions. I've met some amazing people sitting beside me on an aeroplane! Like the man whose son had recently passed away and he shared deep thoughts on life and meaning with me. I would have missed out if I was not curious. I just spoke to my friend Tesh Hearth for Seeds podcast episode 450 and she mentioned meeting someone on a plane and ended up moving cities as a result!

**Alcohol:** There can be a lot of this flowing at evening functions, events, Friday night drinks and it is very easy for that one glass of wine to unwind at the end of the day to become two. Alcohol over time has a numbing effect where you need more to feel the same effect. I'm currently on a multi year break from alcohol because I was starting to notice that it was too simple to top up a glass. Be proactive about this and consider it for yourself. If you'd like to consider this further, James Laughlin and I had a great conversation for Seeds episode 415 (he has a great podcast called ***Lead on Purpose*** that is worth following as well).

**Mentors:** Do you have a mentor? Who are you mentoring? Focus on having relationships with people who have more experience and have an openness to share their wisdom. The ability to work is a privilege and ultimately is about relationships, so invest in them and seek out mentors (even if you don't use that label). These relationships are always two-way and you will learn from each other. And don't forget to mentor and help the next generation – even if you are only just starting consider how you can come alongside others and help them.

**Empathy and the journey of others:** One of my mentors is named Ken Lord and he told me recently: "*Empathy is the heart of advocacy – you have to really know the client and what they are going through to really act in the best way for them.*" It's about supporting others in their journey, instead of thinking how they can help you in yours (the essence of marketing as well).

**The ethical situations:** There will be times when there are compromises, grey areas and decisions that need to be made. How we respond to these scenarios should be guided by our integrity and desire to act in the right way. Even if it costs us clients or promotions.

**Presentation skills:** It is worth investing in learning more about how to present to others because this is a skill that is applicable to more than just a group setting. Every time you meet another person for a meeting, it as a form of presentation. There is a lot of resources out there on this topic – how you use your voice, body language, and use of storytelling. Develop in this area.

**Lead yourself:** I am saying this again because it is so critical to understand. You are a leader. Everyone is, even if you are only leading one person - yourself. If you want to achieve something, carve out the time to do it. Focus on becoming the type of person that you would like to meet. Are you impressed when you meet someone who speaks three languages? Start learning one yourself.

We are not challenged on these sorts of topics during our years in school, but better late than never.

### *A note on dealing with disappointment*

Are you a student or recent graduate? Maybe you started studying because of the ideals of helping others, supporting communities, seeking justice – all the positive sides I've hinted are possible.

However, when you start working, you may realise that these ideals also come with obstacles and challenges. Whatever you do is likely going to involve people in a business and money and these factors will throw hurdles in your work journey and desire for Ikigai. When (not if) that happens, and you feel disappointed, please don't give away the entire scope of your work with disillusionment. That is the moment to stand for making a difference.

Developing your career can be rewarding and can incorporate all the reasons you started studying, but you will have to fight for it. Every disappointment is a chance to try again. And it's progress. Disappointment teaches you how to problem solve and how to become resilient rather than cynical. If you are able to seek out impact in your role, this will help soften the blow of disappointment because you know there is a greater purpose to work to.

### *Brokenness, true strength and beauty*

Each of us will have something in our lives where there has been trauma or brokenness of some kind or other – so how do we deal with that?

One of my favourite Seeds episodes was talking with the artist Nobuko Okamoto about Kintsugi, the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery using gold to bind back the pieces into a whole again. She does that as her job based in Christchurch, which has taken a very long time to study as it is not easy and takes time to do properly as well. But there are principles that apply to us as humans which is interesting to reflect on and what it might mean for each of us and our lives and parts that might be broken.

The thing that strikes me about this technique of Kintsugi is that if we think about our lives, so often there are broken parts and it is easy to push them aside and say "I don't want to deal with that brokenness" or that pain, or whatever it is. And the metaphor offered by Kintsugi is to say, "we can repair things and we can recognise that there is brokenness but that there can be beauty in the brokenness".

By using Gold it is actually emphasising the places where the pottery was broken rather than trying to hide them - highlighting that what was once a weakness has become a strength and distinctive and beautiful.

In the same way sometimes in our lives we don't want to talk about the broken things but in the same way we can be repaired, we can be fixed as well. That can be something that even is celebrated and it actually leads to some new life for this object of pottery … or this person.

The brokenness itself becomes the uniqueness and is a beautiful thing. In fact the brokenness which is repaired will also lead to empathy for others who are broken and we will be better placed to support them than someone who has not been through those experiences as well.

It won't be easy but dealing with the things in our life which have not gone well or where we have been hurt or damaged, if we get the right support and can repair those things, can be an expression to those around of us of a great beauty – like the gold in the Kintsugi which highlights the broken parts but they have been made strong. And we can all work with others to help them repair and become strong again as well.

## Reflection Points

Think about the practical considerations raised in this chapter.

What might it mean to consider these points such as your relationship with stress, alcohol, exercise, community and more?

# PART V
# DEVELOPING SEED HABITS

*"Do not judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant." - Robert Louis Stevenson*

All this is well and good but to really be able to implement change another element is needed – building up good habits.

If you were to attempt to run a marathon without training, you would struggle – but if you were to build stamina and endurance over time with training each week, the marathon becomes very much possible. You will become the type of person who is able to run a marathon. It is the same with our lives and having goals in other areas.

I've learned a lot from the 450+ guests on Seeds Podcast and wrote a book on these lessons called "Seed Habits" which is a free download at theseeds.nz. This book sets out nine principles I've learned, and I thought I'd share the summary version. If you can implement some of these principles in your life, I am confident your impact will increase. In that book, I have categorised my guests' insights by the different things that help a seed to grow – such as water, nutrients, heat, light, and time.

These principles are:

1. **The Seed / Your Purpose** – make this clear as it will lay the foundation for what else comes.

2. **Water / Patience** – this is not about trends or social media – it takes time to achieve results.

3. **Time / Expectations** – have a long term perspective not a short term one.

4. **Nutrients / Failure** – take risks and realise that "failing" is important because we learn from it.

5. **Heat / Encouragement** – surround yourself with the right people who will be on your side.

6. **Light / Curiosity** – have this attitude in all that you do and it will guide you well.

7. **Pruning / Saying No** – don't try to do everything, set boundaries and be willing to say no.

8. **The Fruit / Creativity** – try to ensure everything has this spark to it.

9. **The Journey** – it's not just about the destination; there is real wisdom is in enjoying the journey.

### *Being eff icient and choosing projects*

I recently spoke at a dinner for Principals, Deputy Principals and other Christchurch school leaders out at the beautifully remote Terrace Downs in the foothills of the Southern Alps. I shared these nine principles and Polu Luatua wrote me this message afterwards:

*Malo lava Steven,*

*Thanks for your presentation at the leaders dinner tonight. I was so inspired and motivated to get more out of my life. I spoke to you briefly at the end about how you use your time to fit everything in... I notice you have a lot of projects and hats on… How do you start projects? Do you just get an idea and go for it?*

*Ma le fa'aaloalo tele lava,*

*Polu Luatua*

I have reflected on these questions since and share my reflection below.

My opening thought was that we all have time each day – you, me, that person we both admire: twenty four hours in the day. I think we have a responsibility to use our time well because it is precious. We inhabit this space and moment in time – what we chose prior to this moment has shaped us, and what we choose now will alter the very essence of who we are becoming.

Achieving a goal or project can be overwhelming and it is easy to become discouraged. If you know the end point you can get there by a series of very small actions - being consistent is what shapes us. So, I encourage you to focus on the small steps. In many ways, the trajectory of where we are going is set by the end goal. Therefore, it is about showing up every day and committing. Eugene Peterson called this principle "*A long obedience in the same direction...*"

In everything I do, I am trying to make connections with the past, future, myself and others. One of the most important points when deciding on involvement in a project is who I am transforming into in the process. Each of us are different to ten years ago – so what will I be like ten years from now? I use

this thought as a filter to my decisions – will this help me meet interesting people, learn, have fun and encourage others to think deeply or in a new way?

Alongside this, I try to say "yes", unless it's not aligned with those considerations. I am not aiming for perfection. If I was, it would be hard to release any of my podcast episodes. The raw nature of them, the uhms and ahhs mistakes are what makes them authentic and real.

### *The Pareto Principle*

Realise early on that if you give yourself two hours of focussed work on something, it will yield 80% of the result. To get to 100% and elusive perfection will probably take another eight hours. I've learned to be content with producing more in less time (if you want to explore this, it's called the Pareto Principle).

My friend Sean Barnes who has written the excellent "The Impact Professional", refers to the quote by Winston Churchill, "*Perfection is the enemy of Progress.*"

Also seek out collaboration as it reduces the weight of what you need to bear.

As an example, I wrote five pages of a "Charities Healthcheck" guide and then sought comments from others – eighty responses later, from the collective wisdom of collaboraters, the document had grown to a six-part guide with dozens of questions.

This showed me an important principle: you can do more with others than you can on your own. Put another way, think about it in terms of this quote, "*To go fast, go alone – to go far, go together.*"

### *Fear of Failure*

Don't be afraid of failure. It is what holds people back from trying something new. One "failure" is compost for future success. I challenge you to have an opportunity-focussed mindset where you are willing to try things, learn from them, and move on.

Use your time well but be realistic about what you can do and have multiple projects at any one time. People see things come out and assume it was quick – but usually it is months of preparation.

Choose projects or initiatives that you feel passionate about, not things you feel like you "should" do. Seeds Podcast is up to 450+ episodes because I enjoy doing it. I get to focus on talking to inspiring and interesting people. There have been many people I have met who start a podcast and it fizzles after 5 episodes because they did not have a strong "why" when they were starting it and they hadn't thought about what brings joy.

As you try things, seek out that elusive element of fun and the spark of joy. Life is too short to be constrained by doing things we don't actually like doing. I remember talking to my friend Shamubeel Eaqub and asking how things were going and his reply inspired me: "I'm just having so much fun".

### *Rules for life*

Don't just think about developing good habits and choosing projects well, but also think about having certain rules for your life. Not negative, "don't do this or that" rules, but ones that will instead allow you to focus on making good choices when you get presented with options.

I've recently developed some for myself and would like to share them as a way to explain what these rules might look like and how you might find them useful. I want to acknowledge John Mark Comer's book called "Practising the Way" where he talks along these lines in a spiritual setting:

**Rule 1: Family** – my children and wife come before my work and other priorities. It is their respect that I crave over others in my life. This may involve choosing them over other priorities. I commit to prioritising this in my life.

**Rule 2: Solitude** – not watching TV or interacting with an online game but instead sitting, being still, walking and watching the sunset. In my case this will involve taking one day a month to be away from routines. I commit to prioritising this in my life.

**Rule 3: Fasting** – this involves showing my body that I am are in control and can be for a day or longer. It is amazing what not eating will do for clarity of thinking and a renewed sense of perspective. I commit to prioritising this in my life.

**Rule 4: Experiences** – money is temporary and if there is a choice between doing something which will stretch me or involve something new then I'll choose that over having more money in my bank account. This could involve travel, learning a new language, or learning an instrument - including paying money for lessons. I commit to prioritising this in my life.

**Rule 5: Spiritual** – this is an important part of life and is not to be ignored with preference for material needs or possessions. This could involve practises such as meditation, reading books of wisdom or being part of a faith commuinity. I commit to prioritising this in my life.

**Rule 6: Generosity** – if someone asks for help then it will be given to them, and I look for ways to serve others and be generous with my time. Acts of service are important. I commit to prioritising this in my life.

### *Reflection Points*

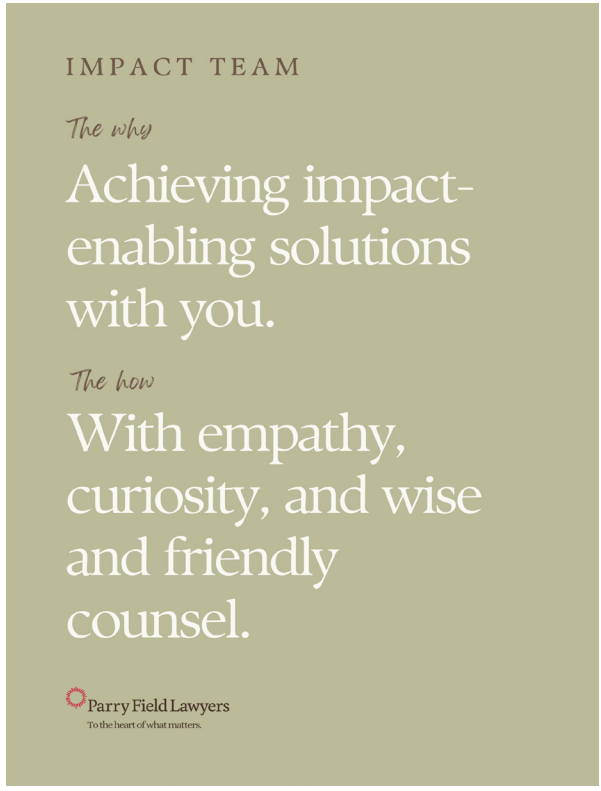
What would your rules of life be?

How would you prioritise them?

What will this mean for where you work?

*What might some of the principles discussed in this book mean in the context of an organisation?*

*An example: this is the wording that our team developed together to explain what we do and how we do it in our Impact Team.*



# PART VI
# CREATIVITY AND VULNERABILITY

More than one-hundred years ago, Theodore Roosevelt became the youngest President of the United States at age forty-two. The following quote comes from a long speech he delivered in 1910 in France after he had finished as President:

*"It is not the critic who counts; not someone who points out how the strong one stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the one who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends themselves in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if they fail, at least fails while daring greatly, so that their place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."*

This quote still resonates with a lot of people even though it is from over one-hundred years ago and serves as a reminder to get down in the arena and strive valiantly, to "*fail while daring greatly*". It's an emboldening statement to get on with things, create, let things flow, and show up before you are even ready to show up.

The thing I draw from the quote has to do with vulnerability. To be out there in the world and create something of value, even if it may be criticised. Criticism hurts. You may spend a lot of time and effort to create something, only for things to not go the way you expect – either a negative reaction or, in some ways worse,

silence. If you are coming up with something new, if you are being creative and making art, then that is inevitably going to happen.

And yet, true creativity will only ever be authentic and really resonate with someone if it is birthed from a place of vulnerability. There are amazing technical painters who are able to recreate the paintings of the old masters stroke for stroke, so that you or I who look at them would not be able to tell the difference. But, what elevates the painter to become an artist is the infusion of vulnerability and creativity, resulting in the creation of something
new.

If we've seen it before then it's not much better than a photocopier. There isn't much vulnerability involved in saying "here's something just like that painting over there".

Creativity is the mechanism whereby something is elevated into art. Vulnerability is needed because if you create something new, and if no one likes it, you have at least pushed boundaries to go beyond what others have done and create something yet unknown.

### *Learning from Vincent van Gogh*

Vincent van Gogh in his lifetime was never commercially successful – he only sold one painting while he was alive. Objectively, he was a failure during his time. But today, he is one of the most famous and influential painters in all of western art. He started painting at age twenty-seven and died at age thirty-seven – in that short period he painted around 1,100 paintings and 900 sketches – that's around four a week.

His "Starry Night" is one of the most reproduced pieces of art ever. What he said about the work he did on his art was: "*In spite of everything I shall rise again and take up my pencil and draw and draw.*" Perseverance is key. Continue creating art and don't

wait for the perfect moment.

Brené Brown has written extensively on this subject of vulnerability, and I encourage you to look up her work. On a recent road trip I listened to her talking and she said: "*Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change*". She also asks the question – are we willing to show up and be seen, to be authentic and stand by what we have produced? It can be difficult to create something new, but it is the struggle that will result in something beautiful.

What are you holding back from creating while you wait for perfection? If you are working on something, is it being created from a place that is infused with vulnerability that comes from the fear of showing people what you've made? That creative writing you've done. That art. That podcast. That song. That speech. That memo at work. That spreadsheet. Yes even the mundane can have creativity brought to it.

Embrace vulnerability as the path to creativity and through doing so, truly put new things out into the world. Sure, there may be critics to what you produce. You may fail. But you need to be down in the arena. Be ready to show up before you are even ready to be on the stage. Grab the mic and fail wholeheartedly – always knowing you gave it your very best shot.

***Give it all, Give it now ...***

Don't hang onto the creativity and bottle it up or wait to use it at some unknown point in the future. One of my favourite writers is Pulitzer Prize winner Annie Dillard, and her advice for authors resonates here:

"*One of the things I know about writing is this: spend it all, shoot it, play it, lose it all, right away, every time. Do not hoard what seems good for a later place in the book or for another book; give it, give it all, give it now. The impulse to save something good for a better place later is the signal to spend it now. Something more will arise for*

*later, something better. These things fill from behind, from beneath, like well water.*"

I remember back in 2003 I started writing something and a friend encouraged me to continue – he reasoned, if I put the effort into writing it, someone else would likely enjoy it too. Even if it is a small audience that doesn't result in monetary success. Seth Godin talks about the smallest viable audience for the creative things we make. It's certainly my approach with Seeds Podcast – someone may be listening to it right now, and that is enough. Actually even if no one listens, I am proud of the creativity and art of creating it.

Here is a moment of honesty. I've never shown that piece of writing from 2003 to anyone. I've sat on it – afraid of the vulnerability that would come with sharing it. Maybe this reflection is an encouragement to myself to be bold. To let go of the pride of having to be successful or having to write a perfect story. Perfection is a myth that we willingly let lock the door to the creative ideas that are waiting inside us.

I'm just finishing a novella called "The Last Wonderer" set in a dystopian future and am planning to release a chapter every few weeks. Will people like it? The more improtant question is if I enjoyed creating it. I did. I've put an extract at the back of this book so have a read! And help spread the word if you like it and want to know what happens next...

With Seeds Podcast and these reflections – they are about being vulnerable – about putting myself out there. At first, I thought the podcast was just interviews but now I realise that it is art too because there is both vulnerability and creativity involved in their creation.

Sometimes I get to interview amazing individuals you may have heard of like Tā Tipene O'Regan who I talked to for two hours about his grandparents and influences (the longst episode so far)

and other times they are with people you will never have heard of - but they have an amazing story. The key is to remember that everyone has a story - we just have to ask the right questions to unlock them!

I'm creating something with the podcast. Perfection – no. Creativity and something new – hopefully yes.

I hope this is an encouragement to you, and also to myself. How will you embrace your vulnerability and create something new – create something that might be criticised. Allow creativity free reign to come out. Embrace the fear as a friend, and as the quote said, forget the critic who is not in the fight. It's in being vulnerable that we will actually have achieved something creative, unique and worth sharing.

### *True success*

Get away from the measure of success being likes and numbers. Judge success by the authenticity of creation and the willingness to be vulnerable. Let the creativity flow from who you are and give it the chance to see the light of day. If there is no vulnerability involved, then it is probably not worth doing at all.

Later in Theodore Roosevelt's speech, he noted that those who try – and perhaps fail – stand apart for "*they have nobly ventured and have put forth all their heart and strength.*" So, don't just sit back and be a critic. Whatever this means in your context, get out there. Find your way of being creative. Do it wholeheartedly and with vulnerability.

You are the only one who can create something truly unique. That creativity which only you can bring has value for our world. Create. Get involved and get down in the arena – together, let's start daring greatly.

## Reflection Points

What form does creativity take in your life?

Do you seek perfection or are you willing to share what you create?

What is an area of creativity which you could nurture more?

*Interviewing Tā Tipene O'Regan was a real honour*

# PART VII
# WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING?

You are walking along a deserted path in a place you've never visited before. The sun is beating down and it is a very hot day. In the distance you can see three people beside the path, each about fifty metres apart from one another and they are all doing the same task.

When you reach the first one, you ask, "what are you doing?"

He looks back at you unhappily and says, "I'm just stacking these bricks, one on top of each other".

You reach the second person and ask them the same question. They shrug their shoulders and say, "I'm building a wall."

You walk up to the third person and ask them what they are doing.

She smiles and stretches out her arms, pointing upwards to an imagined future, and she confidently says, "I'm building a Cathedral".

***Mindset shift***

In one of my favourite interviews I spoke with Israel Cooper for Seeds Podcast on the work that they do with the construction company "Home", and how important it is to get the foundation of a building right.

It got me thinking about foundations, buildings and most importantly, why people build things. Each of us are spending time in our lives creating something, building something. You are involved in creating or building something of value. But how often do we lose focus on that – lose sight of what it is we are contributing to?

I'm reminded of a visit I had to Barcelona many years ago. The Sagrada Familia is the most visited site in Spain and will be nearing completion in 2026 which is the anniversary of the death of main designer, Gaudi. That's right - it is going to be completed one-hundred years after his death. Building cathedrals can be an intergenerational activity that involves a true understanding of stewardship and working for the benefit of those who will follow us. Few of those who worked on Cathedrals, particularly in the Middle Ages, would have expected to see them actually completed. Being part of building something like that requires you to embrace a bigger picture that is far beyond yourself.

The first meeting about the Sagrada Familia was held in 1866 and the first ground was broken in 1888. The first bell tower was completed in 1925. Over time, since then, there have been many artisans, sculptors, builders, masons – all kinds of people who have been involved. It simply could not be created alone. Since the beginning, there have been generations of workers – several lifetimes – of people working to see a vision unfold.

*The Sagrada Familia in Barcelona*

### *The legacy of Rod Oram, and an Apple Tree story*

Rod Oram was an Edmund Hillary Fellow and journalist who often reported on climate change. I got to know him through the EHF program as I am also a Fellow. I thought it might be worth sharing a little about what I heard at his funeral in 2024 as it is relevant to this theme of the impact our lives can have. Cheryl Reynolds (another EHF Fellow) shared this at his funeral service:

*"A number of us within the fellowship were tuned into Rod's frustrations about his seeming lack of progress on the big issues around climate and we rallied around and tried our best to support and encourage and boost him back up… And then came the big pep talk the last time Rod stayed with us in Raglan in October. Rod was openly sharing his frustrations again about the lack of progress and impact and he talked about his lack of influence. What a trigger that was for me. I gave Rod the biggest pep talk in my life, which Lynn will remember well and is one of the reasons that I'm here today telling you this story with love and compassion.*

*I told Rod just what a hero he was in my life and how I was certain he was a hero in the lives of so many others. I told him in no uncertain terms about the positive influence and impact he had had on my life alone and how far that influence and impact stretched. I remember he was quite taken aback at the time.*

*An Edmund Hillary Fellowship gathering in November 2022 with Rod Oram in the picture I am about 5 people to the left of him) – the string showed how we are all interconnected.*

*I told Rod the story of The Apple Tree. Christchurch EHF Fellow Steven Moe published a book last year called The Apple Tree. The story is like a parable. It describes a single tree beside a stream for a particular reason. The tree is leaning one way and so all the apples fall off the tree into the stream and float away. The tree is lonely by itself and questions its purpose. Little does it know that just out of sight further downstream a forest of apple trees, an entire valley of orchards has sprung up. I told Rod that day hat he is the Apple Tree and I tell you now, we are Rod's orchard. We are the fruit form his countless seeds of wisdom. We are his ripples of change. We have the knowledge that Rod has gifted us. It is on us now to act on that knowledge. A mighty Totara has fallen… We are Rod's orchard. It is time for us to bear Rod's fruit. Rod's legacy will resonate for generations to come – rest in love."*

We all will at some point wonder about our legacy and the impact we are having - it is important to keep planting seeds, even if you may not sit in the shade of the trees that result.

*The Apple Tree, a picture book written with messages for children and adults - you can watch me read it at in a video at theseeds.nz*

### *Learning from the life of Peter Drucker*

When I looked into the story I told at the start – and there are a lot of permutations that exist out on the internet - I found that it was made famous by Peter Drucker in his 1954 book called "*The Practice of Management*".

I think that Drucker himself exhibits this idea of having a greater vision beyond stacking bricks. He was born in 1909 and left Germany prior to WWII.

He was forty-five when his book was released, it's contents advocating for far-sighted things such as allowing risk-taking at lower levels in organisations, the importance of making strategic decisions, and developing teams that manage their own performance by reference to overall objectives.

He has been described as the founder of modern management and even if you haven't heard of him, it is likely that he wrote articles or books that influenced people you have heard of. He came up with the phrase "knowledge worker" back in 1959.

In the end he wrote thirty-nine books that were published over a seventy-year career. Drucker died in 2005 at the age of ninety-five. And yet his first book only came out when he was forty-five years old. I wonder if at age 44 he questioned if he had been successful?

The reason I write about Drucker is it seems likely that he knew that his life was about building cathedrals.

### *The Cathedral Builder and Invisible Labour*

So what about that first builder who didn't really know what they were doing – is that all their fault or could the person have explained the context better to them?

Stella Hye Chung Jeon from Entangled Curiousities offered this reflection on the metaphor:

*"I love the 'cathedral builder' metaphor. It's a powerful call to connect our daily tasks to a greater purpose. It also made me curious from a systems perspective: who are the people that are never asked what the cathedral should look like but are simply told to stack the bricks? The popular narrative of the 'inspired worker' can sometimes mask the precarious reality of those whose labour is essential but unrecognised: the cleaners, the administrators, the caregivers... Their invisible labour underpins the entire structure (as we experienced during lockdowns), yet they often can't afford the luxury of seeing the cathedral. It pushes me to ask: whose cathedral are we building, and how do we ensure the design and the dividends are shared with everyone who holds a brick?"*

As we finish this part and circle back to the story at the beginning, I just want to ask two questions and leave you to reflect on them. Each person in the story was building the same thing, but their attitude was completely different. My first question is:

***Which of the builders are you in how you approach your life?***

In the day-to-day repetition of placing one brick on top of another, it can be really hard to see what is being built and maintain the vision. Yet, that is what will sustain you in the long run. If you can see the bigger picture, it will fuel you and give you purpose. The second question is really quite simple:

***What is your Cathedral?***

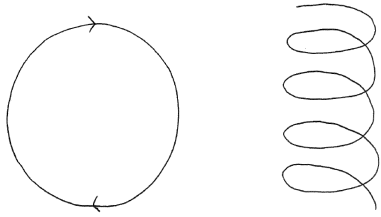
# PART VIII
# CLOSING THE LOOP OF THE CIRCLE

*"A circle is a reflection of eternity."*

At the very beginning of this book, we started with an image of a circle – let's return to that.

If you look at a circle in two dimensions from above (at left below), it is complete and unending. As I said at the start, who we are becoming is connected to who we are now.

Now consider a sphere - three dimensions (at right). Now when you look at it, there is actually an upward looping going on.



In this conception, it is a dynamic relationship which results in positive change that leads to greater impact. You can make things better. You can be in control of your career and work. You can have a vocation, a calling.

Start by having a longer-term perspective on your life and the fact that your worth comes from who you are and not what you do.

Then embrace what you do as one outworking of who you are.

So think of your life like a circle which loops around and connects the person you are with the person you are becoming.

**Become the person you have the potential to be.**

# RESOURCES

# 10 TIPS FOR NEW GRADUATES

I meet lots of graduates who ask me about being a lawyer and what advice I can give to them. Here are the ten pieces of advice I give to them (You can find the podcast episode on this here.

**Add value.** Always ask "how can I make things better" by doing more than is expected or requested. If you are asked to write a memo, draft the cover email that you know is going to be needed as well. If you mention a resource to someone over a coffee or on a call, follow up by emailing them a link later. If a client has a problem, think about whether they are asking the right questions or if there are other issues they haven't considered. Be proactive.

**Be curious.** School prepares you to think logically but does not teach you how to deal with the reality of work. You will be asked questions that you don't have the answers to. Some of them will seem very dull ("What is the origin of Section 22 of the Trusts Act 2019?"). But every question is a chance to learn something new. Approach them like greeting an old friend, with enthusiasm and curiosity and soon enough you will discover that over time, answering those dozens and hundreds of questions will build up a foundation on which you can stand firm.

**Be efficient.** Learn to use time well and in seek for those pockets of time that are wasted. Have a commute? Call prospective clients who want to talk. Have an interest in a subject area? Why not write a white paper about it. Become known as an expert in that, reach out to others you admire and ask for their views.

**Be creative.** Following on from that last one, always be looking for ways to infuse your work with creativity. Add a quote from a poet to that article you you are writing. Spend time thinking about how you can add visual interest.

Whatever career you are in, you can be creative in how you express yourself. I like how Seth Godin puts it, "*the distance from 'can' to 'will' keeps getting larger. You can connect, lead, see, speak, create, encourage, challenge and contribute. Will you?*"

**Seek impact.** I am fortunate and have a great privilege to meet amazing founders and purpose driven people. I get the opportunity to help catalyse impact for them to achieve things. Consider the areas you want to become known for and become an expert in that area. Becoming an impact-driven employer or employee is possible.

**Assumptions are dangerous.** Be careful when relying on an assumption about an answer, what a client wants, what someone implied, or how long something will take to prepare. You will get experience over time, but until then, always be wary about assumptions.

**Own your mistakes.** Yes, they will happen. Acknowledge, apologise and learn from them. Then move on and don't let them drag you down over and over by playing on an internal repeat loop. I once hit "reply all" on an emil by mistake that went to eight thousand people! When I interviewed Michael Mayell for Seeds Podcast, he described mistakes as the compost from which success will grow. I really like that.

**Relationships are key.** Think of it like a spiderweb where we are all interconnected in some way – everyone in that web has value and one day you may be able to help them (or they could help you).

**You are a leader.** Think of yourself as a leader right from the outset, because you are – at the very least, lead one person: yourself. So start there, and that mindset will help you grow and contribute.

**Have fun.** I started my career in 2001, so I have been doing this a while. It's important to not let the pressure of work outweigh the having fun part . . .

# THE BEST CAREER ADVICE YOU'VE EVER GOT

I did a LinkedIn post recently with some career advice and it had so many comments that were gold that I thought it would be nice to include all 39 of them here and there is also a Seeds episode of them being read out.

### Relationships and Mentorship

*"Build your industry connections and network" Rachel Tobeck.*

*"I loved this kōrero over a tasty kai and kawhe. And my response is – the best careers are those filled with diversity. Whether in orgs, place, or capabilities. So the first job is exactly that – the first of many to come!" - Anna Watson*

*"Soak it all in!! Learn from everyone around you regardless of their role in the business, listen, be curious, be open to all things that come your way – it's all experience! MOST OF ALL build relationships!!" - Meryll Waters*

*"Ask questions. Listen to the answers and advice. Ask thoughtful follow up questions. Listen carefully. Repeat. Try the advice and don't avoid imperfection. Keep asking, listening, and trying things." - Matt Perry*

*"These are all valid suggestions. I would like to add that if you see someone you admire, ask if they would be willing to catch up for an occasional coffee (or on line) to mentor you." Helen McLeod.*

*"That sometimes the biggest impact you (can) make is with people and collegial relationships … To be a kind, helpful, encouraging human being is often more of an enduring legacy than your work/ output in and of itself." - Megan Blakie.*

*"Embrace a mindset of constant learning and to actively seek out mentorship and opportunities." - Danny Blackwell.*

## Curiosity and Opennes to Opportunities

*"Say 'yes' to every opportunity or project that comes your way no matter how leftfield … you never know where it will lead!" - Claire Baldwin*

*"Be open minded to every opportunity that comes your way. You never know where it might lead and what undiscovered skills you didn't know you had." - Julie Lee*

*"Be open and curious." - Jeremy Muir*

*"Be curious, learn something new everyday, be open minded to new ideas & always act in a way that is true to yourself." - Brett Boag*

*"Food for thought, Steven. My advice would be embrace the opportunities on offer, go over and beyond, learn as much as you can and above all, stay true to yourself!" - Florina Pirnea*

*"I have certainly NOT had clear straight path in life and frankly wouldn't want it any other way. Life isn't a destination, it's a journey of continual navigation. Mine has taken me all over the place from living in the bush solo and showering under a waterfall to consulting with corporates in big cities. Take the winding path!!!!" - Edwin Dando*

*"Not sure what you want? Say yes to as many new experiences as possible. Then, once you have an idea of what suits you – say no to everything else and go all in." - Jen Stevie*

*"Embrace all training opportunities provided by your employer." - Leigh Fenigsohn*

*"Take the approach of your career / life being an adventure to explore. Navigating braided rivers can be so fulfilling, plus it has the added bonus of keeping life interesting." - Pete Howard*

*Careers can be successful and satisfying on a single path, across multiple paths, seemingly not following any path at all, or any combination at different points of time. I believe it's important to reflect, be open to opportunities, and always be alert to; what is happening, how you are doing, and who you are being and becoming." - Sunil Unka*

## Career Values and Goals

*"I love having a few things on the go and realising what the limit is and when there's more capacity to give." - Kate Radcliffe-Reid*

*"Recession proof yourself. What skills allows you to work in good times and recessionary times." - Tim W*

*"Never stop learning – focus on the soft skills and self awareness rather than technical skills." - Linda Scott*

*"Don't worry if your grand career plan changes trajectory – find the aspect of the job you love.. (the bit that you can't believe someone pays you to do) and grow that part and see where it takes you!"- Joy Reid*

*"What you do today doesn't have to be what you do forever." - Kate Bevin*

*"I call mine a non-linear career." - Louisa Taylor*

*"When joining a board a few years back, the comment was made that I seem to go where I feel I can add value. And that's true. If I cannot add value I shouldn't be there." - Phil Newman*

*"If you are starting a project or business, work out what you want to achieve. Knowing what success looks like helps you to make good decisions. But not just professional goals – what lifestyle do you want this to provide for you? If you can't achieve your personal goals within your professional goals then it will be unsustainable." - Miles Dalton*

*"The career as a scenic tour… it doesn't suit everybody, but it suits me!" - Paul McGregor*

*"You're here because you are one of the best at what you do. Don't internalise anything, the door is always open. Everyone makes mistakes and don't get upset if you make any. Speak to someone who can help you fix it. And don't spill anything on clients. That's it." - Warwick Anderson*

## Personal Values

*"My career path has certainly been a braided river, just like Hannah Duder's and I strongly suspect that this will be the case for more and more people driven by technology advancements. The softer human skills are what will be needed more and more, the things that technology can't replace. Finally, do what you love and don't be afraid to change paths. Many skills are transferable." - Amy Carter*

*"Don't box yourself in. Follow your interests and heart, and nurture both in everything you do while knowing context change is out of your control but how you change with it is entirely within your control." - Callum McKirdy*

*"Consider that you were born innately gifted. There will be a wee small voice that is inside you saying 'this is where I excel, and this is where I don't'. So my advice is to not ignore that wee small voice. Oh… and the voice speaks no matter what your qualifications are." - Malcolm Sproull*

*"There are a million ways to get from birth to death, and every one works." - Kaila Colbin*

*"I always say 'head in the direction you want to go/interested in'." - Jenn Benden*

*"Don't worry about salary, worry about what you will learn. Work for free if you have to. The earlier you gain knowledge, the more cumulative impact it has over the course of your life (much like saving money)." - David Carter*

*"Look for meaning in your work and stay true to yourself." - Fiona Stephenson*

*"Everything passes, all is temporary, nothing will matter in 500 years' time. Therefore, you get to define the meaning of your career, your life and your time on Earth." - Jamil Eldar*

*"My little bits:"*

1. *"Aim high and stay the course – you can actually move mountains with the depth of your will and desire."*
2. *"If anything comes easy or fast, it is not worth your devotion."*
3. *"Wealth will chase worthy causes. You may well chase the latter and let the former chase you."*
4. *"Build a family that grounds you solid and gives you sound sleep."*
5. *"Work on your health and find your daily dose of laughter."*

*"And lastly: believe." - Ganesh Iyer*

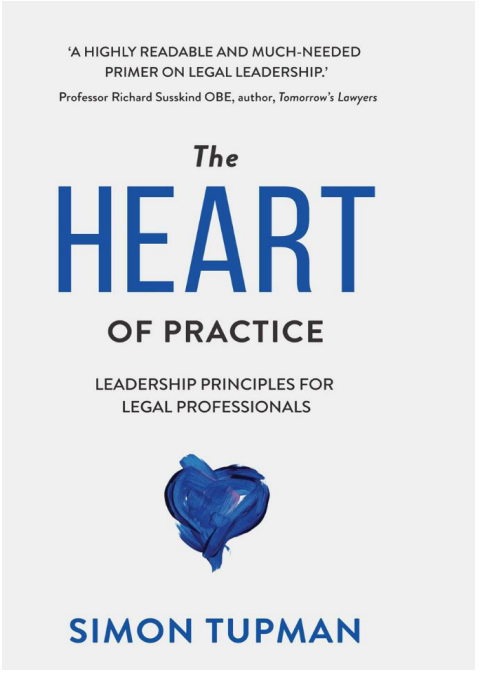
And mine was: *"Be willing to take risks particularly at the start of your career, ask yourself what your 90 year old self would think – would there be regret over not pushing out into new things?"*

# INTERVIEW FOR "THE HEART OF PRACTICE" WITH SIMON TUPMAN

This is an interview with Simon for his 2023 book "The Heart of Practice - Leadership Principles for Legal Professionals" and I am including it as the answers may interest no matter what area you are working in – a lot of the principles will apply to any work or career.

**Steven, you are widely traveled and experienced. How did you get to be where you are today?**

"My story begins in another country because my parents are from America. We moved to New Zealand when I was seven years old. I grew up in Christchurch and I went to Canterbury University. Although there was no legacy of lawyers in my family, there was a person whom I knew and respected and who ended up being the example I followed – Ken Lord, a Partner at Parry Field. Initially, I wasn't sure what I would study but, having enjoyed writing, reading, history, I decided to study law. And at the end of my degree, I took a year out and moved to Japan to teach English. I view it now as a symbol of all of the life choices that I've made because it was not the expected career path and involved taking some risk. I try to make decisions on the basis of whether I will have regrets at the end of my life if I do not pursue something"



**How did you kick off your legal career?**

"After my year in Japan, I got a job at Russell McVeagh in Wellington and spent three years there before deciding to move overseas. I then spent three years in the London firm Norton Rose, (which later became Norton Rose Fulbright), followed by four years in their Tokyo office, and then a further four years in their Sydney office before moving back to Christchurch six years ago, when I joined Parry Field."

**And what is the focus for your work now?**

"I describe it as a 'purpose-driven' practice, in that lots of the people that I'm helping are 'for profit', while trying to have a positive impact on the world. Some people call that 'social enterprise'. I prefer to think of it as a mirror of what the future may hold for business. The other side of my practice is helping what traditionally people would call 'not for profit', but I prefer to call 'for purpose'. So, that includes charities, incorporated societies, and others who are generally acting from their hearts to have some positive impact in what they're doing. So, it's quite a varied practice but the foundation is supporting people who are making positive impact."

**I understand that as part of your purpose driven work, you have recently taken on the position of Chair of the Asia Pacific branch of Global Alliance of Impact Lawyers (GAIL).**

"Yes, GAIL is a new community of legal leaders who are using the practice of law to have a positive impact on people and the planet, and to accelerate the just transition. We believe lawyers are uniquely positioned to facilitate change and support the movement towards a more equitable system."

**Is Parry Field a purpose - driven law firm?**

"Yes, I think it is. Next year will be our 75th anniversary so it's been around for a long time. Our founders were Mr Parry and Mr Field and they had a focus on providing quality service to their clients. Our tagline is: "T*o the heart of what matters*". In other words, we really try to get beyond what the client is presenting as their issue and to understand what is really going on underneath, as often clients haven't even articulated what their real issue is. So, as lawyers, we help to unlock that and then to deal with it."

**On a personal note, what drives you to do the work that you do today?**

"My career has comprised two halves. The first half of my career was very focussed on acting for big companies and banks overseas. Then, when I got to my late thirtys, I spent time thinking with my wife: where do we want to be based when I retire? Is it in this big international law firm or do we want to move back to New Zealand. I took that chance of moving back here, as a signal that I could re-invent my career, to really focus more on this developing of a purpose driven practice, and be able to use my legal skills in a way that I think is a catalyst for positive change. In other words, while I can't help feed one thousand children, I can help the person who sets up a charity, who then feeds one thousand children - that's really the philosophy that I'm bringing to my practice."

**How do you share that philosophy with your colleagues at Parry Field? What is the glue that holds you together?**

"We are a tight knit and very supportive partnership who are also willing to try new things and be future focussed. I felt at one with them from the start, as the reality is that, when I arrived back six years ago, I had no practice and I had no clients. And so, the Partners really took a leap of faith by allowing me to build up this practice area, focussing on purpose driven clients.

But it has worked, and the reason it works is that I think we can all see that there are positives that come from having that sort of a focus. For example, the type of clients that we attract to help set up their charities or establish their businesses also will eventually need employment support, they need to enter into leases, and may even end up having a dispute. So, this focus actually flows through to benefit all aspects of our law firm."

**And given the size of your firm, I presume it's important that you structure it appropriately so that people like yourself, have time to lead your clients, as well as some of your team members, while the business is nevertheless being guided and managed appropriately. How important is structure from an internal perspective in a firm like yours?**

"I think it's essential. And I don't think we would have seen the growth that we've had in the last couple of years if we hadn't been very strategic about getting the right people involved. Before I first joined the Partnership six years ago, we had about thirty-five people and the Partners then were very forward looking. As a result, today we're about to get to eighty people, so that's a massive change in just a few years. We have a really amazing General Manager, Kate Williams, who is able to keep us on track, which ensures that we, as the Partners, aren't getting bogged down in all of the operational details. I think we've been very deliberate about hiring someone who's able to shoulder that burden for us and is truly excellent at her role. We're still very involved in the governance but not so involved in the day to day decision-making that has to happen. That has freed us up to think strategically and, in my case, to grow my practice and get out in the community as well."

In contrast, some law firms, I think, end with an inverted model, which is a whole bunch of Partners who are working really, really hard, probably for too long, and not delegating down because they don't have enough juniors involved. We always are trying to delegate, in order to free us up."

**Looking at the operational side of your business, do any of your Partners act in an executive capacity working in tandem with your General Manager?**

"Not full time. Right now, we have a Chair of the Partners but they continue to be active in their practice. Every couple of years the Chair rotates as well, so it is not something that they commit to forever."

**What does success look like for you?**

"I think it's changed over the years. In the first half of my career, success for me was about gaining the right class of degree, working for the biggest law firm, and doing the biggest deals. I think that's maybe a sign of the stages of life that we all go through. At the beginning of my career, I was trying to build up my reputation and work out how I fitted in, whereas, in the second half of this career, I have ended up focusing on qualities which are not as focussed on money, reputation or title. I have four young children and I'd like to think that the important measure of success is when they get to see me when I come home at night, and I can read them stories. I would like to think that is the true measure of success, not just in helping clients with their legal needs but also to be respected by my wife and family who know me best."

**What you've just described about success obviously extends beyond the office. What do you think that law firm leaders need to do to help their people to be more successful?**

"I think that there may be a problem with the fact that we're always talking about work/life balance. When you are talking about balance, you're implying that life is good, and work is bad, and so you're constantly trying to balance the good with the bad. It also emphasizes that the things that we care about and are most passionate about are not at work, rather they're in our lives away from work. Instead, we should be talking about the

concept of work/life integration.

Lawyers should feel passionate about what they're doing in their jobs, rather than viewing work as a pay cheque to subsidise a 'life' outside of work. So, a flow on of this is that too often we emphasize to young graduates that they need to decide what area of law they'll specialize in, rather than allowing them time to explore so that they can become passionate about being an employment lawyer, a family lawyer, a banking lawyer, or a corporate lawyer. The old saying has truth to it that: '*If you really love what you do, then you'll never work a day in your life*'. So, I think within the legal culture we've gotten things around the wrong way by splitting work and life.

I think the role of the leader is to help people discover their own self-worth and value rather than leaving them to discover it for themselves. Sometimes, we are not bold enough to call out the positives that we see in young people. We worry that we might be stepping on toes but, actually, if we can encourage them to become all that they could become, then I think that they would really appreciate that and would thank us later on in life.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said it this way: '*If you treat an individual as they are, they will remain how they are. But if you treat a person as if they were what they ought to be and could be, they will become what they ought to be and could be*.'"

**Are there any specific tips you've got to help law firm leaders out there help their people discover their passion or their purpose?**

"Ask them what they are passionate about and what is meaningful to them and then explore and try practicing in different areas to find what they really resonate with, and also make sure that they're really happy in what they do."

**How do you formulate consistent leadership within a partnership whereby Partners are all on the same page and collaborating with each other, rather than being autonomous solo practitioners in the corner of the office doing their own thing?**

"I think it's about understanding and playing to the strengths and weaknesses of those in the partnership. We cannot all be great at every aspect of being a Partner. Let's face it, not everyone wants to present at a seminar or conference; some love to receive client emails and draft documents instead.

So, it is important to empower people to really focus on the areas where they already have strengths, and at the same time to grow in areas where they might have some weaknesses. Further, I think jumping from a Senior Associate to becoming a Partner is actually a really big step that people don't appreciate. They just assume that if you are a good lawyer, then you are going to be a good Partner. But actually, there's a lot more to it, around the strategies and direction of the firm, the people side of things that are not taught in law school. So, I think it's about recognizing which areas we can each bring to the table and empowering each other to do our best."

**It's been my experience that there are plenty of young people out there who aren't lawyers, but who are working down the corridor from where you are and who exhibit leadership qualities. Do you feel that firms, whether it's here in New Zealand or overseas, are doing enough to tap into that potential?**

"There is an opportunity to allow people, whether they're a lawyer or not, to grow, as they're all part of the team. It is wrong to think about lawyers as being the only part of the law firm – we need many others to provide input as well and to let them know that they are valued. You want everybody to feel like they are contributing. These days, new graduates are not enquiring about the bonus structure or getting a company car but, instead, they

are asking what opportunities they might have to make a positive impact on society. I think employers need to be increasingly aware of that and be able to provide real answers. I feel very fortunate that our firm can."

**Does the firm invest in any particular sort of leadership development programs or anything of that nature?**

"It depends on what their needs are. One of the things that I personally am involved in is the Institute of Directors (IOD). Our Chair also attends their courses. We also attend lots of different other seminars and have a monthly lunch at which we typically have external speakers, and they won't just be talking about legal type of issues. Sometimes we'll have people presenting on topics about personality profiles or about skills of delegation, for example. I think one of the things that you realize as you get a little bit older is that learning never stops, as you're always on a learning journey. And actually, when firms start to atrophy and not grow, I think that is most likely when everybody assumes they know everything that is important already. You have to always be pushing and questioning and learning. Because if you don't do that, then you're going to sink into routine and not be willing to challenge perceived barriers or push assumptions."

**Is there any one particular tip that you might give a frustrated legal professional who's looking to raise the leadership bar in their firm?**

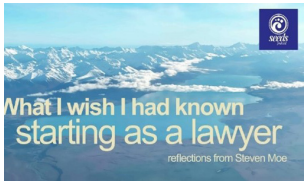
"Focus on the bigger picture question. Get beyond a focus on the next quarter, the next year, the next two years and have conversations about where you are going to be in ten years, in twenty years, because as soon as you have that lens on decisions, it helps to adjust all of the thinking that's going on. So, if I were encouraging, say, a new partner who's just joining a partnership, it would be to always try to bring that longer term view and perspective. If you can do that, and you can take people on a journey through that way of looking at the world, then I think you're going to be setting your firm up really well for the long-term future."

# PODCASTS, BOOKS, AND MORE

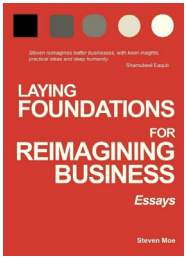
Seeds Podcast now has 450+ interviews I've done with inspiring people for an hour each – it is in podcast apps and more information is at www.theseeds.nz

I host Board Matters podcast for the Institute of Directors on governance and leadership which now has 4 seasons and around 25 interviews Board Matters - Seeds

Seed Habits is a short book with 9 principles I've learned from my guests on Seeds. You can find out more here - Seed Habits - Seeds
(theseeds.nz)




Have set out a lot of articles and interviews with lawyers at this page on what I wish I had known when starting out.
(https://theseeds.nz/articles/new-lawyers-what-i-wish-i-had-known/)

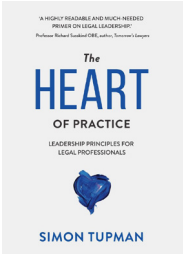



Laying Foundations for Reimagining Business is a book of essays and can be downloaded here.

The Apple Tree is a picture book - but written for adults [The Apple Tree - Seeds](theseeds.nz) (theseeds.nz)

seeds Impact Conference

The Seeds Impact Conference brought together about 500 people to hear from 100 speakers across 32 sessions and the recordings are all available here: [Seeds Impact Conference 2023](seedsconference.nz) (seedsconference.nz)




The Heart of Practice - Leadership Principals for Legal Professionals by Simon Tupman which my interview was for. Simon explores the principles that underpin effective leadership. You can find more about the book here: [https://www.simontupman.com/store/the-heart-of-practice](https://www.simontupman.com/store/the-heart-of-practice)

GAIL
Global Alliance of Impact Lawyers

I was on the Global Alliance of Impact Lawyers first board and the APAC region chair when it started. If you are a lawyer I suggest you check out what they do at [https://gailnet.org/](https://gailnet.org/)

**Want some more reading? Why not start here...**

- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey
- Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less by Greg McKeown
- Human Work by Leanne Holdsworth (former Seeds guest) and Naryan Wong
- Unresonable Hospitality by Will Guidara
- Thinking Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman
- Your Brain at Work by Dr David Rock
- Ask by Jeff Wetzler (former Seeds guest)
- The Practice: Shipping Creative Work by Seth Godin
- Scaling up by Verne Harnish
- Avoiding Propeller Blades by Chris Taylor (former Seeds guest)

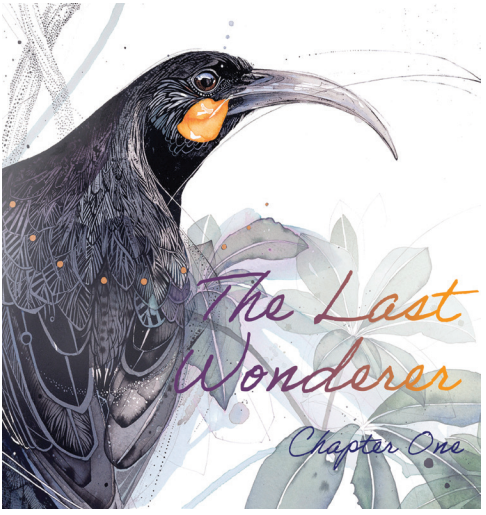
# THE LAST WONDERER

*This is chapter 1 of an upcoming story set in a dystopian future – be watching out for it as will release it in parts! The cover is by the amazing artist Rachel Walker.*

Wonder was all around them.

Aline had always felt Wonder, a closeness to it as if it were just below the surface. Wonder was like a stream that she could reach out to and feel like cold water flowing over and around her hands. It was like the sun on her face, warming her with its rays. Like light itself it was unseen but by it she could see.

Sometimes Aline felt it in the form of a shiver, kind of like a feeling of being cold it rippled through her body. She could not predict when it would do so. She wondered if others felt the same way but no one talked about it and so she began to realise even as a young child that she was unusual in this.




Aline had always been a curious child and although the curiosity never stopped, she had learnt to hide it well. Back when she was very young she would curl her fingers in her long dark hair and ask the same questions others had at her young age.

The Olders encouraged those whom they called the Infancy in this. They would then laugh at the Infancy with their stumbling words and many questions. It was a way to stop them asking more.

# BIOGRAPHY

Steven Moe started studying law in 1995 at Canterbury University in Christchurch and graduated with first class honours in Law and a BA in History and Political Science. He had a year in Japan in 1998 teaching English. He started his legal career working at national law firm Russell McVeagh in Wellington in 2001 where he was based for three years. From 2004 to 2008 he worked at international law firm Norton Rose Fulbright in London where he also qualified as an English lawyer. From 2008 to 2012 he was based in their Tokyo office and worked two years as an in-house lawyer at Mitsui. From 2012 to 2016 he was based in the Sydney office of Norton Rose Fulbright and qualified in New South Wales.

At the start of 2016 he returned with his wife Ellie and their four young children to Aotearoa New Zealand. He is now a Partner at Parry Field Lawyers which has nearly 100 lawyers across 5 offices. He leads the 'Impact Team' with 15 people focussing primarily on work for purpose driven organisations. This involves supporting many companies with their structures but also many charities, churches, technology companies, entrepreneurs and hybrid structures. He wrote the books "Social Enterprises in New Zealand: A Legal Handbook" and "Laying Foundations for Reimagining Business: Essays", both of which challenge existing thinking about legal structure options for companies.

He is involved with the Institute of Directors as a facilitator of their courses on governance, is on the XRB Advisory Panel giving input on financial standards of New Zealand, the Charities Services sector group giving input to the regulator of charities, is an Edmund Hillary Fellow, is the Chair of Community Finance which has raised more than $260 million for social housing,

on the Board of Christian Savings which has loaned out hundreds of millions to Churches and Charities for buildings, was the first Chair of the APAC region of the Global Alliance of Impact Lawyers, hosts Seeds Podcast with 450+ conversations, helped start the Christian Lawyers of New Zealand network and conferences, hosts the Institute of Directors podcast Board Matters on governance and leadership, is on the board of the international project the Theology of Work and has several other board and governance roles relating to charities, climate, Māori social housing, busking festivals and the arts.

His most important role is as a father of 4 children aged between 10 and 17 - lots of uber driving which is a joy as it is the time for deeper conversations. He has a desire to help others through teaching and sharing what he has learned. Ultimately he wants to plant seeds of thoughts and ideas that others can learn from - like the seeds in the Apple Tree story.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We create things when we are in community and not in isolation. Thanks to many who've contributed through conversations on the topics in this and specially to Tasha Fraser for your significant contribution to this project.

Thanks to my Parry Field Lawyers fellow Partners Kris Morrison, Tim Rankin, Paul Cowey, Doris Tu, Paul Owens, Luke Hayward, Nicole Murphy, Joseph Morris, Judith Bullin, Alex Summerlee and our CEO Gilbert McKinnon and the whole Impact Team!

Originally I had a list of more than a hundred but then I kept thinking of more to add and realised I was bound to miss someone - so just know if we have spoken or interacted over the years I am grateful for you.

Thanks to my family: My parents Norm and Marion and my sister Natalie and the Bruce family for letting me stay and finish this while with them. Also to Ellie, Shanna, Ayala, Isabel and Isaac - continuing to make kites worth flying.

"This book helped me reflect on my journey and inspired me to think deeply about how I can align my career with my purpose and values. It also reminded me that I am the leader and driver of my own life and this perspective reignited my excitement for the future."
- Jasmine Muhlmann

Have you ever wondered about how the work you do intersects with who you are?

Is work/life balance the right way to think about how we spend most of our weeks? Or should we talk about integration?

How do you ensure that there is an alignment between your values and your day-to-day job?

These are some of the questions that often come up for people when they are thinking about the work they do. In this book, we consider the answers while providing practical tips and a framework for thinking about your work.

Steven Moe is a Partner at Parry Field Lawyers and the host of Seeds Podcast. His other books include Laying Foundations for Reimagining Business and The Apple Tree. For more visit **theseeds.nz**