

This is my story. What would you like your story to be?

People look at my qualifications and think I am an academic, but at the age of 11 I saw education as a way forward.

I started earning money at the age of 12 and have never stopped finding a way to make a living, but still having fun - and never becoming materialistic.

Whilst at school, I used to get up every morning at 4am to do training for cycle racing. Then I would be involved with opening a shop, preparing and delivering papers from 5-7am, before going to school and then coming home from school and delivering more papers. In the evenings and weekends I had part time jobs such as working in departmental stores, petrol stations, painting and decorating. Also I breed tropical fish, swordtails, to sell to the local pet shop.

My income allowed me to buy and run my first car, which I use to drive to school. Then I also used to give driving lessons.

I learnt at an early age, do not expect people to give you things or do things for you - you have to be self reliant and determined to get what you want.

I went to an all boys school found in the UK in 1652, so imagine my delight when the job I got before university was planting flowers in the all girls school at the bottom of the hill from my school. (Humour is important in life!)

Even at my first year at university, I spent three days a week selling tents and camping equipment. During the holidays I did work such as piece rate coil winding, and door to door encyclopaedia salesman (my values and ethics soon convinced me to stop that)

And at some time or other, I drove a taxi 12 hours a night, seven days a week

But over the years I obtained a chemical engineering degree in the UK, after which I got my first real job - working for an American firm, Mars in the UK. I used to work a three shift system that meant I got Friday, Saturday, Sunday off four times a year. It aimed at being a very equalitarian working environment. Everyone clocked in, including the managing director and everyone ate in the same canteen

I got bored, and applied for jobs all around the world and went to South Africa. There I did a masters degree on a project on mathematical modelling of a cane shredder. The project was started by a lecturer, who was nick named the "Professor", but failed to find away to improve the extraction of sucrose. I was nicknamed "the cane rat", as I would emerge from the shredder cover in shredded cane. I solved the problem by going at 2am when things were quieter, and talking with people who really understood the problem. The solution provided savings which paid the annual wage bill for the biggest sugar mill in the Southern hemisphere

This highlights a key learning - there are always people that know a lot about a subject, find them and listen to them.

I worked for Unilever in South Africa, firstly as a national project manager and then as an operations manager with a staff of around 1000. During this time I used to do graduate recruitment and

development. Here, as part of the senior management team, I was entitled to lunch, with wine, served by waiters. Quite a difference from the days at Mars

I considered whether I should do a masters degree in business or clinical psychology. **For many years, my life goal had been to help people help themselves.** However, I was concerned that if I did psychology, at some stage I may have been driven by the desire to earn money rather than to help people. So I decided to earn money from business, and help people without any financial gain

I started a four year part time masters degree in business. It was tough for every to find the time to be committed to this, on top of demanding jobs. There were people from all over South Africa. Twenty four people started the course in Durban, only four finished. The job at Unilever was very demanding, working long hours and the need for intervention constant involvement at any time of the day or night.

My mentor during my study was an organisational psychologist. I learned so much about myself, and realised I should no longer continue working for Unilever

We are on a constant of learning, we must understand ourselves to be able to understand and interact effectively with others.

I applied to PWC (Coopers & Lybrand) to become a consultant. Despite my experience and qualifications they would only accept me if I committed to study for a qualification from APICS, the leading professional association for supply chain and operations management and the premier provider of research, education and certification programs that elevates end-to-end supply chain excellence, innovation and resilience.

This was a life changing event. You have heard of the story of teaching someone to fish, rather than feeding them a fish. This was one of those events

I became an associate director of consulting, and opened up a consulting firm in Durban for C&L. There was so much variety of work, which is needed for my type of personality and had so much fun.

I did three theses during my four masters degree in business leadership, including the impact of top management turnover and the impact of the personality of the CEO on formal and informal planning systems, and worked with the senior management team of Toyota as part of this thesis. The university awarded me a scholarship to study a doctorate, but by this time I was feeling it was time to leave South Africa.

I worked on so many different projects - from irrigation schemes to revitalising and re-launching a theatre. But eventually I decided South Africa I did not want to stay in South Africa any longer. Through the C&L network I was offered jobs in other parts of the world, and I choose New Zealand. I had never been there, but liked the values of New Zealanders I had met. At the same time, I was offered a similar job by KPMG.

I decide to accept their offer, as I choose to work for a New Zealand rather than a British boss. I was astonished by the smaller scales of businesses in New Zealand. However the variety of work continued - from tourism, the tax department to small businesses

My involvement with APICS continued, as I volunteered and became a committee member for the New Zealand affiliate, NZPICS.

There was another life changing moment. I had a project in an abattoir. They insisted on a plant tour, and I became a vegetarian, instantly

During my time at KPMG, through my association with NZPICS, I lectured part time for the University of Auckland. I developed the Diploma in Operations Management for them. Also I lectured for RMIT University on a Masters Degree in Logistics in Hong Kong and Singapore

I facilitated the strategic planning process for many companies, including the partners of KPMG

By this stage, I decided I no longer wanted to work for anyone else. So in 1993, formed my own consulting and training company, A.L.T. Limited - *All Learning Together*. I have a passion for learning, and believe that there is always an opportunity to learn from each other. I have been "my own boss" ever since that date.

Mentoring is a two way learning process, beneficial to both mentor and mentee.

I did some APICS type work for ABB in New Zealand. The boss moved to Vietnam, and asked me to do some work for him. During these initial visits to Vietnam. I met my future wife.

We have now been married for over 6 years, and have a wonderful two and a half year old son. We are showing him our values of care and concern for other, and that is already having an effect. Through my wife and son I have learnt the meaning and practice of contentment.

The condition that I must take an APICS qualification to join C&L in South Africa so many years before, has taken me along a winding and testing path to contentment

Everything happens for a reason, but we do not always know why

I have been living in Vietnam for 6 years. We built a house in Ho Chi Minh, and the foundations went down 41 metres. Building in a house in Vietnam has proved to be a significant challenge, and has taken over two years. During my time in HCMC, I have done a number of things including lecturing Strategic Management at the International University.

I may have made many mistakes along my personal and professional career path, but I have never failed. I learnt the lesson early on in my life, when bad things happen and you get dumped on your "backside". There is no point in worrying about what has past, you can do nothing about it. You get up, dust yourself off and try again and again, until it does work.

You do not know how to succeed if you have not made mistakes, and learnt from them

Philosophy is seeking wisdom and knowledge that works in actual reality. You have faith or belief that something will work.

Despite what some leading consultants tell you - just wanting something does not make it happen. You have to find a way to continually rewire your brain.

Do you have a goal, do you want to rewire your brain? Shall we rewire our brains together?