

ENRICHED

re-defining wealth

John Sikkema

www.enriched.com

First published in 2012 by Major Street Publishing Pty Ltd
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National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication data:

Author: Sikkema, John.
Title: Enriched : re-defining wealth / John Sikkema.
ISBN: 9780987368201 (pbk.)

Subjects: Self-actualization (Psychology)
Success.
Conduct of life.

Dewey Number: 158.1

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Design: Keston Muijs and Richard O'Gorman
Photography: Jesper Nielsen
Printed in Australia

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 978-0-9873682-0-1

“ John Sikkema was living the good life, but felt something was missing. In this provocative book, he shares his story and seven life-changing principles that will help you become the person you were created to be. Along the way, you’ll also learn how to align the work you do with the person you are, instead of the other way around. Reading *Enriched* could well be a turning point in your life. ”

– Ken Blanchard,
Co-author of *The One Minute Manager*® and *Great Leaders Grow*

“ *Enriched* will prove to be of great value to many people contemplating a deep desire to find more meaning and purpose in their lives, rather than that which the frantic pursuit of money and position has up to now provided them. In a culture which under-values the wisdom and experience of elders, this is a transparently honest, insight-packed and easily-read book that will help many to transform their own lives and positively impact those around them at the same time. ”

– Hon John Anderson AO,
Former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia (1999-2005)

“ In *Enriched*, John Sikkema gives you a powerful strategic plan (blueprint) for undertaking a second-half career that is full of adventure and significance. By the time you get to the last page you will know what you need to do. I could not stop reading this book, I loved it and it hits right where MANY men and women are these days. John’s story will change lives! ”

– Dean Niewolny,
CEO, Halftime, Dallas, Texas

“ It is my hope that *Enriched* will inspire and encourage others to follow in John’s footsteps, and that each one of us will reach out and empower others in our sphere of influence to follow his example. I compliment John for his bold initiative in writing this book. It is a new and refreshing perspective that challenges the old paradigms of success and pursuit of wealth and opens our respective world-views to live purpose-driven lives. ”

– David Bussau AM,
Co-founder of Opportunity International

“ Reading this book is like having a conversation with a wise mentor. John Sikkema shares honestly from both his successes and failures to help you turn your career into your passion. *Enriched* will inspire you to do what you’ve always wanted to do with your life but didn’t think was possible. *Enriched* is totally new and fresh (which is hard to believe with millions of books in the world) – it is an honest, from-the-heart account guiding the reader to a new and exciting place in their calling and purpose. ”

– Markus Koch,
CEO, Daniels International

“ *Enriched* is an inspiring read. If we all pick up this responsibility to do a little or a lot within our own capacity to make the world a better place, what a great lift it will give to one’s wellbeing and self-esteem. ”

– Frank Costa OAM,
Chairman of Costa Group; Former Mayor and President
of Geelong Football Club, Melbourne

About the author

John Sikkema's entrepreneurial career began as an eleven year old in Tasmania, Australia, when he spotted a business opportunity literally hiding in the bushes.

At a prestigious golf course near his home, he would seek out wayward golf balls from the surrounding scrub, polish them up, and resell them to unsuspecting players.

By 26, he was earning the same annual salary as the Australian Prime Minister of the day, Malcolm Fraser.

And at 49, as CEO and major shareholder of the financial planning group Garrisons, he sold the business to a Kerry Packer backed company for \$40 million. He had transformed the small company he started in Tasmania into a successful franchise business with 65 offices across Australia. Yet it was his personal transformation that remains his most satisfying and rewarding achievement.

Today John divides his time between serving on several boards, and his new 'second-half career' as the CEO of Halftime Australia (www.halftime.org.au), an enterprise devoted to helping others enrich their lives through the discovery of their true purpose.

He lives with his wife, Sue, in Melbourne, Australia. They have four adult children.

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Foreword by Bob Buford

Since I wrote *Halftime* in 1994, something of a movement has emerged in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of men in their mid-forties and beyond – and an increasing number of women – have discovered that the very best and most fulfilling years of their life are ahead of them. I call it the ‘second half’. Unlike our great grandfathers, whose life expectancy was around fifty years, today’s forty-year-old can expect another entire lifetime – thirty to forty years – of healthy, productive living. And whereas the generation previous to my own looked forward to retirement, most of us see nothing particularly attractive about terminal leisure.

At the same time, however, we generally have found that pursuing our work solely for the sake of success or increased wealth offers diminishing returns. As many successful people have discovered, growing your net worth may gain you more money, but it doesn’t give you a life. And the thrill of the chase that sustained us in our twenties and thirties no

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longer delivers what we thought it promised. It's not that hard work and contributing to your profession are wrong. It's just that at some point in the first half of your life you begin asking questions:

How much is enough?

Is this what I want to be doing for the rest of my life?

In all that I am gaining, what am I missing?

The inner desire to move from making a living to making a difference is universal in the developed world. It is what opened John Sikkema's heart to a still, small voice that told him he could not go on living as he was, and because he had the courage to listen and make some 'mid-course corrections' in his life, he's well into a productive, adventurous second half.

As am I. In fact, I am now in the third decade of my second half and still have no plans to retire. Instead, I'm still working on things that provide immeasurable significance for me because they relate directly to my life mission. When I took over my family's cable television business, my goal was to make money, and we did. Lots of it. And although I look back fondly at my first-half years, I can honestly say I am having more fun and experiencing more fulfillment in my second half.

And so can you. In *Enriched*, John artfully weaves a tapestry of personal story, practical guidance and inspiring encouragement. He will help you discover what you are most passionate about and how to match that passion with the knowledge, skills and talent you have been given. If you find that appealing – if you want your life to count for something beyond the value of your portfolio or the title on your business card – you have come to the right place.

As a good friend and recovering venture capitalist once said to me, “People have it backwards. Most people worry about what they will sacrifice in the second half. The sacrifice is in the first half – the travel, the stress, the triviality of so much of it. The second half is where the real joy is.”

In John’s case, he found his life was enriched by investing in others so that they could become more successful. That’s where he found “real joy.” With his help, you are about to discover your own source of joy.

Bob Buford

Author of *Halftime*, an American Best-seller

Introduction

Immediately after I had completed my role as CEO of our financial planning group, the phone began ringing. “Would you come and speak at our conference?” Or, “We’d love to have you lead a seminar for our organisation.”

Word had spread about how I had succeeded in building such a fast-growing and successful national company from Hobart, a provincial city on the island state of Tasmania.

The attendees of these seminars were mostly owners of small businesses. After I had spoken, several would approach me and ask if I would be available to coach them on an ongoing basis. Because so many were located in different cities all over Australia, I had to say no to most of them.

For those who I did help, we often spent a half or whole day in a strategic planning session. I would usually meet with

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these business owners in their boardrooms and have a great time brainstorming and roughing out a plan to take their business to the next level over the next one to three years. The meetings invariably ended on a high note, as they now saw a constructive way to move forward.

But I would finish with one last question: “Do you have a plan for your own personal life, distinct from your business?” Silence, followed by, “Not really.”

Then I discovered a very interesting truth.

As I probed deeper, asking them about their families and aspirations, they would suddenly get very passionate about their personal dreams, which had been put on hold while they pursued the ‘business’ of building wealth and attaining success. What seemed to really matter to them had been buried in their subconscious or given a low priority because life had become too busy. You could say they were rich on paper, but their lives were not yet enriched by a sense of purpose and meaning.

I myself was nearly a casualty of this type of business and financial success by doing the opposite – that is, trying to somehow make my life-purpose fit my business goals. It seems silly now, but back then it appeared to be a normal path to take.

During those one-on-one business coaching sessions, we often needed to double-back and modify the business plan so that it became more aligned with their personal dreams and aspirations. This was what I had personally and painfully discovered in my own life through a series of events that got my attention. Ultimately, it led me to redefine wealth and make the transition from simply being rich to having an enriched life.

I traced the birth of my second half career out of this simple market research conducted with these men and women who sought my advice. And ultimately these conversations provided the motivation to produce something bigger – this book.

Over the last few decades there have been an enormous number of leadership books written, most of which provide ideas, methods, formulas and experiences on how to become more successful in business. I have personally benefited from reading and applying the principles from many of these books in my own life and business. I am forever grateful to these authors, as I would not be where I am today without their books and the ideas they convey. The exceptional ones have been catalysts to help me make important paradigm shifts: *E Myth* by Michael Gerber, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey, *Good to Great* by Jim Collins and *Maverick* by Ricardo Semler. However, the more

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success I achieved in my business, the more challenges I encountered. Much to my frustration, I could not find the answers to some of these important challenges in the usual business success books.

My aim in writing *Enriched* is to share the answers I discovered to those questions that were unanswered in the success books I had read. I hope this book will also help you experience transformation in your life as I did in mine.

I now devote the majority of my time to encouraging others to discover their life-purpose, and with that clarity help them develop a plan to achieve it. By most standards, these people are already 'successful'. Many are running a thriving business or are in the middle of a remarkable career. But they all have this vague sense that something is missing; life hasn't turned out exactly as they had hoped it would. So I help them refocus and develop a plan to align their business or career to their life-purpose.

The results have been liberating, transformational and truly amazing.

Few things make me happier than seeing someone 'get it', and then make the necessary changes that deliver a life that is far more exciting and fulfilling than the one they had previously. If you are open to some unconventional

Introduction

thinking and have the desire and tenacity to apply the principles I outline in this book, you too can know what it's like to reclaim the life you've always dreamed of living.

John Sikkema,
Melbourne, July 2012

Part 1 The Pursuit of Success

Success – 1. the favourable or prosperous termination of attempts or endeavours. 2. the gaining of wealth, position, or the like. 3. a successful performance or achievement. 4. a thing or a person that is successful.

– Macquarie Dictionary

**“ WINNING ISN'T EVERYTHING,
IT'S THE ONLY THING...” ”**

– Vince Lombardi

1 Is this success?

It was one of those moments when everything in my world was going exactly as I had hoped it would. My wife, Sue, and I were standing in the living room of our new dream home and I could barely contain the sense of accomplishment that welled up inside me. With the help of one of Australia's best architects and a talented team of craftsmen, I had transformed a steep, treed block on Tasmania's South-East coast into our own personal oasis.

It reflected my appreciation for nature and quality. The exterior consisted of second-hand and convict-made bricks that I had handpicked from an old bank in Hobart and a hospital in Launceston. I had chosen these bricks specifically because they blended in with the natural beauty of the picturesque surroundings and spoke quietly of Tasmania's convict history. I also selected large Oregon beams and stained them so that the grain would suggest a ruggedness found in the coastal environment.

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Raised in the church – though not necessarily devout – I added touches to our home that subtly invoked a sense of the sacred. Pyramid-shaped windows into the atrium suggested the Trinity and a cross-shaped skylight bathed the floor in a dazzling pattern of sunlight by day, and by night revealed the luminous splendour of the moon and stars. It almost seemed the Almighty himself was placing his stamp of approval on all I had done.

I carefully selected this unique property for its privacy and secluded entrance, set high above Kingston Beach; it offered sensational views of the small town where I grew up. In fact, I could stand on the deck and look down on three particular areas that had a profound influence on me during my childhood: the beach, the golf course and the village church where I spent nearly every Sunday.

In a very real sense, this house was my declaration that I had arrived. I had finally made it. The great British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli wrote, “Diligence is the mother of good fortune”, and if nothing else, I had put my time in to get to this point in my career. It hadn’t been easy. After starting out at the bottom of the ladder, I was well on the way to climbing to the top of my profession, eventually owning my own business, and this house symbolised for me the culmination of a lot of hard work and sacrifice. While I was raised by traditional Dutch parents and had never been overly materialistic,

Is this success?

with the creation of this house I shed much of my inherited frugality.

It was stunning. Elegant yet understated. And it was a far cry from the rodent-infested shack I lived in as a child when we first migrated to Australia.

It was proof that I had won first place in the race; evidence of my success.

On this particular occasion, the one where this story began (with me proudly admiring our new home and my wife standing beside me with misty eyes), I had just returned from a rather stressful day at my office. The mere act of pulling into the driveway began to dissipate the tension that goes with running a business. The sun was just dipping into the Derwent River and the bright full moon overhead cast a warm, golden glow over the rustic exterior of our home.

It was enough to bring joy to a man's heart.

With a spring to my step, I jumped out of the car, swung my soft leather briefcase by my side and crossed the small wooden bridge that led to our front door. I remember thinking "life really is pretty good!" I could hardly wait to change into something comfortable, take a cold drink to the deck and let the gentle sea breeze blow away any

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remnants of the day's hectic agenda. The kids were in bed and after Sue welcomed me home with a quick hug, we just stood there, taking it all in.

That's when it started.

The high price of success

My friend Bob Buford calls it "success panic:" the first whisper of doubt about the value of all you have attained. While I stood there quietly with my wife by my side and surveyed the understated elegance around us, my satisfying sense of accomplishment slowly faded as I considered the true cost of this home, and it had nothing to do with money.

On the surface I really *did* have it made. But strip all that away and what did I really have?

A headache.

Lots of them. Headache pain so debilitating that often when I got home from work I went straight to my bedroom, closed the curtains and lay motionless in the dark. Pain so excruciating I couldn't manage to eat, let alone have dinner with the family. Sue would caution the kids to be extra quiet so as not to disturb their father who was having another one of his migraines.

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I tried everything to get rid of them; traditional medicine, non-traditional medicine. Home remedies generously offered to me by friends. The only advice that had a ring of truth to it came from a close friend: “John, you’re working too hard. Slow down and I reckon they’ll go away.”

But I couldn’t. The faster my business grew, the more it demanded from me. It wasn’t unusual for me to leave the house before anyone else was awake and not return until Sue had already put the younger kids to bed. In order to expand my business to meet the growing demands of the market, I added new employees or acquired other businesses, and that required additional capital. So I had to borrow heavily. Always in the back of my mind a disturbing thought hovered: one slip and the whole business could come tumbling down under the weight of debt.

“Why can’t I just enjoy this moment and celebrate my success?” I thought to myself.

As I tried to shift my mind from my business to my lovely family, a troubling wave of guilt engulfed me as I remembered the many soccer games and school activities I had missed.

It didn’t seem fair.

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Like most men, I thought I was doing the noble thing. I had been a responsible father and husband. I had made sacrifices for my family. I could have settled for a less demanding career and perhaps enjoyed life a bit more, but I put in the long hours and dealt with a stressful job so that I could provide a better life for my family. This house was but one of many 'rewards' they got from all my hard work.

But standing in that serene yet empty living room, I came to the horrific realisation that I hardly knew my children.

Sue's presence next to me should have been comforting, except for the fact that I knew better. To be honest, she was there beside me more out of duty than devotion. The long hours away from home, coupled with my take-charge personality, had taken their toll. And as much as I didn't want to admit it, this was not our dream house, but *mine*.

Who could ask for more?

Only a few years earlier, we had been happily living near the bustling city of Melbourne. We owned a lovely ranch-style home on twenty acres of land and Sue was able to train and ride the young horse she adored. It was a perfect set-up. The children had space to roam around freely and it was only an hour's drive to the city that Sue loved so dearly. She would regularly go there on shopping excursions,

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exploring the many boutiques and coffee shops, and each year eagerly took the children to visit the Royal Melbourne Show. Melbourne offered her everything she cherished and she would have been more than happy to have spent the rest of her life there. In fact, that was exactly what she thought we would do.

But I wanted to move to Tasmania. After all, it was where I grew up. The kids would finally be close to their grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. They could be raised in the same church community where I had been raised. Instead of being a small fish in the big pond of Melbourne, I would be a big fish in a new and growing market in Tasmania. It all made sense.

At least to me.

When I announced that we would be moving to Tasmania, you could see the hurt in Sue's eyes. She had learned from many years of living with me that this wasn't up for discussion, so she tried to put on a brave face. But I could see that the great plan I had just imposed on her crushed her spirit. Perhaps a kinder, gentler husband would have demonstrated some compassion, but at the time, I thought she was just acting like a spoiled child and secretly rationalised that it would be good for her to sacrifice a little. Isn't that what I had done? This would be her turn, and once she saw the house I was planning to build for her, she would change

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her mind. It didn't help when I also told her she would have to sell her horse.

What began as a joy-filled moment in the living room of my dream house was now just another hollow moment that had become so commonplace in our marriage. The haunting sting of Sue's words on that evening pierced my heart, not so much because she dared utter them but because I knew they were true: "John, you've become boring. You're no fun anymore."

I tried to pull her close, but sensed that stiffness that had crept into our relationship. Generally, I am not an emotional man, but at that moment I felt something well up inside of me that felt like tears. I so wanted to believe that all my hard work, the dream house, living next to family and attending the church near where I had grown up would bring Sue to her senses. I wanted to believe I could engineer our marriage as I had done my career: systematically and with a ruthless drive for success. I thought I had made all the right moves to ensure her happiness. But as I released my grip and she slowly walked away, I couldn't help but recall the words she had said to me a few nights earlier after another exhausting argument: "John, I'm not sure I want to be married to you."