

JACKPOT

THE KEY TO INNER WEALTH



TAMARA STRAATMAN, FOUNDER OF STRIBE

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Apart from my own, names have been changed for privacy reasons.



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‘Jackpot is the true story of a woman who, despite persistent opposition from those around her, remains true to herself and dares to go her own way. A fascinating and incredibly inspiring book about how to manifest the life that you dream of.’

Esmir van Wering, author and journalist

‘Jackpot is a very open, moving yet also humorous story, in which Tamara shares her life lessons in an enjoyable manner. Filled with special stories from her eventful life as well as practical tips, it penetrates you with questions. If you truly have the guts to allow the questions of this book to confront you, you will discover new insights that take you closer to your ideal life. It’s not for everyone, but for those who dare, this book is the actual Jackpot.’

Robert Schulze, founding partner of the Growth Factory

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FOREWORD

I wrote this book because I want to inspire others. I want to inspire you to make the most out of life. In perfect health, stress and debt free, in a positive mood, with success and happiness in love. I would want you to find your dream job, have an incredible sex life, and to never be afraid of choosing for yourself and your happiness. It is possible to live your perfect life. Just like world peace, poverty, hunger, and climate problems can all be resolved. United as one world. Ambitious thinking? Perhaps. Yet if no one takes the first step, it will most definitely never happen.

I invite you to further explore your world and the world beyond. If you don't like this journey of discovery, you can at any moment decide to return to the life you have now. However, you have been warned: once you've experienced what it's like to free yourself from your old pains, you'll never want to be left with that pain any longer than is absolutely necessary. We all look alike, and yet we're all so very different, but deep down, we're the same. Discover your authentic self and your passion. With this, you bring your true superpowers to the foreground, and you can make this world a little bit more beautiful.

I hope you will enjoy your adventure. At times you will dig what I intend to say, and sometimes, you won't. Welcome this book with an open mind, and you'll find what works for you.

There are several boxes throughout this e-book with questions addressed to you. Since you can't physically write in an e-book, and we do want to offer you a sustainable world, in collaboration with Paper on the Rocks, we've come up with a fun solution. Visit our online shop on Stribe and use the code: Jackpot.

Tip!

Writing these down on a piece of paper creates a stronger connection to your subconscious mind. This will increase the chance of uncovering surprising breakthroughs and insights.

**PART I
A FALSE START**

VISION

It's a Thursday evening, December 28, 2017 to be exact. My colleague, Charlotte, and I are on our short break. Shops are open late on Thursdays. We're both working at the store tonight.

'Can I tell you something crazy?', I ask.

Charlotte gives me a curious look.

'Years ago, when I was twenty-seven, I had a vision that I would be a millionaire by the age of thirty-five.'

Her curious gaze transforms into amazement.

'I know', I smile. 'No one believes me. Most people I tell even joke about it.'

Charlotte nods. We are sitting in an Italian restaurant in the city centre of Tilburg for a quick bite to eat.

'What matters is whether you believe it or not', she says.

'Until now, I've always firmly believed in it. I've had bizarre predictions before, and each of them has come true. I've never been wrong.'

I like Charlotte, so I continue and tell her about my visions and doubts.

'The vision of the millions was crystal clear, like all my other visions.'

'And?', she asks. 'How are you doing now?'

'Well, in two months I'll be thirty-five, but little has meanwhile changed in my bank account. I'm not sure. Maybe this time I misinterpreted my vision?'

'Or not. It's still possible. Have a little faith in the power of your own visions.'

MY FIRST MEMORIES

'At night, past 2 a.m. ...', this is how a cheerful carnival song by a local band begins. At that exact same time, my life begins as well. Though hardly a carnival stomper, the rich experiences of one's youth colour ones subconsciousness and, for the most part, influence ones thinking and behaviour. I'm the second child born to my family, my brother Paul is one and a half years older than me. With white-blond hair and blue eyes, he is a shy child. My mother, Anna, is a housewife. She dropped out of housekeeping school at a young age and began working, until she had children that is. My mother always looks immaculately groomed, wearing her hair blow dried or neatly pinned up, and sporting her favourite outfit – a black pencil skirt with tights and pumps.

My father, Thomas, works as a mechanic. You could say that he brings his work home with him, as he can always be found in our garage in the evenings and on weekends. He had tinkered with cars as a child, which led to him learning the profession. My father walks around in his greasy clothes, always smelling of petrol and oil. The only time you can find him in clean clothes and with washed hands is on Sundays.

For the first years of my life we live in Tilburg North, in a flat near the shopping centre. I have a few fuzzy childhood memories of those times. Only later in life, when I had started working on my personal growth, did unpleasant images and memories begin to emerge. For example, I can see myself sitting in a box as a toddler, while my father and mother argue. In the height of emotion, my mother shouts that all the misery began after my birth. I must have heard this remark for years throughout my childhood. As a little girl, I know no better than to think she's right; I'm to blame if she feels miserable and I'm to blame for my parents' problems. It's the beginning of the never-ending battle with my guilt whenever there's trouble. But who would have thought then that such a careless comment would have such an impact on a child?

A year later – by now I have the same full head of blond hair as my brother – we leave the flat and move a couple of blocks away to a terraced house, where many other families with young children live. The houses all feature an identical front, differing only in colour. We live on the red side of the street. My best friend Casper lives two doors down, in another red house. Remco is a gentle

guy with a flowerpot haircut that suits him well. You could say we're kind of dating. We see each other every day. We play with army puppets or computer games: first on the Atari, then on the PC. We also play on the street a lot where you can always find other neighbourhood children. We like playing basketball or boulders the most. Boulders is a game in which you try to hit the kerb stone from across the street, so the ball bounces back and you can throw it again. This continues until you miss the boulder, or the kerb. If we're not playing these kinds of games, we often just hang out – usually innocently, sometimes getting into mischief. One time, we carry out a prolonged conversation with an old lady called Ms Petjes, asking her if she also sells hats, as in Dutch her name translates to Ms Cap. We keep her talking through the intercom at the entrance of her apartment building for over half an hour. She has absolutely no idea what we are talking about, but we have a great deal of fun because of it.

Across the street the houses have a blue front, which is where Rick lives. Rick is the neighbourhood rebel with an attitude. I have a love-hate relationship with him. He likes to tease me, but I bug him just as much, which usually makes him angry. This constant pulling and pushing changes when I'm about ten years old. At that age, I start seeing boys with different eyes, and I begin to notice more and more how handsome Rick actually is. With his fiery, inquisitive gaze and swirling energy, he is a real charmer. We start dating, which lasts about two years. Then we begin to take an interest in other boys and girls in the neighbourhood.

I enjoy playing with boys, but there are also some girls that I am friendly with. Some of these friendships are born out of necessity. There's only one girl, for example, who also wants to play with Barbies. She's the youngest at home, so she tends to act like she's the boss. I refuse to let this happen, so we regularly argue. However, that's nothing compared to my nephew Lucas, my parents' godchild, who lives in one of the yellow houses. He's sneaky, always getting into a great deal of mischief. He doesn't care if he gets into any trouble at all. He just laughs straight at you. This is where you need someone like me. I don't tolerate antisocial behaviour. It releases the moral knight within me, or rather a mix of Mother Theresa and an angry Italian Big Mama. I don't know why I react so strongly to it, yet. Fortunately, I bond just fine with the other children of the neighbourhood.

In a side street of the red houses with red facades, there are more yellow houses. I'm literally and figuratively growing up in a coloured neighbourhood. My neighbours, more or less of the same age, are almost all from different countries. I like to visit my Moroccan friend. It's a joy to eat with her, because I don't like the traditional Dutch potatoes, meat and vegetable meals.

Give me foreign cuisine every day of the week. Another friend of mine is of Vietnamese descent. Her mum makes the most delicious spring rolls. But there's a more pressing reason as to why I take refuge in someone else's kitchen, and it has everything to do with my father's behaviour.

HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD

At home, there's always an overload of candy available; our mother makes sure we have everything we want and need. We are bombarded with sweets and lemonade. Children are also always welcome to stay for dinner, but that rarely ever happens. That's because as soon as my dad comes home at around five in the afternoon, the atmosphere immediately changes. We're a traditional working-class family, one where the husband is in charge of providing for the family, the wife is in servitude to her husband and the children have absolutely no say. My father decides what happens. In the evening, for example, he wants to lie on the couch before tinkering in the garage. Even if you're in the middle of your favourite show, the TV must be turned off, or he'll change the channel to something he wants to watch. This isn't up for discussion. It's only communicated, at most. His rule is absolute. If you disagree, well then, you're out of luck. My father is not open to hearing my opinion or my brother's. Everything I believe and think is nonsense. Not only does he have no respect for his children, but this applies to his wife as well. Everything revolves around my father, his power and his role in the family. He owns the throne, and we dangle somewhere from the bottom of the ladder. Only later will I recognise this behaviour as narcissistic, but as a child I don't know how to describe this yet. All I know is how unpleasant it is and how much of a tyrant I believe he is.

We barely speak during dinner. I play it safe and follow my father's example, which means I sometimes stick my nose deep into a magazine. Donald Duck is a breath of fresh air. It's my escape from the latent fear of the ever-present verbal aggression. My mother hates the cold silent treatment and continuously tries to start a conversation, unfortunately without prevail.

Years later, Rick would confess that he always made sure to leave the house before my father came home from work. He was right to do so, at around five o'clock our house turned into a minefield, where a bomb could explode at any given moment.

PART IV
THE START OF MY MILLIONS

HIGH AMBITIONS

So, there I am, with all my ambitions to become the biggest and best-known life coach in the Netherlands. However, I have no idea how to get there. I'm used to having a manager who teaches me what I need to know. Ineke is a born leader and a great supervisor, but she can't help me with this. Managing a successful fishmonger is nothing compared to starting a new business in a different market. A market in which I must wake people up and make them aware, to create the demand myself. Coaching and training were not as familiar as they are today, and they are still not regarded a basic necessity, which people will easily spend their money on. Nevertheless, I'm confident it will work out. This is partly because of the SMART method. This method is programmed into my mind during the NLP training, which influences my brain and focus. Moreover, I've seen in a vision that I will succeed. So there is no real reason for any doubt. Most of the people in my life view it somewhat differently. Of course, my father thinks it is complete nonsense. 'Nobody needs your rubbish. You're wasting your time with this!'

I had heard such things at a very young age, and still they hurt, even now. Nathan says my head is up in the clouds, claiming; he says this knowledge about mindset is philosophical bullshit. Dina sees another opportunity to screw with me. What a surprise. However, even my colleague Denise can't appreciate my forward thinking and career switch. I can't share anything about my latest insights without getting a nasty comment or eye roll. Of course, this affects me. I want to help them to experience more happiness in their life. Their hostile reactions only push me to keep going, to prove what I already know. I'm not talking rubbish – I know that. I'm lucky some people actually react positively. One person is ahead of the rest: my mother. I tell her about my big ambitions and plans, and even though she doesn't understand all of it, she's proud of me. She believes in me and supports me. That means so much to me. Never before have I had her enthusiastic support like this. She has never been on my side. If someone compliments me, I feel good inside; but I also get uncomfortable. I tend to hide it or downgrade my accomplishments. However, those rejecting me, with their negative comments, stay in my mind much longer compared to any appreciation or compliment. This habit of retaining the negativity and putting myself down is most likely due to the relationship with

my father; he doesn't accept me for who I am and he thinks my opinions are irrelevant. He's the first, and most important, man in my life to make me feel like I don't matter, that I shouldn't exist and that I'm unwanted. That's where my infinite drive for approval and recognition from others stems from. He's happy when I behave like the kind of daughter he wants me to be: a docile girl who serves his every need. Check? Nope.

Do you recognise this need for approval? And the wish to have a supporter? We all have these needs to a greater or lesser degree, and they can differ in various situations. The situations in which you feel most vulnerable are the times that you desire support and approval the most. It'll hurt the most when you get rejected during this search.

Are there aspects of your life you would like to change, or moments when you think completely differently from those around you? How do you deal with this? What could you do differently from now on? How else could you respond to this? If you can't change the playing field (other people's negative reactions), how can you change your perception of them, so that you no longer experience your own torment? Moreover, can you accept yourself for who you really are and what your inner needs are?

ACQUIRED DEPENDENCE

As an infant, we depend on others. We can't make it on our own. We need our parents, or surrogate parents, to survive. That's why it's easy for us to adapt, because we'll do everything we can to survive. However, not everything we do is considered to be desirable behaviour. So we lose some of our authentic self as a result thereof, as well as the confidence and belief we have in ourselves. For the first time, we feel unsafe when we're rejected by our guardians for being who we really are, but it's them we depend on for survival. So we give up a bit of our individuality to be fully accepted by the other. Unconsciously, we conclude from this that we depend on others (through punishment and reward) to feel good, appreciated and loved. This is confirmed time and again through pleasant contact with others that makes us feel nice and loved, and missing this pleasant and safe feeling when we're alone. We need something external to produce the buzz, the pleasure, to feel good about ourselves. So we depend on the environment, relying on ourselves less and less. We also argue with the other to get this approval when they disapprove of our behaviour. However, you're the only one who can determine what will affect your mood and who you are and want to be. Long ago, we started forgetting to love ourselves in that way. Unconditional love for ourselves, and with it, love for other people. Our parents, our immediate surroundings, society and the culture in which we grew up has a decisive influence over this. Natural needs and human desires are rejected because they don't fit the "perfect" picture. We focus solely on behaving in a way that is socially desired. We do this as a baby and a toddler simply to survive, and as we age, we learn how to implement this even better. By the time we're (young) adults, this is ingrained in us. We've become experts through years of experience. Repetition is essential to programme your subconscious mind; in other words, it's your strategy for survival. This adaptation of behaviour comes with a price: we part with who we really are because we unconsciously believe that we need this other person to feel good and survive. As a result, we increasingly turn into the person our environment expects us to be, or what we think is expected from us. This means we increasingly live by just using our head (the programmed survival strategy), rather than our heart (our natural being, buried in the deepest parts of ourselves). We abandon who we are. We let our intuition drown under the yells of our ego,

i.e., our inner critic. We do what we've been taught is right and live up to the expectations of others. This inner conflict with your intuition can be fixed quickly, because the voice of your subconscious is softer, subtler than that of the ego. This herding behaviour allows us to feel accepted and safe, which is one of our most pressing values; however, as soon as we leave the herd to follow our own path, it's stressful to the others in the group. The collective ego will express itself, quickly forming its opinion, so the lone wolf must remain strong to continue on his own path. The lone wolf mirrors something within the others in the group, which causes this discomfort; unconsciously, it reminds them of their own self-rejection and disapproval. The easiest way to suppress this feeling of danger the lone wolf instils, is to reject and condemn the abnormal behaviour, rather than to take a hard look in the mirror themselves.

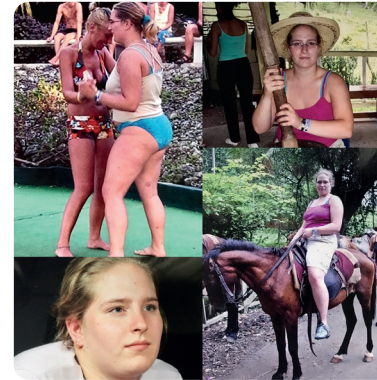
By deciding to go and study, coupled with the inner wisdom that resulted from this, I leave 'the group'. I no longer keep my lips sealed; instead, I share what I learn. That's the first step. That is, if you want to become the biggest and best-known life coach in the Netherlands, you have to open your mouth. That's what I have to do. I have to inspire other people with my story and teach them how our mindset determines our happiness, health and successes. Childhood traumas and our upbringing affect our lives if we don't deal with those self-rejecting emotions from our past. Even if this is uncomfortable or difficult because it confronts the immediate surroundings. Any trauma, small and large, can be broken down and eliminated. No matter the path our lives have taken, we can always still become the hero of our own story. By resetting the aged programming and the continuous self-rejection of our hindering survival strategy, we can transform into a source of inspiration or a confronting mirror for our environment. Most people fear departing the safe haven (changing habits and breaking patterns) to open themselves up to the pioneer following his or her heart.

I thought everyone would be happy to have a mirror held up in front of them, and to be given a chance to transform into a better version of themselves. You don't have to reinvent the wheel; you're handed the key instead. I thought I would make people happy with my new insights and knowledge, but the collective fear is persistent, defensive and too focused on self-protection. Long standing survival mechanism makes them feel safe, which is why they protect it with their life.

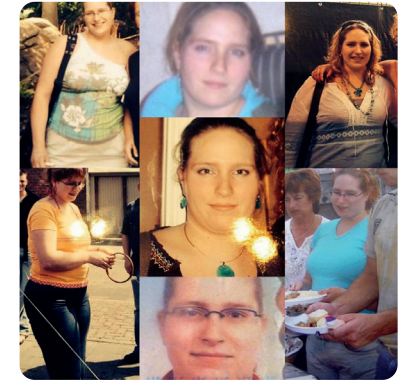
Miraculously, my mother doesn't. We have endless conversations about the past and the effect our family had on my personal development. Although it's confrontational, she lets me talk about it. She acknowledges my point of view and understands the choices I made. For the first time, I feel heard and seen; she really takes what I say seriously. These kinds of conversa-

tions improve our bond. I start to see her more as a mother and a friend rather than a helpless child looking for support from her own child. She assumes more responsibility and I give her more responsibility in return. We grow closer together. There is even a fine emotional connection between the two of us. And as my frustrations towards her subside, I'm able to be kinder to her. However, this would never have been possible with her previous medication. Her dosage has been reduced, because women over fifty apparently experience fewer complaints. From her zombie state, she slowly transforms into my sweet mammoth, as I affectionately call her. I admire her courage. Some conversations are more confrontational, yet she remains jubilantly enthusiastic to hear about everything I do. Because of her unconditional support, my passion and perseverance get a significant boost. She's so proud of her independent daughter. It also transforms her; she stands up for herself more often, and furthermore develops her self-esteem. Now that was exactly what I was aiming for. These moments are very dear to me.

ARE YOU READY
TO REALISE YOUR
ULTIMATE DREAM LIFE?



I'm about twenty years old here. We're on a holiday in the Dominican Republic.



I'm 20 to 23 years old, deeply unhappy, together with my ex.



These are my 'before' and 'after' pictures I send when I contact different media outlets (20-23 years old & 32 years old).



Every picture on the right, I'm only ten years older, but twenty kilos lighter.

