



The Impact Manifesto
You Make A Difference
Whether You Want To Or Not
Ken McArthur

Congratulations! You beat odds of approximately 280 million to one and earned the chance of a lifetime with your incredibly hard work and persistence!

You were a success from the very first day.

Your success started in a massive explosion of about 280 million sperm, of which only a tiny fraction made it as far as your Mother's uterus. Even fewer followed all the way to the oviducts, and the number of sperm successfully arriving at the egg was very small.

Once there, you found the egg covered by a thick layer of cells called the corona radiata, which acts as a blockade. Sperm cells contain enzymes that break this barrier down, but it required an assault of many sperm to break down the corona sufficiently to let you get through to the egg.

So on your first day of existence, you ran a marathon through a maze filled with mucus after which you had to break into a fortress. You are the champion of Mother Nature's triathlon.

Here's the truth for the rest of your life.

You matter because, by existing, you impact the world every day.

So consider the powerful force of the choices you make.

Imagine this...

It's a cold morning in Cambridge, where Jack Stanford is driving his dented, blue, 1997 Oldsmobile Cutlass, feeling as bruised as the bumper of his aging car. His father tried to make a man out of him by administering regular beatings, forcing him to have sex at the age of twelve and berating him at every opportunity. It only served to make Jack quiet, desperate for attention and lost in a world of fantasy.

Today Jack gets up deep in a world filled with feeling of emptiness, searching for someone to make his life more full. His eyes scan the sidewalks for attractive women as he drives aimlessly around the Harvard campus, a world he can't even imagine entering.

Stan Segal will be a chemist someday, but today he is up at 5 AM spreading rock salt. He works for the maintenance department part-time on a work/study scholarship and the sidewalks are covered in ice.

Daniela Frank studies French and makes the choice to wear a red béret. She knows that the French word béret, is based on the Béarnais Berret, a “sort of flat woolen cap, worn by the local peasants.” She decides to wear the cap not because of its origins but because it matches her gloves and the temperature is 19 degrees Fahrenheit as she leaves her room to walk to class.

Francesca Francis is a genetic rock star, the ultimate combination of brains and body, packaged in a frantic energy with a drive to always be better than anyone in the room. Frantic this morning means a driving need for coffee to kick-start the day, but because she has last minute thoughts about the paper she is presenting at 10 AM to the research funding committee, she can't really make the usual five minute stop at Starbucks, without messing up her always flawless arrival.

In an instant, Francesca decides to risk it and is now officially five minutes behind with ten minutes left in her drive and the accelerator moves closer to the floorboard.

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Little Choices.

If Stan hadn't been up most of the night trying to impress three of his friends with his drinking abilities, he might have made the choice to pick up the bag of calcium chloride instead of the rock salt because, stored away somewhere in his impressive memory, is the fact that while both are effective at ice melting, sodium chloride only melts ice when the temperature is above 20 degrees while calcium chloride will melt ice in temperatures down to -25 degrees.

If Francesca had decided to forget the coffee, she would have arrived at the corner of Holyoke Street and Massachusetts Avenue five minutes earlier and likely would have been traveling a more careful 35 miles per hour instead of 45 miles per hour which would have decreased her skid distance on ice from 451.6 feet to a slightly more manageable 273.19 feet.

If Jack's father hadn't tried so hard to make him a man, he might not have been scanning the sidewalk looking for attractive women.

If Daniela hadn't chosen to wear a red béret as she walked past the Harvard Shirt Shop at 9:53 AM, then Jack's eye might not have been drawn to the sweep of red in his peripheral vision as Daniela slipped on the ice, causing Jack's aging Buick to move fifteen inches to the right which was just enough to miss the corner of Francesca's skidding Mercedes.

Two people saved from a lot of pain.

Every choice mattered.

However, the extraordinary insight to be gained from these events is not what you think.

It's not the fact that any small deviation in choices might have avoided the potential accident.

The insight you should focus on is the extraordinary fact that every choice you make, no matter how small, has incredible impact on the world around you.

Every day you make countless choices like the people in this story. Every one of those choices eventually affects thousands, if not millions, of people impacted by your actions and your very existence.

You make a difference whether you want to or not.

Just imagine how things would be if it didn't. You could do whatever you want—with no consequences or impact.

Go ahead... tell Aunt Martha she's ugly, eat as many slices of chocolate pie as you like, sleep all day, pick your nose or belch in public, kick a kid.

It simply won't matter. You can do what you want, you can say whatever comes into your mind. You are completely free!

Wouldn't it be great!

Or... maybe not. Because in order to be happy, you need to be significant. And if you don't matter, you cannot be happy.

Scientific studies show that helping others boosts happiness. According to Stephen G. Post in a 2005 paper called "Altruism, Happiness, and Health: It's Good to Be Good," published in the *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, "The link between altruism and health is important to how we think of human nature and human fulfillment."

It was alluded to a half century ago. Sorokin in his classic 1954 treatise entitled *The Ways and Power of Love*, began his Preface with the assertion that unselfish love and altruism are "necessary for physical, mental, and moral health."

*“In order to be happy, you need to be significant.
And if you don't matter, you cannot be happy.”*

You want to be significant.

You want to matter.

If you don't make a difference, you don't matter, you aren't significant and you probably won't be very happy about it.

The good news is, you do matter and so do your actions—even if you do nothing.

So what should you be doing?

I asked people at one of my events, “Who is the person that has impacted your life the most?” They mentioned all kinds of people from all walks of life. The participants talked about friends, strangers off the street, teachers, and business associates, but there didn't seem to be any pattern.

But when we asked “What did they do to have that impact?” the pattern was clear. In almost every case it was a simple word of encouragement at a time when it was needed most.

Many of the people who had the biggest impact in someone's life had no clue they made such a huge difference. Most likely they never gave it a second thought, and yet they did something that had the largest impact ever in a person's life.

We can all say a kind word. You just have to decide to do it.

How simple would it be to notice the start of every hour and use it as a reminder to say something encouraging to someone in the next sixty minutes.

For most of your life, you've been told you need to take action to be successful.

True... but not enough.

If you are alive, you are taking action every day. You breathe in. You breathe out. You eat. You sleep. Clearly, taking action is not sufficient to create success in life.

You must take massive action, with clear focus, direction, and purpose.

You realize you must take action all the way to completion, because you know starting is only the beginning of success.

So you start and what happens when you take action?

Something!

And, what happens when you do nothing?

Nothing!

Wrong.

Oh I wish it were so.

If nothing happened when you do nothing, life wouldn't be nearly so painful for the people around you.

What happens to a house when the owner does nothing to maintain it?

Think about the mother who does nothing. What happens to her child?

According to Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., "The impact of impaired bonding in early childhood varies. With severe emotional neglect in early childhood the impact can be devastating. Children without touch, stimulation, and nurturing can literally lose the capacity to form any meaningful relationships for the rest of their lives."

The impact of doing nothing is incalculable.

But the impact of doing nothing doesn't stop with one child. The damage spreads beyond that child to every person the child touches.

You impact the people around you.

From the very day you are born, you make a difference. Your parents took one look at you and realized their lives would never be the same. People feel your influence countless times, in amazing ways you never notice. Just as the butterfly's wings can change the weather, your tiny movements may create storms that shake the entire earth.

Your impact is incredible, and today is the day you can take charge of it.

Call it the Impact Factor.

Similar to the ever-expanding ripples across water when an object is dropped into it, the Impact Factor is the chain reaction that occurs when a small change causes a similar change nearby, which then causes another similar change, and so on in sequence like a falling row of dominoes.

“ People feel your influence countless times, in amazing ways you never notice. Just as the butterfly's wings can change the weather, your tiny movements may create storms that shake the entire earth.

The Impact Factor is multi-threaded and exponential. It grows branches like the huge oak tree moving from acorn to a solid force of nature and power in the same way the electrical power grid lights up a country.

And you can turn up the volume knob to make life better.

Or worse.

Don't let that happen! You have the art, science, and technology to make things better and to spread ideas that work. It makes a difference what you choose to do.

You know what it takes to create great ideas, persuade, motivate, build, spread the word and engage the masses.

- ◇ You know the art.
- ◇ You know the science.
- ◇ You know the technology.

And if you aren't aware already, knowledge and powerful insights are available to you right now in countless ways.

That knowledge and those insights are important, because you have significant ideas and stories to tell.

Today you can improve the chances of your worthy ideas spreading by adding concrete details, dumping complicated statistics, connecting with people's emotions, and telling stories.

It's in the telling that you grow your impact. It is in the story you create, the way it sizzles, fries, and has its own spice-filled, taste-burning explosion. It is in the shock of ice-cold water thrown in the face, in the flash of light, and the chest thumping impact of sound that resonates to our very soul.

But don't worry, you aren't in this alone.

Even though it may seem like you are alone sometimes, you aren't. You don't start alone or end alone.

You may be thinking about people who start out without parents or who die without anyone caring, but no matter how alone you think you are, you touch someone. If you are born without parents someone still has to care for you and when you die, someone has to clean up the mess. They may not like it, but someone is in this life with you and your ideas influence everyone around you.

Just make sure you are standing in the right place.

Harvard Medical School professor Nicholas Christakis is one of the most prominent figures in the emergent discipline of network science.

According to Christakis, “Things don’t just diffuse in human populations at random. They actually diffuse through networks.”

You live in a network of relationships between you and your friends, coworkers, siblings, and relatives, and how you are positioned in those networks matters.

Christakis says, “the people with the densest, most central connection form a ‘sensor group,’ a kind of canary in the mineshaft for what’s going to be cool next—or give you a cold.”

Your message can grow and spread and people can feel your message wherever there is feeling, wherever people gather your ideas can be. You can influence every thought that can be imagined. And all you need to do is to put your ideas in the minds of others, feed and nurture them as they grow, and make sure they are given to others as simply and easily as a cold locks into your system after a simple handshake, a hug transmits a feeling, or a pointed glance nails you with reproach.

You will have an impact, but the real questions are “Will your ideas and solutions be spread to the people who need them?” and “Will your impact make a positive difference?”

You can have more impact than you ever thought possible and it’s easier than you think. You don’t have to do it alone.

With your one life, you touch thousands of people in the course of your lifetime.

How many do you need to positively impact to make your life worthwhile? One? Two?

Any number over one and you break the viral coefficient barrier, which is the point at which impact becomes exponential. Once the barrier is broken, you quickly experience a power law curve of exponential growth in your personal impact. Your impact can’t be stopped even if you want to slam on the brakes.

When you impact one person, what does that impact mean to the thousands of people that person touches and the people they impact?

If you impact one person every day for 30 days, you will have impacted 30 people. But, impact doesn’t work that way. If your impact doubles every day for 30 days, you will have impacted 536,870,912 people because of the exponential effects of the Impact Factor.

I’m not saying you will impact that many, because I’m pretty sure it’s unlikely you’ll believe it.

When you double anything it usually gets harder. There are limits to the number of people you will touch, but still the math means something. It's a clue to the reach of the very real impact we can have by working together, by leveraging the art, science, and technologies we have to make sure that positive solutions to real problems spread.

Let's create impact together, because working together we can do more than we can alone.

“You can have more impact than you ever thought possible and it's easier than you think. ... With your one life, you touch thousands of people in the course of your lifetime.”

Here are three things you can do today:

1. Notice the beginning of every hour and encourage someone within sixty minutes.
2. Each time you get a green light, say “You’ve been given the green light to impact millions.”
3. As the lottery results are announced tell someone, “You’ve already won and the odds were 280 million to one.”

You have the power to touch and influence millions.

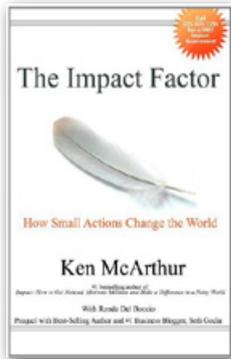
- ◇ You have the energy to transform our universe, and make it better.
- ◇ You are a force of nature and a creator of new fresh life.

You have an impact beyond one life. You can choose to make your impact ...

- ◇ positive
- ◇ powerful
- ◇ a legacy that reaches beyond one life.

If you choose to do the work, you will make great things happen. 🌱

Info



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR | Best-selling author Ken McArthur has enabled thousands of people to achieve amazing impact by championing the philosophy that partnerships and collaboration build value for everyone. Selected by *Fast Company* as one of the Top-20 Most Influential People Online, Ken is the popular host of a series of live events that brings together top-level marketers, entrepreneurs, business owners, corporations and non-profit organizations to create multi-million dollar joint venture relationships. You can subscribe to his newsletter and find hundreds of hours of multimedia training and resources at kenmcarthur.com.

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