

ULTIMATE ACHIEVERS

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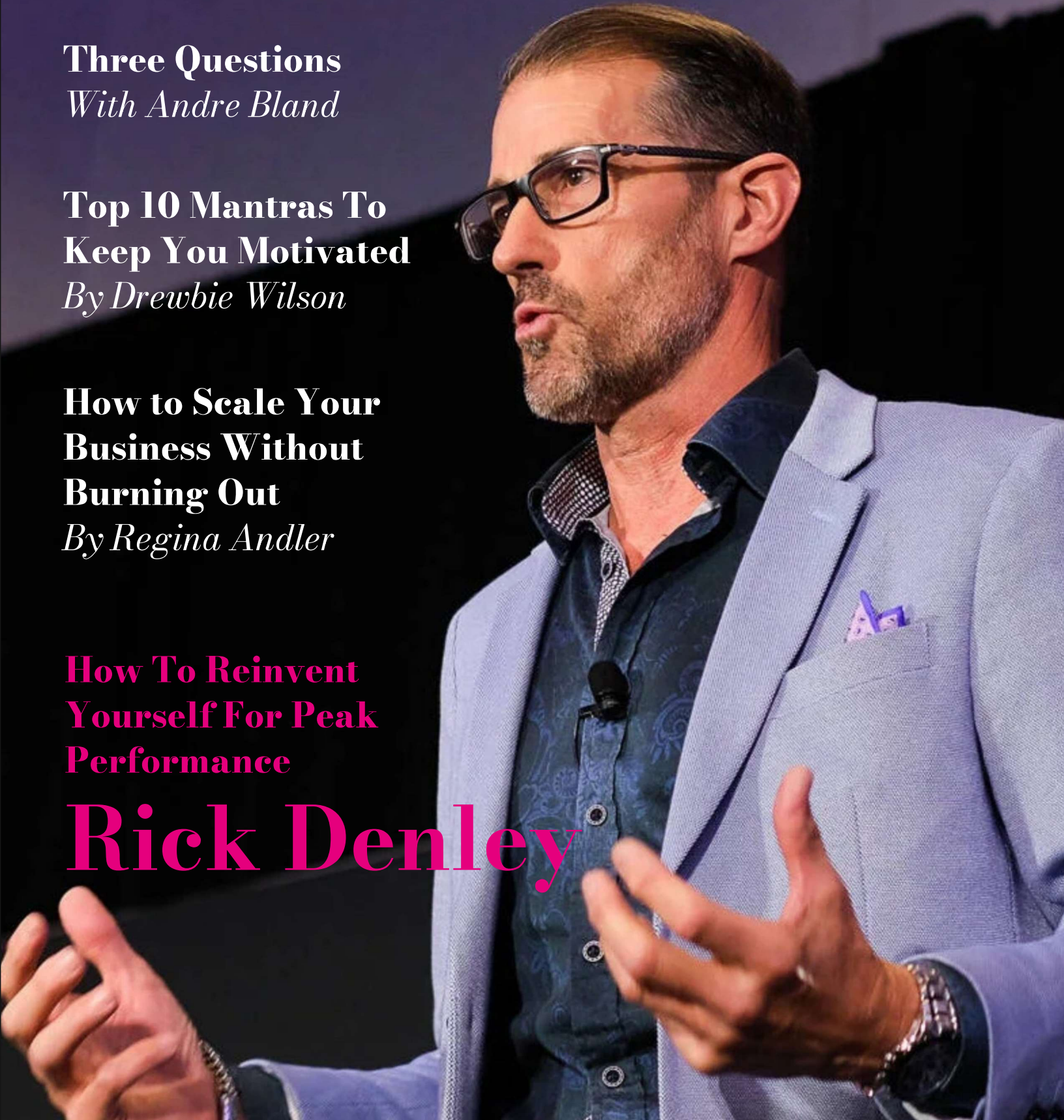
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Yourself For Peak
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Rick Denley





HOW TO REINVENT YOURSELF FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE

By Brian K. Wright

I had the honor of interviewing Rick Denley recently, and we discussed many topics including the importance of reinventing yourself, how to start reinventing yourself, developing

leaders, creating a winning culture for your team, and much more.

Brian: Welcome Rick, did you envision early on that you'd be where you are



right now?

Rick: No, I didn't see the type of vision and capability that I had for myself. My goals weren't as lofty as the ones I'm beginning to achieve.

Brian: Tell us about your career path. How did you get started and how did you get to where you are right now?

Rick: Well, interesting story is that my first degree is in engineering. But very shortly after going into the field, I liked what others were doing as they came around to promote and sell high technology products for manufacturing.

And I liked the business end of things,

and I changed my direction very quickly to the world of business. And as I did that, of course, I started to pick up the skills, tools, and knowledge necessary to be successful. And that's where I learned how important it is to be a lifelong learner.

Brian: So, where is the intersection between what you learned as an engineer and what you love doing in business?

Rick: That's a great question. It comes down to formulas and processes. There's a repeatability once you get it right. And believe me, getting it right takes a lot of failure.

We know that we fail, we learn, and we go again, and then we fail hopefully faster and better, and then move forward. What I learned from engineering that I applied to the business world was that the methodologies and processes can be repeated for continued success once you get them right. So, that was a major learning.

Brian: For those who have a big dream but just haven't gotten started yet, how do you know when you're ready?

Rick: If you're thinking about it that much and it's dominating your thoughts, you are ready. Don't question yourself any further. The problem is most people

come up with excuses for not getting started..

The most common ones are, "Well, it's not the right time financially for me, it's not the right time relationship-wise for me, I think I need more education before I take that leap." But the number one reason people don't pursue their dreams is fear!

And I'll admit that I was fearful, and there are only three types of fear. You're fearful of failure, you're fearful of rejection, or you're fearful of the unknown—and they're all valid to a point.

But fear is just something that our mind creates. There's power in that fear if you get it turned around in your favor.

Brian: What do you think it takes to be a successful entrepreneur?

Rick: You have to have grit, and it's made up of two things. Number one, passion. If you've aligned your passion with your purpose, you're going to be successful as an entrepreneur.

And the second element of grit is persistence. When the passion and the motivation fade, our persistence lets us follow through with what we said we're going to do. Those two things make up grit, and that's what makes a good entrepreneur.

Brian: Let's talk about your book. It's called *Reinvent Yourself*. Why did you decide to write this?

Rick: I wanted to help more people. I found a formula that I believe works really well in changing what I call the

BHAG, the big hairy audacious goals that we have to change ourselves, and how do we do that?

People are numb, frozen, and scared of doing it. So, I put together the book like a blueprint from start to finish, addressing fear, setting your goals, the actions you're going to take, the importance of the top five people that influence you—all the steps that help you get to being the person that you want to be.

I wrote it because I had the ability to do so with all the different changes that I'd gone through.

Brian: How important is it to reinvent yourself?

Rick: To me, it's hugely important. We're not made to stay in one place. We're not a tree. We don't grow roots into the ground stay there forever.

And the other reason is because of all the change that comes our way, how can you possibly stay the same with everything that impacts you throughout your lifetime? And I don't need to go into what that could be on a personal or career level.

Our ability to adapt to change, and more importantly, lead the change that we want to see is important towards being and having a fulfilling life. The number one regret people have on their deathbed is that they didn't chase their dreams, they didn't go after it. And isn't that sad? We need to solve it.

Brian: Absolutely. So, how do we know when it's time to reinvent yourself? For example, in the music world, there are

artists who reinvent themselves with every album. Cher does this, Madonna does this. I think Prince did this to an extent.

They do it as a matter of staying fresh and not risk being boring. But there are many other reasons to reinvent ourselves. So, how do we know when it's time?

Rick: When something has been on your mind for a long period of time, it's already time for you to change and move forward. Some people hesitate too much and get stuck in a rut. As soon as you feel yourself in that rut and there are other things on your mind that you'd like to accomplish, that's the time.

You know when the change is ready to happen. You might be fearful of it, but you know.

Brian: And speaking of fear, reinventing can be very scary. How do we overcome that?

Rick: Well, 90% of the fears that we have in our mind do not come true. So, there are ways to get past those.

Number one, have your goals. Identify what you're trying to do and be very specific about them. Write them down and then share them. We know that if we write down our goals and share them, we're three times more successful than if we don't.

Second thing, create some milestones. What are the small steps that are going to get me to that goal? You don't get to the top of a massive staircase in one leap. You do it one step at a time. So, set your smaller goals with milestones and



remember to celebrate them.

Then the final thing is taking action. The best plan in the world not acted upon doesn't help us at all.

Brian: Let's talk about leadership development because this is one of your big topics, too. You are a keynote speaker, and you do leadership training in some large corporations. Tell us about that.

Rick: The first thing that we want to do when we want to become a better leader is understand ourselves, and we do some online assessments and a SWOT analysis, but one of the areas that we're going to look to grow in that's very important is EI and EQ. Emotional intelligence is so important.

Only in understanding ourselves can we become aware of understanding others, which is very important in leadership.

Now, it's not just my way or the highway. We have to understand the people that we're working with. There are five generations in the workplace right now. It's a very challenging place for leaders to be and understanding others as much as yourself is going to be vitally important.

Then we look at some of the strengths we can work on and some of the weaknesses we can reduce. Now, I'm a big advocate of focusing on your strengths. Everybody has weaknesses. If we spend all our time trying to improve the weaknesses—we're not going to be successful. We're going to

get exhausted. We take our strengths and make them even better. That's a very important step when we look at leadership development.

Then, we have to make sure that those up-and-coming leaders understand what their goals and their team's goals are. We talk about aligning passion with purpose. Then you can get rid of a lot of bureaucracy, and you'll see highly engaged people on whatever team you are leading without needing to push others in the back all the time.

So, there are all sorts of steps we take when we look at bringing along the up-and-coming leaders of tomorrow.

Brian: Absolutely. How do you establish a winning culture on your team?



Rick: Winning culture is so important now in the workplace. One of the first things we can do is realize that we have different generations in the workplace, and look for the commonality between them.

We're always so fast to look for the differences between the generations. How about we find the common thread within those different generations and make sure that everybody's working together?

Secondly, let's not forget DEI, diversity, equity and inclusion. Diversify your team. If we have a bunch of people that think and act the same way, you're not going to have a winning culture. You're going to have a competitive culture.

A winning culture is collaborative and complimentary to each other's different styles, so it's very important that everybody is inclusive in the team, and they're being heard.

And when you're building a winning culture, make sure that recognition is as important and occurs more often than reward. Not everybody's motivated by the almighty dollar, so make sure that we're recognizing on a regular basis as well.

Brian: How do you gamify things to make life more interesting on your team?

Rick: I see two ways to do it, and I come from a background in sales and leadership. So, with those personality styles, what often works very well is competition. They love it, and they'll eat it up and do their best.

The other way is collaboration. Do it as a team, make the overall challenge and reward a team event, and the entire team has to contribute if they're going to win as a team as well. Two different ways you can look at it depending on the makeup of the personalities on your team.

Brian: What is your philosophy of hiring? How do you know who to hire and bring on your team?

Rick: We used to hire incorrectly because we would hire the mirror image of ourselves. I would interview somebody and think, "My God, that guy's perfect for the role. I love that guy." And my team would say, "Well, I guess so, he's exactly like you."

We love ourselves. We have to understand what we're hiring for and have a very clear definition of that first, and make sure that person can handle that.

The next most important thing is alignment of values—your values, which should align with the company values—are vitally important. If your organization has not done a values exercise where you can define the company values, you need to do that.

The up-and-coming generations will sit across from you and ask you these questions: “Brian, tell me more about your company culture. What sort of values are important to the organization and yourself?”

These are the type of questions that come your way as a hiring person, and it's very important that you be able to answer them so that you can find that correct alignment in the person and the organization.

Brian: What is your favorite bounce back story? This can be one of your reinvention stories or bounce back stories, or maybe it's your favorite client story.

Rick: I'm going to share a story from a chapter in my book. After I wrote it, I had my oldest son, who is quite a literary, give it a read. He said, “Dad, it's a pretty good book. You wrote it in your voice. It's not a bad book for a middle-aged entitled white guy.”

His point was, “How about we have some diversity in your book?” So, I had some other people write in it. I had some women write in my book, and some were minorities. Then I had my boxing coach write a chapter for me, and I'll tell you why.

You talk about a bounce back story. Here's someone who was on a pathway

to be successful as an amateur fighter turning pro, and then he ran into a major injury that put him out of his career in boxing, and it took him over a year and a half to get to the point where he could even start training again in the gym.

And the strength of mentality that he needed to pull himself back up was important. The chapter talks all about how his mentor helped him, others around him helped him, and how he strengthened his own mindset to come back. To me, that is a real bounce back story.

Let's not judge somebody by how far they fall. Let's judge them by how high they bounce.

Brian: How can we reach our goals faster? Apart from being consistent and having a plan, how can we do that?

Rick: I'm going to share the best five habits of the top 1% of people that end up successful and acquire their goals and dreams.

Number one is **remarkable boldness**. We have to be bold in what we do. We can't be mediocre, we can't sit back and let everything happen to us. We have to be bold and take steps forward.

Secondly is **intrinsic motivation**. You can look to others for motivation at times if needed. But if it doesn't come from you inside, you're not going to be successful. You need to motivate yourself.

Connection and communication with others. Right from the very start of setting our goals, look for coaches, and then communicate where we want to

be.

We talked about **grit**. Passion and persistence need to occur if you're going to be successful. It's the one main element and characteristic.

Then finally, **the ability to lock in and see things through to conclusion**. This is a big one. We have to be sure that whatever we've started, we're going to finish. Regardless of what challenges come our way, we're going to see this through. And that “never quit” mindset needs to be in place if we're going to be successful, if we set our dreams and goals large enough.

Brian: How did you become a speaker? That's a huge part of your business, too.

Rick: It is, and it was always a goal of mine. I wanted to find a way that I could have a greater impact on more people, and I've always enjoyed sharing and talking to individuals. Then I realized that from stage, I can have a tremendous impact, if not just an initial impact on people, and start moving them in the direction that they want to go.

So, speaking was how I came to be able to do that.

Brian: Do you remember your first gig?

Rick: Oh, I do. It's a fun story. It was for a local women's business group. I showed up to a room of 50 professional women, and I was the only guy in the room other than a couple others that were part of the admin, and away I went with my first talk.

Brian: Was it a paid gig?

Rick: Yes, I made \$500 for that speaking gig.

Brian: What defines a really great speaker in your mind?

Rick: I think a speaker needs to do three things. Number one, they need to educate. Secondly, they need to motivate. And thirdly, if they're entertaining as well, I think it's a huge bonus because we tend to learn and remember things that we enjoy hearing more than if it's just a data dump that occurs.

I aim for those three things every single time I get on stage.

Brian: Storytelling is a huge component when you do all three of those things. How important is storytelling for you when you speak to a group?

Rick: Very important. People remember what you tell them through stories, and it usually has some sort of message within the story. It may have some humor in the story as well, usually at my own expense. And that's okay because it presents me as being vulnerable, which is good.

The whole idea of the story though, Brian, is that they're thinking of their story. While you are telling yours, they're thinking of their own. That is when you know you're really doing well as a speaker and a storyteller, because what you're saying is resonating with them within their own challenges, within their own stories, within their own goals that they're setting.

They're hearing you, but they're thinking and aligning their own story with yours.

Brian: Absolutely. So, what do you think makes a great story?

Rick: If it's relatable, if it really hits the mark. Nobody wants to hear a story about how successful you were. It doesn't help them in any way. People want to hear a story where you overcame something that was a large challenge that they may be going through.

They want to hear about the steps you took to overcome the challenge, to reinvent yourself, to become successful so that they can perhaps emulate those steps themselves. That type of story is one that they're going to benefit from tremendously.

Brian: I agree with that. And if you make them laugh a little bit along the way, all the better, right? When you speak for organizations, do you usually ask what the group wants out of it first?

Rick: It's very important that I speak for the main event planner, and they explain the benefits are that they're looking for. And I'll ask outright, "Do you want this to be educational? Do you want this to be entertaining? Do you want this to be a tear jerker? What is it you're looking to get out of this with your team at the end of the day?"

And then I will customize and personalize one of my three keynotes to that, and it's very important that you understand your audience and how you can benefit them. How are you bringing value through your keynote?

Brian: How do you identify good opportunities in your business?

Rick: How it aligns with the value I can bring. If it's outside of the comfort zone that I provide, if it's not on change and reinvention or leadership, I have to realize that it's not a good fit for me and walk away from it.

We're only very good in particular areas. Nobody's good at everything. So, if it's not in alignment with the value I can bring, I don't stretch myself to try and go after that.

Brian: Fantastic. And rickdenley.com is where we can find you, right?

Rick: Absolutely, also search Rick Denley on Instagram.

Brian: Thank you so much. It was awesome having you here.

Rick Denley is a three-time hypergrowth leader of Fortune 100 companies turned solopreneur, and he's the bestselling author of the book *Reinvent Yourself*.

He's a world renowned and sought after keynote speaker, and he's on a mission to assist leaders and everyone in performing their very best by achieving their peak performance.

He loves to compete triathlons and is an undefeated boxer. He raises money and awareness to conquer cancer in our lifetime. That's why he does those things. So, he's on a great mission to help everybody he can.