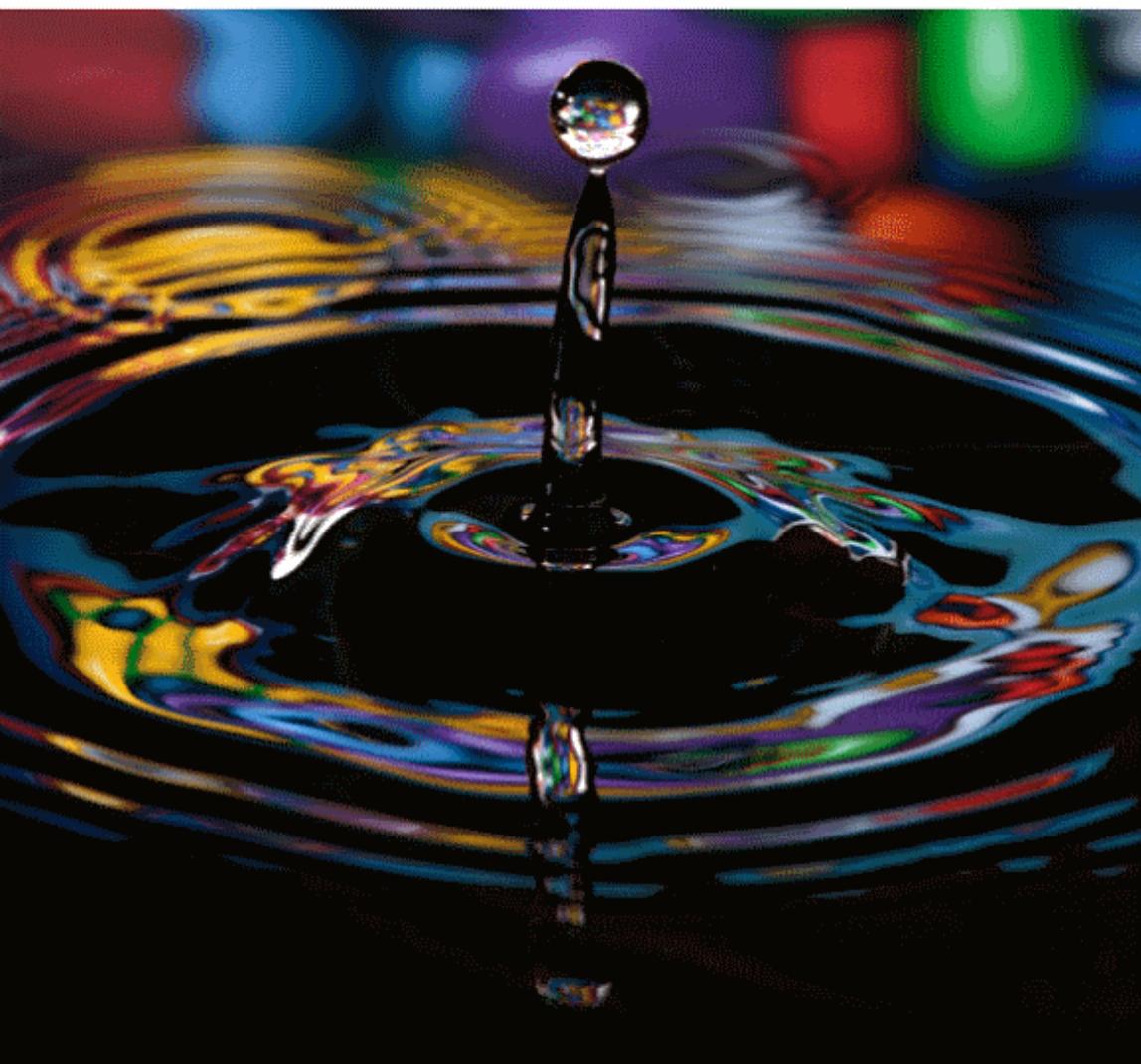


The Ripple Revolution

Handbook



A Guide to Changing the World
from the Inside Out

from Curt Rosengren

www.ripplerevolution.com

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curt@passioncatalyst.com

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Introduction

Ripple Revolution: *A connection and community based approach to changing the world, built on the power and potential of the individual to make a difference and shine.*

* * *

There is a huge resource in the world today that is going largely untapped. It's readily available, and has the potential to set an almost unfathomable amount of positive change in motion.

What is that resource?

You!

And me.

And anyone else who feels called to make the world a better place.

The Ripple Revolution™ is a vision for a way to tap into that resource, helping people maximize their abilities to live vibrant, meaningful, impactful lives, creating a global community of like-minded people, and ultimately laying the foundation for a future we can feel good about handing down to future generations.

I want to change the world. More specifically, I want to be part of reshaping the culture we live in, helping weave making a difference more deeply into the fabric of who we are and what we do, individually, in our communities, and

collectively as a society. I want to be part of building a culture of positive impact – one choice, one action, one everyday life at a time.

Each of us has the potential to live our own “micro-revolution,” a personal revolution that not only makes a difference in the world, but also enriches and enlivens our lives. My vision for The Ripple Revolution is to spark one million of those micro-revolutions, while setting the stage for connection and community to energize and amplify their impact.

My goal with the Ripple Revolution is to set in motion a decentralized movement of self-organizing “cells” around the world where like-minded Ripple Revolutionaries can connect, learn, find inspiration, and take action.

I hope you’ll join me.

Long live the Revolution!

Curt Rosengren

Seattle, WA

www.curtrosengren.com

Changing the world from the inside out

The Ripple Revolution is a movement in three interrelated parts. Taken together, the three offer a framework for “changing the world from the inside out.”

The Inner Game: Whether it is freeing the flow of your potential, or enhancing your ability to “be the change you want to see,” the Inner Game is a foundational piece in maximizing the difference you can make in the world.

Impact: You have a mind-bogglingly huge ability to make an impact. Not just through the obvious things like charitable giving or volunteer work, but also through how you show up in your day-to-day life. Impact is about turning up the volume on difference you can make with your life.

Interconnection: The ripples we create as individuals have a real impact. And when we join them through connection and community, those ripples have the chance to merge, surge, and create a wave.



The inner game energizes, empowers, and amplifies our individual ability to make an impact. That individual impact in turn can be energized, empowered, and amplified through connection and community.

The book is structured around four main segments:

Inner Game: Specific practices and techniques to help you reduce stress, feel more at peace, and be more energized and in your groove.

Impact: A framework and specific ideas for how to make a difference with your everyday life.

Interconnection: Ideas for connecting with like-minded people and creating your own local community of Ripple Revolutionaries.

One Ripple Living: A simple, sustainable approach to making a difference with your life.

This ebook is meant to be, first and foremost, a practical guide. It is my answer to the question, “How do I start living a Ripple Revolutionary life?”

Part One: The Inner Game

A core idea underlying the Ripple Revolution is that our inner worlds and the impact we can make are two inextricably linked parts of a whole system. Think about it. All the ways you have ever made a difference – and all the ways you ever will – have one thing in common. They start with you! So if you want to maximize the impact you can make, it just makes logical sense to integrate the inner game into your efforts.

Our inner world is a wild and woolly place, and there are many facets to the Inner Game. Since I'm the one writing this ebook, I'm going to stick to my area of expertise, with ideas that can help you:

- Reduce what constricts your inner experience, like stress, anxiety, and anger.
- Cultivate greater inner peace and equanimity.
- Feel more energized and in your groove.
- Develop a stronger resilience.

The Inner Game of You

At the heart of the Ripple Revolution is *YOU*. There are a lot of different ways to think about how to play the inner game. One useful way of looking at it includes these four components:

- **Freeing the flow:** Most people have infinitely more potential than they realize. Freeing the flow of your potential is about understanding how you block that flow internally (via things like feeding stress, self-criticism,

procrastination, or chronic pessimism) and working to dismantle those blockages.

- **Being the change:** Related to freeing the flow, the way you show up (e.g., with a greater inner peace, or more compassion) influences both the impact you make through your direct efforts and the impact you make “by osmosis,” affecting others around you just be the way you show up.
- **Energizing your impact:** The more energy you have to put into making a difference, the greater your ability to be a force for change.
- **Empowering awareness and action:** The more opportunities you see for making a difference, the greater your potential impact. But that awareness only has an impact if it is paired with a willingness to act.

Ultimately, the question to explore is, “How can I feel less stressed, more resilient, more energized, and more in my groove so I can make the difference I’m here to make?”

To get you started, here are ten easy ways to answer that question. Don’t get caught up trying to do all of them. Just pick one to start and make it an experiment. You can add more over time. (I lifted several of these from my ebook, *The Aliveness CODE First-Aid Kit*. If you’d like more ideas, you can download it for free at www.curtrosengren.com/the-aliveness-code-first-aid-kit.)

1. Start with the basics

Even though there are four ideas here, I’ll count them as one. Because they’re the things we all know we *should* do, but so often don’t. They’re a decidedly unglamorous “solution,” but if I’m going to explore how to free the flow of your potential,

these four pillars are where the conversation has to start. Each of them has a huge impact on how we show up in the world, emotionally, mentally, physically, and energetically.

- Healthy diet: Load up on the healthy foods and reduce/eliminate the junk.
- Hydration: Drink enough water. Simple as that.
- Exercise: Exercise regularly, preferably doing something you enjoy (so it's easier to stick with).
- Sleep: Aim to get 7 – 8 hours of sleep a night.

I love all the other things I get to talk about in the course of helping people explore their Inner Game, but if I could only give one piece of advice that would have the biggest impact on someone's ability to live a full, rich, fulfilling life, it would be to focus on these four things. Their impact is really that big.

2. Take a 60-second breath break

In the busy go-go ethos of today's world, most of us go through our days in a chronic state of low-grade (or not-so-low-grade) stress. It's like a toxic snowglobe we're constantly shaking. As a result, the "sympathetic nervous system," the part of our nervous system that activates the fight-or-flight response, is constantly engaged.

Put another way, your body is in a near-constant state of readiness to either bolt or brawl. Not only is that an uncomfortable place to live, it also wreaks havoc on you physically as your body steps in a toxic brew of stress hormones.

Let's be honest – as a culture, we generally suck at pausing and letting the snow in the snow globe settle. Much of that is because of habitual conditioning, but some of it is the degree to which we really are pressed for time. And that's where the 60-second breath break comes in. It's hard to make space for downtime when you have ten critical deadlines, nine people demanding your attention, eight new skills you need to learn, seven requests to respond to...and a partridge in a pear tree. But even the busiest among us can push pause for 60 short seconds.

Set a reminder, maybe on your phone or your computer, to go off several times throughout your day. Maybe hourly. Each time it does, you can take your breath break.

A breath break is just what it sounds like. For sixty seconds, or for a count of ten breaths, focus on your breathing. Place your attention wherever you notice it most. That might be inside your nose as the air comes in and out, your throat, or your belly as it expands and contracts with each breath.

Slow, deep belly breathing, particularly where the outbreath is longer than the inbreath, triggers the parasympathetic nervous system, the complement to the sympathetic nervous system that is responsible for what is sometimes called the rest-and-digest response.

Think of it as a 60-second spa visit for your body and brain.

4. Breathing in / Breathing out

Your breath is a wonderful grounding tool because it's always there and readily available. This exercise combines the

positive effects of deep, slow breathing with the reinforcement of positive words and phrases.

With each deep, slow breath, play with some variation of “Breathing in, I _____. Breathing out, I _____.” For example:

- Breathing in, I take in calm. Breathing out, I let go of stress.
- Breathing in, I smile. Breathing out, I relax.
- Breathing in, I take in peace. Breathing out, I send out love.
- Breathing in, I notice beauty. Breathing out, I feel gratitude.

Experiment with your own combinations. Try making one pair your habitual mantra, or change them up to keep them fresh.

3. Five-minute meditation

Developing a meditation practice can have a significant impact on how you feel, emotionally, mentally, physically, and energetically. But the story line I hear so often is, “I tried that. It didn’t work. I couldn’t stick with it.”

If you want to build a consistent meditation practice, the best advice I can give you is, “play small.” Your goal is to make the practice sustainable enough to last long enough to turn into a habit. Lofty aspirations of long inner-peace-soaked meditations can be the kiss of death to a beginning practice.

Instead, make it small and make it consistent. Meditating every morning for five minutes is infinitely better than 30 minutes three days a week (which typically lapses into 30 minutes zero days a week). Not only is it small enough that it

has more of a chance to live past the dabbling stage, the daily engagement is also more conducive to developing a habit.

There are many ways you could spend that five minutes. One of the simplest is to stop and sit in silence for five minutes. Focus on something, maybe your breath, maybe the flame of a candle, maybe a spot on the wall. When you catch your mind wandering (and it will), just note it and bring it back.

4. Check your story

However convincing it might seem, what we perceive as “reality” is really just our own interpretation of events and experiences. There is no static “out there” out there that you and I will both experience identically. Our individual experience depends on the meaning we give it, on the story we tell.

Don’t believe me? Just look at two people with radically different political views. Same exact world. Completely different interpretations of it.

We humans are story-telling beasts. We have a story about everything. It’s how we make sense of the world. Many of them are innocuous (like my story that nuts have no business showing up in ice cream – ever), while others are helpful (like our collective story that we’re supposed to stop the car when we see one of those eight-sided red signs).

But some of the stories we tell ourselves only serve to limit us.

If you feel friction (e.g., a conflict with someone) or constriction (e.g., an emotional constriction like stress, or a

physical constriction like a feeling of tension in your stomach), it's a good bet that there's an unhelpful story there. Stop and ask, "What's my story here?"

Awareness is the first step. Without it, an unquestioned story usually feels like just "the way things are." That person *shouldn't* be late, but since they are, there's a reason to be irritated. Or this grocery store line *shouldn't* be moving so slowly. But since it is, I'm feeling impatient.

Without the stories (the negative meaning we give events and circumstances), there's no reason for the negative reaction. Changing our story literally changes what we experience.

5. Watch for cognitive distortions

While the stories we tell come in all shapes and sizes, there are some common stories that show up repeatedly for many of us and skew how we see the world. These are called "cognitive distortions." Some common examples include:

- **Black-and-white thinking:** Seeing things in either/or, all-or-nothing terms (e.g., "I always..." "They never...").
- **Oversgeneralization:** Extrapolating a single bad event or experience and seeing it as evidence of a broader trend (e.g., "This crappy thing happened – that's the way it's always going to be!").
- **Catastrophizing:** Seeing and expecting the worst case scenario ("What if *this* happens to me?").
- **Filtering:** Magnifying the negative aspects of a situation and filtering out the positive aspects.
- **Personalization:** Making everything about you (e.g., thinking someone must be angry at you because they're

not their normal chipper self, when in reality they had been up all night with a sick child and were just sleep-deprived).

- **Mind reading:** Assuming you know what others are thinking (usually something negative, like “They think I’m an idiot.”).

The first step is awareness. Ask yourself if any of these cognitive distortions sound familiar. If they do, watch for them and when you notice one rear its head, see if you can let it go and swap it out for a more helpful – or at least more neutral – story.

6. Watch the physical sensation

Another obstacle that both fuels negative experiences and prevents us from stepping more fully into what’s possible is getting swept away by strong negative emotion.

One way to counter that is to cultivate a stronger ability to watch those negative emotions objectively as they rise and ultimately subside. Here’s a practice to help you develop that ability.

When you are having a strong emotional surge like fear or anger, step back from the thoughts associated with the emotion and simply focus on the physical sensation of it. You’re not trying to make yourself not feel the emotion. You’re just shifting your focus.

If you feel angry, rather than following your thoughts over the cliff, check in with your body and ask, “What am I feeling? Where do I feel this in my body? What is the sensation?” Focusing on the physical sensations is a way to both bring you

back to the present moment and help you refrain from feeding that negative emotion with your thoughts.

Sometimes emotions like anger can feel too all-consuming at first to step back and observe. If you find that's the case for you, it can be helpful to practice with lower-intensity emotions, like irritation.

The more you do that, the more you lay down tracks in your brain that make it easier to do it again in the future.

7. What's good here?

Shift your focus to the positive by asking, "What's good here?" You can spin that question numerous ways. For example:

- What can I notice that is fun?
- What can I notice that I enjoy?
- What can I notice that is beautiful?
- What can I notice that is interesting?
- What can I notice that is _____? (whatever adjective speaks to you)

It can be hard to notice the good stuff when you're in negative tunnel vision mode. One way to counter that is to create a "cheat sheet" when you're feeling good. Look around and make a list of ten answers to each of those questions. When you're feeling constricted, you can pull out that cheat sheet to help you shift your focus.

8. What would loving myself look like right now?

Take a minute to think about how you treat yourself. Are you “being the change you want to see in the world?” If by some magic the world changed to be an exact reflection of that treatment, would it be a better place, or would the change make you cringe?

Let’s face it, most of us are complete bastards to ourselves, at least part of the time. Whether it is brutal self-criticism, toxic choices in what we eat and drink, or overworking our fingers to the bone with little to no time for rest and play, we often land far afield from what could be defined as a loving relationship with ourselves.

As with so many things, the first step is awareness. When you notice yourself feeling stressed, or reactive, or overwhelmed, it’s a big flashing neon sign that some kind of shift is in order.

When you notice, ask yourself, “What would loving myself look like right now?” That might be words of kindness and self-reassurance, taking a break and walking around the block, going to the refrigerator to make yourself a salad, or reaching out to a friend.

The more you ask the question (and act on the answers), the more natural it becomes to bring self-love into the array of options as you navigate your day.

9. Write a self-compassion letter

While we’re on the topic of loving yourself, let’s talk about self-compassion.

I have become a huge evangelist for self-compassion over the last few years. Not just because of what seem to me like the intuitively obvious benefits, but also because there is an increasingly robust body of research pointing to the very real positive impact of practicing self-compassion, from greater happiness to less depression to a greater willingness to take risks to a greater resilience when things go wrong.

Unfortunately, self-compassion isn't something that gets taught or reinforced in our culture. As a result, even when people buy into its benefits, they are often left asking, "That's great, but how do I *do* that?"

One way to dip your toe in the water is to write a self-compassion letter. It's a great way both to explore how to speak the language of compassion and to practice directing that compassion towards yourself. Imagine you're writing to a friend you care about who is encountering the exact same problem or challenge. What would you say? What comforting words would you have? What gentle insights might help them feel better? How would you defuse their self-criticism? See if you can come from a place of unconditional love and support.

When you're done, go back through and direct the words you have written at yourself.

10. Understand what kind of support you need

We humans are social creatures. Quite contrary to the culture of "rugged individualism" most of us have been shaped by (especially here in the US), we evolved as a species with a fundamental need for help and support.

The first step is noticing that you're in a situation where you need support to begin with – not always an easy task when so many of us have been conditioned to see asking for help as a weakness. The second step is asking the question, “What *kind* of support?” And the third is asking, “Who can I reach out to?”

You can get more clarity on the kind of support you need and where you might find it with questions like these:

- Am I upset? Who can I reach out to for emotional support?
- Am I confused? Who can help me find clarity?
- Do I need to figure out what my next steps are? Who can help me map them out?
- Do I feel isolated, disconnected, or lonely? Who can I reach out and connect with?
- Do I feel flat and uninspired? Who do I find uplifting to be around?
- Do I feel discouraged? Who encourages and believes in me?
- Do I need specific assistance doing something? Who can I ask for help?

The more awareness you have of what you're experiencing, the better equipped you are to reach out for the most relevant support.

Part Two: Impact

OK, so you've been working on the Inner Game and you're much more adept at surfing the ebbs and flows of life. Now let's look at how you can make a difference.

This is a shift away from "ego legacy" thinking ("will they remember me?") towards what I call Ripple Legacy™ thinking.

Ripple Legacy: The cumulative impact – both immediate and ongoing – of the choices you make and the actions you take every day of your life.

Whether you realize it or not, you are *already* leaving a Ripple Legacy. Just by showing up in the world every day you're creating ripples. Some of those ripples are positive, and some are negative. So the question isn't whether or not you want to invest time and effort into creating a Ripple Legacy – you don't have a choice in that. The question is how conscious you want to be about tilting the scale of that legacy in a positive direction.

Your potential to make a positive impact is mind-bogglingly huge, because it includes not just the direct results of your choices and actions, but also the results that ripple out from there. And some of those ripples will continue having an impact long after you're gone.

7 ways to change the world

The Ripple Revolution framework breaks down all the ways we can create positive ripples into seven main categories:

Work: This can be either working directly on making a difference (like a therapist, or a teacher) or working in support of an organization that is making a difference (like a non-profit).

Service: This can be either formal (volunteering) or informal (e.g., helping a neighbor in need).

Giving: This could be financial, like giving money to charity, or it could be giving in material form, like a meal or clothing for the homeless.

Money use: How you put your money to use (e.g., socially responsible investing, microcredit lending, purchasing from socially responsible companies, etc.).

Consumption & conservation: What impact are your choices about how you consume and how you conserve having on the people around you? On your community? On people elsewhere in the world? On the environment?

Interactions: The potential to create positive ripples through everyday interactions range from the brief and fleeting (e.g., paying someone a sincere compliment) to the deep and long-lasting (e.g., the way you raise your kids and the values you instill). It could even extend beyond people to include interactions with animals and nature.

Serendipity: The positive ripples you create without intending to.

Ripple Check

Taken together, the first six of those ways to make the world a better place offer a template to evaluate and explore both the difference you're currently making and opportunities in the future. Think of it as Ripple Check. For each area, you can ask:

- How am I *already* making a difference in each of these areas?
- How *could* I make a difference in each of these areas?
- How do I *want* to make a difference in each of these areas?

We each leave SO much potential to make a positive impact on the table. Not because we're not interested in making a difference, but because we don't notice the possibilities. Starting to more consciously explore each of these areas can prime the pump for seeing more of the everyday impact you have the potential to make in your life.

Do an End-of-Day Review

Doing a Ripple Check can be a helpful way to launch your awareness and give you ideas to explore, but to really take a conscious approach to creating your Ripple Legacy, you need ongoing awareness and action. With that in mind, it can be helpful to start training your brain with an end-of-day review. At the end of each day, look back and ask, "What ripples did I create today?" Follow that up with, "What ripples *could* I

have created today?” The purpose of the second one isn’t to beat yourself up for the opportunities you didn’t capitalize on. It’s simply to condition your mind to recognize those opportunities more readily in the moment. You can’t act on opportunities you don’t notice.

Everyday Ripples

So much of the Ripple Legacy you leave behind will come not from big splashy efforts to make a difference, but through your everyday potential to create positive ripples. The cumulative impact potential of your everyday life is enormous.

To give you some ideas to prime the pump, here are some easy-to-implement ways you can create positive ripples in your day.

1. Find and acknowledge the good in others.
2. Encourage someone.
3. Pay someone an authentic compliment.
4. Tell someone you believe in them (even better, tell them why).
5. Tell someone you believe in what they’re doing.
6. Tell someone they matter to you, and tell them why.
7. Tell someone what you admire about them.
8. Listen. Really listen.
9. Smile at someone.
10. Stop and talk to a homeless person as an equal. Be curious.
11. Connect with neighbors.
12. Build community – for example:
13. In your neighborhood
14. Around a cause

15. Around a common interest
16. Direct conversation to what's good.
17. Refuse to add fuel to negative conversation.
18. Educate yourself on important topics (e.g., environment, racial inequality).
19. Stay out of your car (walk, bike, bus).
20. Plant a tree.
21. Recycle.
22. Buy from local businesses.
23. Buy locally grown produce.
24. Support local artists.
25. Pick up litter.
26. Share how you're making the world better.
27. Grow your own food.
28. Share the food you grow.
29. Offer advice.
30. Mentor someone.
31. Give blood.
32. Plant a butterfly and bee garden.
33. Grow a wild yard.
34. Save rainwater and use it to water your lawn or garden.
35. Compost your food waste.
36. Write a post on social media asking if there is any help or support anyone needs today.
37. Vote with your wallet.
38. Use reusable cutlery instead of plastic at a fast food joint.
39. Avoid plastic, whenever, wherever you can.
40. Eat less meat.
41. Repair something rather than throw it away.
42. Practice a buffer for criticism or complaints so you don't react and add negativity.
43. Offer your seat to someone on the bus.
44. Ask a question and be interested in the answer. Be curious and listen.

45. Be a role model for _____ (the behavior you want to see more of).
46. Thank someone.
47. Express gratitude for the things you're thankful for.
48. Show up. Be there. Be available.
49. Add beauty to the world.
50. Be an easy laugher.
51. Be playful.
52. Wish someone Happy Birthday on Facebook, and tell them the good qualities you see in them.
53. Make an introduction.
54. Give someone a book you think would impact their life.
55. Speak your truth, and do it with respect.
56. Host a positive movie/documentary party.
57. Teach someone one thing you know would help them.
58. Make a microcredit loan.

Charitable giving

The possibilities for charitable giving are endless, and figuring out where to give can feel a bit overwhelming. Here are several web sites you can turn to as you explore those opportunities and evaluate potential organizations.

CharityNavigator

www.charitynavigator.org

“Charity Navigator has become the nation's largest and most-utilized evaluator of charities.”

GlobalGiving

www.globalgiving.org

“GlobalGiving is the largest global crowdfunding community connecting nonprofits, donors, and companies in nearly every country.”

GreatNonprofits

www.greatnonprofits.org

"GreatNonprofits focuses on helping people make great giving decisions through socially sourced feedback and reviews." – Bill Gates (endorsement on their site)

GuideStar

www.guidestar.org

"GuideStar is the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations."

Philanthropedia (a division of GuideStar)

www.myphilanthropedia.org

"We rate verified, financially responsible charities according to how much great work they're doing."

Free ways to give

While we're on the topic of simple ways to make a difference, here are several websites with "click-to-give" opportunities. It can be an easy addition to your day that costs you nothing and takes next to no time.

Care2

www.care2.com/click-to-donate

You can choose from a variety of causes

GreaterGood

www.greatergood.com

Here again, you have several causes to choose from.

Free Rice

www.freerice.com

This one offers a quiz format on a variety of subjects. For every answer you get correct, you donate ten grains of rice.

While we're at it, here are a couple internet search based ways to generate money for good causes.

EveryClick

www.everyclick.com

Half the ad revenue in this UK-based search engine goes to charitable fundraising.

Ecosia

<https://info.ecosia.org>

Use this browser extension and the ad money from your searches will go to plant trees.

The Good Card

www.thegoodcards.com

The Good Card has gamified kindness. You get a card, scan it via an app on your phone, get an instruction for a good deed, and then pass the card on to the recipient. The app allows you to track the card as more good deeds are done and more stories told.

Personalizing your ripples

There are infinitely more opportunities to create positive ripples than you will ever have time for. With that in mind, it can also be helpful to get more clarity about what kind of impact speaks to you most.

While you will always have plenty of chances to create opportunistic ripples (like complimenting someone on a job

well done at work), knowing what resonates most for you also gives you a frame of reference for both seeking out and recognizing ripple opportunities that are particularly energizing and compelling for you.

To get started, you can ask questions like:

- What do I value? How can I be a force for more of that in the world?
- What do I care about?
- What problems feel most compelling to me?
- If I could wave a magic wand and solve one problem in the world, what would it be?
- If I could look back at the end of my life at the impact I made, what one difference would feel most fulfilling to have made?
- What change do I want to be a part of?
- What level of impact is most compelling (from individual to global)?
- What is my “why?”
- If I wrote a letter to future generations about the change I’m committed to, what would I say?
- What problem am I uniquely equipped to solve? (How am I equipped to solve it?)
- Who is doing work that resonates deeply with me? Why does it resonate?
- Looking back at the end of my life, what impact would I regret not making?
- If I knew I was going to die in three years, what impact would I focus on making during my remaining time?
- If I wanted to maximize the EROI (Emotional Return on Investment) on my efforts, what kind of difference would I focus on making?

Note that this exploration isn't about what anyone else thinks is important, or admirable. It's about what speaks to you personally. It's about getting a better feel for what you feel called to. It's about understanding the kind of impact that draws you in and energizes you.

When you can incorporate that into your life, it creates a self-reinforcing loop. You work towards making an impact that energizes and inspires you, and then put that energy to use doing more of that.

Part Three: Interconnection

The individual aspects of the Ripple Revolution (Inner Game and Impact) are all about empowering and energizing the potential we each have to be mobile points of positive impact as we go through our individual lives.

Interconnection taps into the power of connection and community as an amplifying and energizing force for that individual impact.

Besides the fact that we as humans are wired to connect, the community component nourishes the possibility for a better future in multiple ways.

Impact amplification: When the ripple-generating potential of many people comes together, those ripples can join to create a wave of positive impact.

Energy and inspiration: Being around other people who are focused on making the world a better place can have an energizing and inspiring effect on our own efforts.

Reinforcement of a ripple norm: When the people we spend time with are actively engaged in doing good in the world, it reinforces that as a community standard. The more it becomes the “norm,” the more it weaves its way into the culture we live in and contribute to.

Impact expansion: The more people live a Ripple Revolutionary life, the more they show up as role models for others, planting the seeds for even more people to take a Ripple Revolutionary approach to their own lives.

Ripple Revolutionary Cells

My vision for the Ripple Revolution is a movement of decentralized, self-organizing Ripple Revolution “cells” of like-minded people for whom making the world a better place is a fundamental theme they want to weave into their lives.

Those cells could consist of, for example:

- Members of the local community at large.
- Employees at a specific organization.
- Members of faith-based / spiritual organizations.
- Family members.

Ripple Revolution cell activities

“OK, great,” you might be thinking. “I’d like to start a Ripple Revolution cell where I live. Then what?”

The possibilities, my friend, are danged near endless. And part of the beauty and power of a decentralized, self-organizing approach is that what it becomes at a local level can be tailored to the interests and inclinations of the people involved.

Here are some ideas for Ripple Revolution cell activities you and your fellow Revolutionaries can sink your teeth into.

Meet-ups

Perhaps the easiest toe in the water is to simply schedule a regular meet-up. It might be a simple social time with the opportunity to get to know other Ripple Revolutionaries, or it

might entail a structured group conversation around a particular topic.

One-time volunteer days

There are a number of web sites that act as a clearing house for volunteer opportunities. Many of them include single-shot volunteer projects. You could, for example, organize a monthly one-time volunteer day, volunteering with a different organization each month.

Here are several volunteer opportunity clearing house sites.

VolunteerMatch

www.volunteermatch.org

Network for Good

www.networkforgood.org/volunteer

Create the Good

createthegood.org/volunteer-search

And if you're in the Seattle area, here's a local option.

The World is Fun

www.theworldisfun.org

Community giving projects

You could also create your own "volunteer" opportunities with a community giving project. That might look like, for example, getting together to assemble care kits for the homeless.

Book club

Pick a book with a making-a-difference theme and organize a book group to discuss it.

30-day kindness challenge

A 30-day kindness challenge isn't just a great way to actively engage in the ways your everyday life can make a difference, it's also an opportunity to be energized and inspired by what others are doing. Start it off with a meet-up, and then wrap it up with another one where people can share their experiences. You can add a community page on Facebook where people can share their daily acts of kindness.

Fundraising

Try a community fundraising campaign or event for a favorite cause or a local organization.

Food / clothing drive

Join forces with your fellow Ripple Revolutionaries for a food or clothing drive for your local homeless shelter or food bank.

Neighborhood fruit harvest

Every year tons of fruit goes uneaten in backyards across the country and around the world. Get together a group of Ripple Revolutionaries for a neighborhood fruit harvest and bring the results to your local food bank.

To get you started, here's a great site with locations of fruit trees.

www.fallingfruit.org

For those in the Seattle area, you can get involved with City Fruit.

www.cityfruit.org

Salons

Gather with other Ripple Revolutionaries for a deep dive conversation on one specific topic.

Host a movie night

Host a movie or documentary with a change-the-world flavor. Spend some time with conversation afterwards to share your thoughts, what it inspired in you, and what kind of action you might like to take as a result.

Support the local economy

Supporting the local economy can make a difference in numerous ways. At a most basic level, studies estimate that twice the money spent shopping at a local business (versus, say, a big box store) will stay circulating in the community. Add to that the employment it supports, the local vendors and suppliers that business can in turn purchase from, and the retention of local character in an increasingly homogenized world, and it starts to add up.

Here are some ideas for supporting your local economy.

- Go on a field trip to a local farmer's market.
- Create a "local business guide" online that your fellow Ripple Revolutionaries can refer to.

- Create an email newsletter with a weekly spotlight on different local businesses.
- Get involved in (or start) a “local currency” program. Here’s a good overview to get you started: www.centerforneweconomics.org/content/local-currencies

Speakers

You might consider creating an event or a series of speakers focused on a topic in one of the three areas (inner game, impact, or interconnectedness).

Family discussion and action

Any family can be its own Ripple Revolutionary cell. It’s a great way to:

- Start a family discussion about what you each value and what difference you want to make.
- Get kids thinking about the difference they have the potential to make in the world.
- Help kids see the possibilities for making a difference.
- Get involved and take action as a family.
- Spend quality family time doing something that matters.

Part 4: One Ripple Living

The idea that your life is a holistic system where your inner work has an impact on your work in the world (and vice versa) is a powerful one. It opens the door to maximizing both your quality of life and the difference you have the ability to make.

It can also – let’s be honest – feel a little overwhelming. The comprehensive scope of it can make it difficult to know what to do and where to start. Which can be a recipe for nothing happening at all.

The potential power of leading a Ripple Revolutionary life means absolutely zippo if you don’t actually *do it*.

So what to do? You can start with one of my favorite rules for a life that works – keep it simple! Instead of trying to make wholesale changes both internally and externally, develop a One Ripple habit.

A One Ripple habit is just what it sounds like – developing a habit of asking, “What one thing can I do, what one choice can I make, that would have a positive impact?” You can do this at both the inner and the outer levels. Think of it as creating both inner ripples and outer ripples.

I go into more detail below, but here’s a super-simple way to think about it by asking a question in three different timeframes.

What one ripple can I make right now?

This recognizes that your life and your legacy is built moment by moment. At any given point in time, you have the potential to set a positive ripple in motion. You don't need to think about your grand plan to change your life and change the world – just what one opportunity to create a ripple exists in the present moment.

What one ripple can I make today?

While life happens one moment at a time, it can also be helpful to extend your focus to a longer period of time. Think of it as the theme for the day, a ripple you keep in your awareness and come back to creating throughout the day.

What one ripple can I make this month?

This is the realm of the 30-day experiment. It gives you the chance to explore, “What would happen if I focused on creating this ripple on a daily basis for a month?”

Let's take a look at the inner ripple component of One Ripple living first.

Inner Ripples

When people talk about the ripple effect, odds are good they are talking about things that happen out in the world. But there is an inner ripple effect too, and it can be every bit as powerful and empowering. For example, if you notice that you're feeling reactive and tense, pausing to focus on your breath for ten slow, deep breaths can interrupt that stress state and create more inner space and calm. That shift in your

inner state can, in turn, have a ripple effect on how you feel, the choices you make, and the actions you take.

Part of your One Ripple Living can be focused on exploring which One Ripple would have a positive impact on your mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.

You can start exploring your One Ripple at an inner level in a number of ways with the same three time frames:

- **This moment:** What One Ripple can I create right now?
- **Today:** What One Ripple can I focus on today?
- **This month:** What One Ripple can I focus on this month?

To give you a better sense of what I'm talking about, here are some examples of each of those.

This moment

This is about inner ripples you can create in the moment, on the fly, as life unfolds. For example:

- Pausing and focusing on your breath.
- Realizing that you haven't had enough fluids and pouring yourself a big glass of water.
- Stopping and asking yourself, "What's good here?"
- Stopping and asking yourself, "What can I appreciate right now?"

Today

The "today" time frame gives you a chance to keep your awareness and action focused on one single inner ripple

throughout your day. You might decide, for example, to make one of the following your theme-for-the-day.

- Noticing self-criticism and shifting your self-talk to something kinder.
- Taking regular 60-second breath breaks.
- Challenging yourself to notice everything you can to be grateful for, even the small, seemingly insignificant things.
- Watch for opportunities to express gratitude to others (a day of saying, “Thank you”).

The potential themes for your day are endless. What matters is that you have picked one thing to focus on, keeping it simple and making it easy to implement.

This month

Here again, you’re creating a bigger space for a simple focus on one thing that can have a positive ripple effect on your inner world. One of my favorite ways to approach this is the 30-Day Experiment.

A 30-Day Experiment is just what it sounds like. You pick something you want to explore for 30 days with the intention of seeing what effect it has. It’s less of about gritting your teeth and making positive change happen and more about curiosity and exploration.

Here again, the areas of focus for that 30-Day Experiment are endless. They might include:

- Meditating every morning for at least five minutes.

- Doing a 30-day gratitude experiment, with a mixture of gratitude journaling and expressing gratitude to a different person each day.
- Making a goal to find a way to help someone in a way you normally wouldn't have (or, if it's something you already do, aim to appreciate and savor the experience) each day for 30 days.
- Catching your self-criticism (you might need to start by doing an end-of-day review to see where it popped up if it's really ingrained and automatic) and replacing it with self-compassion.
- Eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Another way to approach your One Ripple at the “this month” level is to make it a learning focus. Pick a topic you know would have a positive effect on your inner world – meditation maybe, or self-compassion – and do a deeper dive into it, expanding both your knowledge and experience. Think of it as “The month of _____,” where you fill in the blank depending on the topic you picked.

For example, let's say you decide that you want to make self-compassion your focus for the month. With that as a theme, you might:

- Start with the self-criticism to self-compassion project mentioned above.
- Read books about self-compassion (two I recommend frequently are *Self-Compassion* by Kristin Neff and *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion* by Christopher Germer).
- Keep a self-compassion journal, tracking your exploration and unpacking your experience.

- Initiate conversations with your friends, family, and colleagues about self-compassion.
- Teach others what you have learned.

Inner Ripple ideas

The possibilities for Inner Ripple generating activities could fill volumes, but here is a short list to get you started. Each of the ideas has many ways you could explore it. For simplicity's sake, I'm limiting it to just one idea each. (Some of them I have touched on earlier in more depth in the Inner Game section.)

Remember, the theme here is One Ripple Living (emphasis on **One**), so don't look at this as a laundry list of things you need to incorporate right away. Just start with one. And then explore another one later.

Breathe

Pause and focus on your breath for 5 to 10 deep, slow breaths.

Meditate

If meditation is new to you, aim low. Make it your goal to simply sit and watch your thoughts for five minutes every day. Sustainable frequency is the key.

Have a mindful moment

You don't have to set aside special time for this. You can have a mindful moment any time, any day. An often-cited example is doing the dishes. While you're washing the dishes, make it a point to immerse yourself in awareness of the experience.

Notice the weight of the plate your holding, or the feel of the warm water on your hands, or the sound of the silverware.

Cultivate self-compassion

“How do I do that?” tends to be the most common response when I talk about self-compassion. A great way to practice putting words to it is writing a self-compassion letter. Imagine you’re writing a letter to comfort a dear friend who is experiencing the same challenge or reaction as you. If you were coming from the non-judgmental, unconditional love of deep friendship, what would you tell them? When you’re done, set the letter down, come back to it a while later, and read it out loud to yourself.

Practice gratitude

A simple way to practice gratitude is to literally practice. Stop at multiple times throughout the day and ask yourself, “What can I be grateful for right now?” That might be the activity you’re involved in, the people around you, a beautiful day (or the luscious green the rain is bringing), even your cup of coffee. The opportunities for gratitude are practically endless once we start looking for them.

Change your constricting stories

When you notice yourself feeling constricted in some way (e.g., stress, anger, irritation), stop and ask, “What’s my story here? What am I making this mean? Is there another interpretation that would help me let go of this response?”

Cultivate life-enhancing stories

One way to positively enhance your experience of the world is to reinforce the life-enhancing story that goodness abounds. You can challenge yourself to “catch people doing something good.” It’s so easy to get caught up in what’s wrong and who’s doing what things we don’t like. A lot of the good people do – especially the small things – go largely unnoticed. The more we notice, the more it paints a picture of good in the world we see.

Change your negative self-talk

You build and reinforce your inner world through your self-talk. Challenge yourself to catch your negative self-talk (like self-criticism, or habitual pessimism) and explore alternative, more positive self-talk.

Reinforce your positive self-talk

Make a list titled, “What’s good about me?” Add to it anything you can think of that you like or appreciate about yourself. That might be skills, knowledge, tendencies, ways of engaging, etc. With that list as a frame of reference, start watching for items from the list to show up in your day-to-day life. When it does, call your attention to it. Focus on it and reinforce its positive quality. Acknowledge it to yourself.

Feed your brain uplifting information

Make it a point to seek out positive, uplifting information and media for your mind. A good place to start is this list of positive news sources.

www.ripplerevolution.com/positive-news-sources-to-nourish-your-mind

Surround yourself with uplifting people

The people we spend our time with have a huge impact on how we see the world, how we experience life, even what we're willing to attempt. Make a conscious effort to seek out and spend time with people who have an uplifting impact on you.

Focus on something greater than yourself

Focusing on something greater than yourself, like a cause, takes you out of the constricted smallness of the egosphere and gives you the opportunity to engage in more meaningful activity. (This might look like it's outer-ripple oriented, but what we're talking about is the inner impact that focus beyond yourself has.)

Exercise

We evolved to move. Even just getting up and taking a brisk walk around the block can have a positive effect on you physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Make it easy to eat something healthy

Make it easy to snack on healthy food. I work from home, and know that I will always go the path of least resistance when I go to the kitchen for a snack. I typically keep some chopped veggies marinated in Greek feta salad dressing on hand, and since it's easy and already prepared, I grab that. If I don't have it, I'm more inclined to graze on junk food snacks.

Drink water

Any time you find yourself feeling cranky, ask yourself, “Have I had enough to drink today?” If the answer is no, go drink a glass of water. Even being mildly dehydrated can have a negative impact on our mood.

Do something good

Look for a random opportunity to do something kind or helpful. You’ll feel good, and so will the person you helped.

Laugh

Finally, look for opportunities to laugh. Laughter has a wide range of positive impacts, from reduced stress, to a better mood, to increase creativity.

Outer Ripples

Joining the Ripple Revolution doesn’t mean you have to dive in the deep end.

It’s as simple as the next choice you make, or the next action you take.

As you read the questions and ideas below, keep in mind the One Ripple Living isn’t about doing everything all at once. It’s about the three questions we explored above:

- What One Ripple can I create right now?
- What One Ripple can I focus on today?
- What One Ripple can I focus on this month?

Ripple questions

You can't create ripples if you don't notice the opportunities. As with anything new, it can be helpful to start training your brain to look for them. Below are several questions to prompt your awareness. Try writing them on a small piece of paper and folding the paper around your debit or credit card (or any other card you use regularly). Seeing them each time you use it can be a great reminder.

- How can I leave this situation better than I found it?
- How can I leave this person feeling better because of this interaction?
- How can I add joy to this situation?
- How can I help this person?
- Who needs my help? How can I help them?
- What effect will _____ (whatever choice or action you're considering) have on _____?
- What one thing can I do today to make the world a little bit better?
- What opportunity can I notice today to create a positive ripple?

Your life has the potential to make an enormous difference, and it happens one choice and one action at a time.

EZ Ripple list

For ease of reference, here is the list from the *Impact* section with some easy ideas for creating everyday ripples.

1. Find and acknowledge the good in others
2. Encourage someone.
3. Pay someone an authentic compliment.

4. Tell someone you believe in them (even better, tell them why).
5. Tell someone you believe in what they're doing.
6. Tell someone they matter to you, and tell them why.
7. Tell someone what you admire about them.
8. Listen. Really listen.
9. Smile at someone.
10. Stop and talk to a homeless person as an equal. Be curious.
11. Connect with neighbors.
12. Build community – for example:
 - a. In your neighborhood
 - b. Around a cause
 - c. Around a common interest
13. Direct conversation to what's good.
14. Refuse to add fuel to negative conversation.
15. Educate yourself on important topics (e.g., environment, racial inequality).
16. Stay out of your car (walk, bike, bus).
17. Plant a tree.
18. Recycle.
19. Buy from local businesses.
20. Buy locally grown produce.
21. Support local artists.
22. Pick up litter.
23. Share how you're making the world better.
24. Grow your own food.
25. Share the food you grow.
26. Offer advice.
27. Mentor someone.
28. Give blood.
29. Plant a butterfly and bee garden.
30. Grow a wild yard.
31. Save rainwater and use it to water your lawn or garden.

32. Compost your food waste.
33. Write a post on social media asking if there is any help or support anyone needs today.
34. Vote with your wallet.
35. Use reusable cutlery instead of plastic at a fast food joint.
36. Avoid plastic, whenever, wherever you can.
37. Eat less meat.
38. Repair something rather than throw it away.
39. Practice a buffer for criticism or complaints so you don't react and add negativity.
40. Offer your seat to someone on the bus.
41. Ask a question and be interested in the answer. Be curious and listen.
42. Be a role model for _____ (the behavior you want to see more of).
43. Thank someone.
44. Express gratitude for the things you're thankful for.
45. Show up. Be there. Be available.
46. Add beauty to the world.
47. Be an easy laugher.
48. Be playful.
49. Wish someone Happy Birthday on Facebook, and tell them the good qualities you see in them.
50. Make an introduction.
51. Give someone a book you think would impact their life.
52. Speak your truth, and do it with respect.
53. Host a positive movie/documentary party.
54. Teach someone one thing you know would help them.
55. Make a microcredit loan.

A Parting Note

As I noted at the beginning of this ebook, I want to change the world. More specifically, I want to change the culture we live in.

Today, we live in a culture that continually reinforces the myopic me-me-me of the egosphere. Look around and see what's happening, with the environment, with increasing income inequality, with social injustice, and it's easy to see that the system is broken. But it doesn't have to be.

The activist Julia Butterfly Hill talks about the "disease of disconnect," a ubiquitous malady all the world's problems can be traced back to. We're disconnected from the environment, we're disconnected, from each other, and we're disconnected from ourselves.

But in the disease, we also find the cure. Connection!

I see The Ripple Revolution as part of that cure. We connect with ourselves in the Inner Game, and connect with the world around us through the Impact we make and our Interconnection with other Ripple Revolutionaries.

I don't believe we'll ever achieve a positive state of the world that is inherently lasting and stable. As long as humans are involved, the state of things will be ever-changing. Instead, I think it's the job of every generation to create the circumstances that will shape the state of the world in future generations.

We all have a choice – both individually and collectively – in what kind of world we want to hand down. And right now, the inertia is heading in a direction I’m not proud of. But I also see massive reason for optimism and hope.

Today, more than ever before, we have the decentralized ability to make an impact. The internet makes it possible both to connect with like-minded spirits, give voice to a new vision, and organize and orchestrate change.

Today, it’s easier than ever to for a movement to take root and grow.

Together, we can be a force for change. Together, we can seed and grow a new culture, one where making a difference isn’t just something we shoehorn in between items on our to-do list, but a way of living, and a way of life.

It’s about both thriving individually *and* seeing how we can each be a force for the greater good. It’s about both “me” *and* “we.” It’s about caring for ourselves *and* caring for each other.

I invite you to join the Ripple Revolution. And I invite you to spread the word. If you know anyone you think has Ripple Revolutionary potential, please send them to www.ripplerevolution.com.

And one last thing. The Ripple Revolution is, for me, a labor of love. And part of what keeps me motivated and inspired is connecting with other Ripple Revolutionaries. With that in mind I would love to hear from you. You can drop me a line at curt@ripplerevolution.com.

About Curt Rosengren

The Ripple Revolution is an idea that has had me in its grip for years and refuses to let go. It's an outgrowth of the one thing that inspires and motivates me more than anything else – making a difference.

That's a theme that runs through the core of my career. As a coach, speaker, and writer, I'm obsessed with the question, "How can we change the world from the inside out?"

While the nuts-and-bolts of my work focuses on stress management, navigating big hairy change, building resilience, and feeling more energized and in your groove, the big picture context is what I describe as "the inner game of impact." It's about dialing down what restricts and constricts our ability to make an impact – both with our work and our lives in general – and dialing up what energizes and expands it. It's also about how to "be the change" we want to see in the world.

Prior to discovering my Passion Catalyst work in 2001, I was a "Professional Malcontent." I was treading water as a self-employed marketing consultant when the dot com implosion happened, and the resulting self-unemployment was the spark that led to a wholesale career change.

My chronic dissatisfaction in my own career led me to what would be my primary focus for many years – helping people find passion in their careers, based on a framework I developed called *The Occupational Adventure Guide*™.

Much of my current focus is grounded in *The Aliveness CODE*™, a framework with roots in my work with stressed out career changers exploring how to improve their here-and-now as they worked towards long-term change. The framework integrates my experience with clients, my experience applying the ideas in my own life, and research in a wide variety of disciplines such as neuroscience, psychology, and sociology.

I have written several ebooks:

- *The Aliveness CODE First-Aid Kit: How to Bounce Back When Your Day Goes Splat* shares ideas to apply when your day goes sideways.
- *The Drive to Inner Peace: How Your Commute Can Make You Happier & Less Stressed* offers an approach to using your time at the wheel as a personal growth practice.
- *The Occupational Adventure Guide: A Travel Guide to the Career of Your Dreams* takes the reader through the step-by-step system I developed to help people navigate the process, providing a simple, effective framework for finding passion.

I have been quoted in newspapers throughout the US, including *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Seattle Times* and, in Canada, *The Globe and Mail*. I have also shared my insights on radio shows across the country. For several years I blogged about career passion for *U.S. News & World Report*. My first blog, *The Occupational Adventure*, was chosen by Forbes.com as Best of the Web.

Based in Seattle, I have traveled to thirty-plus countries and lived in five (US, UK, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland). I speak reasonably fluent Swedish, functionally ugly Spanish, and can

read French well enough to get myself into trouble at a French restaurant.

www.curtrosengren.com / curt@curtrosengren.com