



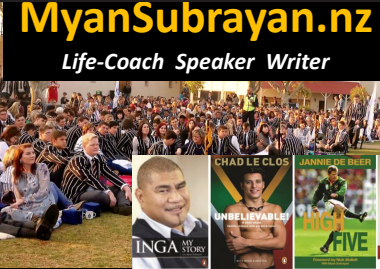
TESTIMONIES TO INSPIRE



Myan Subrayan

MyanSubrayan.nz

Life-Coach Speaker Writer



Mentor, Motivator & Speaker to businesses, sports teams, schools and churches.
Myan's talks and books have inspired many to aspire for greater things!

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Motivation for: Individuals, teams, coaches and management

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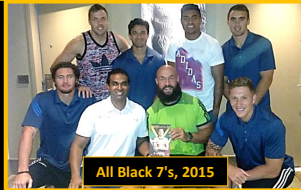
Lions 2014



Springboks Dublin 2014

"Myan had a significant impact on the Lions. His zest for life, positive nature and unwavering faith inspired us to become better players and people."

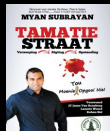
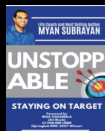
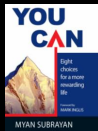
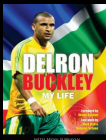
Warren Whiteley
(Lion's Captain /Springbok)



All Black 7's, 2015

"Myan's talks were encouraging and reassuring, especially when we faced tough times as a team. He is a mentor & good friend to us."

DJ Forbes
(Captain All Black 7's)



INTRODUCTION

Myan Subrayan, Writer

The values derived from sport can enrich our lives. Values of discipline, commitment, hard work. We put a lot of effort into playing sport and at our jobs. If we put that same level of commitment into our family, we would be more successful. In sports we play to achieve a prize. In the game of life there is an even greater prize to play for, eternal life. Sport has the amazing ability to cross over religious, racial or cultural barriers, and unite people globally. Nelson Mandela was correct in saying,

Sport has the power to change the world... to inspire... to unite people in a way that little else does.

It's my privilege to produce this book of sportsmen, whom are men of great character. *John Wooden*, the Hall of Fame NBA basketball coach said:

Talent will get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there.

Interestingly the word 'character' comes from an ancient Greek word that means 'to chisel'. It sounds painful, but as the saying goes, 'no pain no gain'. These sportsmen have been 'chiselled' and their characters shaped for the better. Character is a reflection of a man's soul, a worthier prize to be sought than any trophy to be displayed on a shelf. As you read about these stories of personal challenges and triumphs, be inspired to live as a **MAN OF THE WORD!**

MORNE STEYN



Morne Steyn during the IRB 2011 Rugby World Cup between South Africa and Fiji in Wellington, New Zealand.

Photo by Gallo Images

At nine years old my dad presented me with my first Bible. I was so excited and carried it everywhere I went. I am truly grateful to my parents for teaching us to honour God in everything we did from a young age. I was encouraged to read the Bible, and can remember being so blessed reading and learning from the Word of God. Psalm 23 was a Scripture that most Afrikaner children learnt from a young age - it was also the same with me.

Today even though I may have grown older, I have not drifted away from the comfort and strength of the Bible. There is so much peace I receive when I read those words, because God is truly our Shepherd. He is the One that provides and takes care of us just as the shepherd takes care of his sheep. You don't find sheep worried about where their next meal or drink of water is going to come from, because they trust their shepherd to provide. I believe David sets the example for us to have the same confidence and faith to trust God. At times when I may have felt overwhelmed or afraid I am greatly encouraged to know that God is with me at all times,

"His staff and rod they comfort me."

God gave me the opportunity to live out my dream, so whenever I get onto the field, I make sure I give my 100%. I do it in recognition of all that God has done in my life and it is for Him that I live. As a professional sportsman people may think that I have everything I could need. But the reality is that we take nothing when we leave this earth. There is no suitcase that

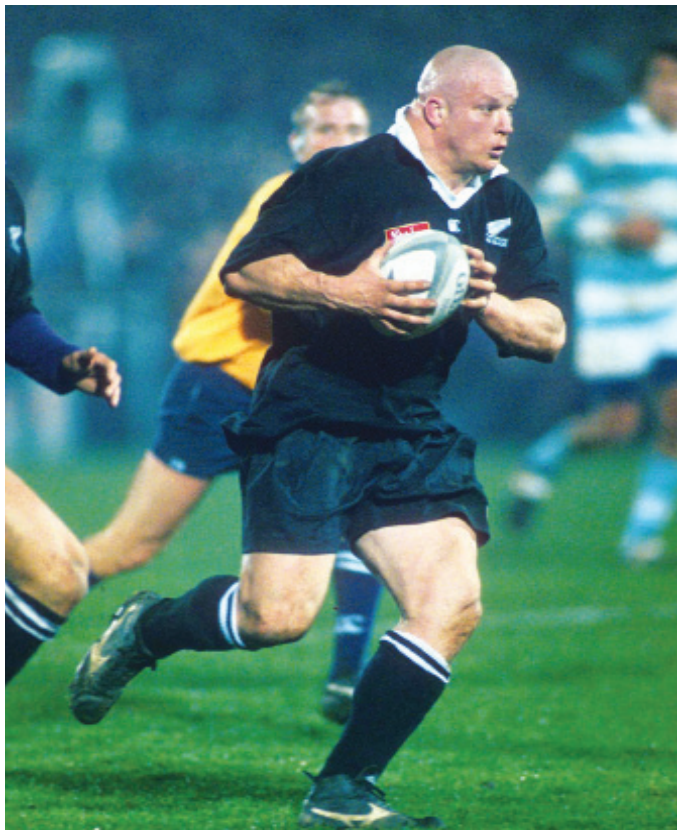
we can fill our worldly possessions into! It saddens me to see people pursuing idols, and God ends up being unimportant. My wife and I are committed to pleasing God and not people. We are growing in God through our personal devotion time, attending church regularly and belonging to a church cell group.

Even at the Bulls we have a tremendous support structure amongst us players, meeting regularly for Bible studies and prayer. I encourage you to belong to a group of people that can encourage you to grow in God. Whether in a church or a Bible study, it is important that you don't do life alone.

You cannot serve God effectively if you are not reading and studying the Bible. Give God your everything and put your whole trust in Him. Be blessed with these words,

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths - Proverbs 3:5-6

MARK 'BULL' ALLEN



Rampaging Bull Allen against Argentina in Hamilton 1997 *Photo*
www.photosport.co.nz

"Before I swam in the 'grey sea of compromise'. Now there's black and white, right and wrong. Life makes sense."

Mark 'Bull' Allen played 19 games for the All Blacks, 30 games for the Hurricanes in Super Rugby, and 110 times for Taranaki. He was the inaugural captain for the Hurricanes and also captained Taranaki. In 1998 his blossoming career was cut short due to a back injury.

Growing up in the country town of Stratford, Taranaki, it seemed like the only two things for me to do were drinking and playing rugby. If they were Olympic sports I would have won gold medals in both. I started playing rugby at five years of age and was soon really committed to it and aimed to be the best. I used to train up to three times a day – swimming, running and doing weights – including the off-season, and continued outside of the required sessions. My life revolved around it.

All of this hard work finally paid off for me when as a twenty year old, I realised my dream of becoming an All Black. But it very often took me away from my family, as I was so focused on rugby that I didn't realise my life was out of balance.

THE RITUAL

Even as a young man it was a ritual to sit around and have a few beers after the games. Before I knew it, I'd had too many. This was the culture – habitually drinking after every game, which we did to be part of the team. After a few drinks, life

would seem easier to handle. I sat there laughing and drinking with the boys and the pressures seemed to melt away. Then as I got higher up the rungs of the rugby ladder, the pressures I faced intensified. Eventually I made it into the All Blacks, the pinnacle of rugby achievements for any young player. Making it as a professional athlete was a dream come true – but I was totally unprepared for what came with it.

There is a saying: One beer is too many. One hundred is not enough.

We often hear about professional sportsmen getting into trouble because of alcohol-fuelled bad behaviour. There is intense pressure to perform and deliver results, whilst maintaining a friendly, approachable public image. For some it's too much to bear and they eventually crack. When rugby went professional in 1996 I spent three years as captain of the Hurricanes while also playing in the All Blacks. The demanding schedule meant that time for my family was scarce.

If I wasn't training or playing rugby, my contract required me to do promotional work. I was totally geared up for the sporting lifestyle, but at home I wasn't as equipped for family life as I thought.

You could say that rugby was my religion – it defined what I did and how I lived. Everything else in my life was secondary. My life revolved around the game so much that I had lost sight of what my real priorities should have been. When it came to rugby I did everything to make time for it. On top of playing

we had practices, sponsorship commitments, team sessions and more. My home life was a different story as often I overlooked my kids and their needs and eventually my family life suffered.

The truth is, I was trying to be ‘The Man’ – staunch. I found it just too humbling to stop and say to my wife, “Honey, I’m sorry – I need help”. I really needed someone to sit me down and explain what I should be doing as a husband and father. I am not talking about ‘pub advice’ – what you get when you and your mates are drunk, sitting around talking trash. I mean solid mature advice. I now believe that this is a key element lacking in the lives of many men.

Many men don’t talk about the real ‘heart’ matters, which have an impact on everything we do. Men are not told enough practical, wise advice or don’t listen properly when we are told. It is a well-known fact that if things are not right in our home life, it’s going to show when we compete in our sports at the highest level. Consider the personal events in Tiger Woods’ life and his form slump in 2010.

Along my life’s journey I had to learn some valuable lessons about being a husband and father, the most important one for me being:

To be the best father I had to be the best husband to their mum.

In 1998, during a Super 12 game, my rugby dream came crashing down when I received a serious back injury. I was diagnosed with a prolapsed disc in my back. As a loose-head

prop there is a lot of pressure on this part of the body. I was devastated as playing rugby was my life. The circumstances forced me to reconsider my priorities and my playing future. I decided to retire from rugby. I see now that this career-ending injury turned out to be a blessing in disguise for me. I didn't want to be consumed by rugby any more. It was an opportunity for my wife and I to prioritise, for me to put more effort into my family. Even then it was a slow process to get the balance right. I learned that change starts by making the choice to do so.

THE TURNAROUND

Being a family guy never came naturally to me. I was not as interested in the lives of my wife and my children as I should have been and as I am now. The big change came when God found me. Yes that's right, God found me! I am not talking religion, I am talking about life. I like what the band leader of U2, Bono, has to say about religion:

Religion often gets in the way of God.

I believe that the real God is not into religion, because He is all about life. Religion is about rules and regulations, 'you can't do this... you can't do that'. The God who found me is nothing like that. He is a God of love, grace and compassion. Now before you think I am going to get all religious on you, please read on...

The major influence in me opening up my heart to Jesus

Christ was my dear wife, GERALYN. She never gave up on me. She had been a Christian for ten years and slowly her prayers and commitment to God began to touch my life. After GERALYN started attending church I had noticed a change in her attitude towards me. Initially she was concerned about me and used to be on my case about getting right with God and coming to church, but then I noticed that she was not so bothered by my 'bad behaviour' as much as before she became a Christian. In her own words she said she had 'handed me over to God' and from then on I was not her problem anymore but God's.

My change or conversion didn't happen overnight and it took many years of my wife's prayers to finally make me 'see the light'. I was okay with GERALYN going to church and despite her invitations for me to attend, I was adamant and told her that I was strong enough to get through life on my own. 'Who needs a crutch?' was my reasoning. I was well able to stand on my own two feet, thank you very much. In my mind I had constructed this image that guys who went to church were wimps. Boy, was this all going to change.

As I was waiting for one of my kids to finish school one day, I was talking with one of the other dads. He was a former soldier who'd had many tours of duty around the world. Once, while serving in Asia, they were walking through the thick jungle and had managed to find a roadway. As they stepped onto it, there sitting waiting for them was a huge Sumatran tiger. Now that's a test of character.

I really respected this guy and we got on really well. The irony was that he turned out to be a pastor who had been praying and fasting for me for ages. He wasn't the stereotypical wimp that I thought most Christian men were. Shortly afterwards my family and I started visiting this pastor's church and I really loved it. I've been going ever since and have never looked back. God loved me, but He loved me too much to let me remain in the lifestyle I was living. Going to church didn't change my bad habits overnight. That comes from a changed heart, something that happens from the inside and not the outside. God's love had come in to my heart and began that change.

It was only when I began attending church and reading my Bible that the penny dropped about my excessive drinking habits. I realised how selfish I was. At the time I had three young children, but I was still living a separate life with my rugby mates. I had to change my ways and over time I weaned myself completely off drinking. Honestly I don't miss it. Nowadays I still do promotional work and catch up with some of my old rugby mates, but with Jesus as my rock, and my head in the right place, I don't have the urge to drink. God has been magnificent and very patient with me sorting this out and now it's not an issue in my life.

When I first went to church I thought I was a pretty good guy, but God helped me see that I needed to change. My faith gives me the confidence to believe that all things are possible only because of God's amazing grace. It's His love for me that

encourages me, showing me who I really am and the areas I need to change in.

Growing up in New Zealand where drinking alcohol is a widely accepted norm in society, and more especially if you play rugby, avoiding alcohol can be challenging. It is a given in our Kiwi culture that rugby and alcohol go hand in hand. Initially I played rugby to drink because there was nothing else to do and I realised that being drunk was a way to avoid making hard decisions.

With God's love and the encouragement of other Christians, I have managed to get a balance between my work commitments and family life. Since becoming a Christian I can see how totally out of balance my life was. As I read the Bible, I have the tools to improve my marriage and my relationship with my kids. Now, instead of just showing my face in my family life, I'm loving it. I thought I loved them before but I didn't realise what love was. Every day my love for God and my family grows and grows.

I try to apply the advice of my eldest son. When he was 13, I asked him what he thought made a great dad. His response was,

A dad who listens, takes the time to be with me and encourages me.

Sounds like great advice for every father. The best thing is sitting here knowing that life is pretty good but I also know it is going to get so much better now that I have Christ in my life.

In the last few years I have really leaped ahead in my spiritual journey. I meet regularly with my church leaders and guys that I respect a lot. They keep me on track and we can share openly about areas we are struggling and need help in. As men we tend to want to hang around in the shallow pool of surface level relationships. We don't open up to each other about what's going on inside us. Now, through my godly relationships I'm learning. Though I appear hard on the outside, I have learnt that it's OK to be soft on the inside. We are honest about issues we are facing and can open up about our tough times. Then we pray through the issues and support each other. It's brilliant!

I realise now that character is being able to handle the unknown – what you are not expecting, and conduct yourself well whether you win or lose. It's said that,

You show some of your character when you win, but show all of it when you lose!

Becoming a Christian doesn't make me perfect. I am still a work in progress, but the good news is that I am improving all the time. That's what I love now about having God in my life. Previously, I swam in the grey sea of compromise.

Now there's black and white, right and wrong. Life makes sense.

CHILIBOY RALEPELLE



Chiliboy Ralepelle with a line-out throw during the 2011 IRB Rugby World Cup match between South Africa and Namibia in Auckland, New Zealand.

Photo by Gallo Images

Reading my Bible gives me the wisdom to know that my life, future, and final destination are in God's hands. Knowing this provides me with the hope I need when faced with difficult times. In faith I believe that God allows the testing to bring you closer to him and to display His almighty power in your life. I recall one particular time of immense testing in November 2010, when I was alleged to have used banned substances. I was so relieved when I was later cleared, and want to share some of the valuable lessons I learnt during this time of testing.

It is a fact of life that we all have to go through adversity. During this time I believed that God had chosen me, so that I could be transformed and come out on the other side, a new person. It was as if I was in the fire. As I read my Bible I realised that it was in the fire that gold was purged and cleansed. God uses the trials and tests in our lives to bring us out as pure gold. I was so grateful for the wisdom I gained through this test - it was beyond measure. Adversity made me stronger, and gave me the time to shut the door to the world and focus on God's purpose for me. I believe until you realise this, you won't grow much in God.

My main source of strength was in knowing that God was with me, and I also got a lot of support from my team mates in the Bulls and Boks, and also from the management. Knowing that they believed in me helped. I love this portion of Scripture that explains more on trials,

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3

knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing – James 1:2-4

You need to give God time to work in you, and to also be connected to other Christians who will support you in your life. At the Bulls we meet regularly for Bible study and prayer – and this knits us together to be more than just team mates, but brothers in Christ. I encourage you to do the same and to read the Bible regularly.

ERONI CLARKE



Eroni Clarke against South of Scotland 1993

Photo www.photosport.co.nz

“Yes, I played rugby to the highest level, but my greatest achievement was being a dad who served his family.”

Former All Black, Eroni Clarke, played 24 times for the All Blacks from 1992 to 1998, scoring 11 tries. He won two Super 12 titles with the Blues in 1996 and 1997, and six national provincial titles with Auckland. Currently retired from rugby he is involved with coaching on matters of character building. Eroni encourages us to not let people tell you that you can't achieve your dreams or your goals. Here is some inspiration and encouragement from Eroni, on how he didn't allow the criticisms of people to hold him back from achieving his dream to play for the All Blacks:

My parents lived in Samoa, where life was hard and there were limited opportunities. My father had a plan to bring his family to New Zealand so that we could have a good education and reach our potential. So when I was a one-year-old, our family made the big move. My father was a keen rugby player who had represented Samoa. I remember sitting down with him to watch my first rugby game on TV – the All Blacks versus Scotland. The game was played on a flooded Eden Park surface in torrential rain. I was inspired by seeing the players running, tackling and diving in this extreme weather with water everywhere. I turned to my dad and said, “How do you become an All Black?” He looked over to me and said, “Son, you have to be brainy”. I remember as a seven-year-old kid thinking, “Wow, those All Blacks are brainy, man!” I began to

dream that one day I would play for that team.

But as I went through my high school years, that dream began to suffer. People would ask me what I wanted to be when I grew up, and I would tell them I wanted to play for the All Blacks. All of a sudden, I was faced by opposition. My friends told me, “You can’t do that. That’s for talented people, for people who have really got it together.” My teachers would say, “Clarke, you can’t do that. Being an All Black is not a future for you.”

NEVER GIVE UP

As I started to understand the Bible, the desires in my heart began to come in line with the desires that God had for me. I realised God wanted me to have dreams. I look at the life of Joseph in the Old Testament – he didn’t know how he was going to reach his dream, but he knew that his destiny lay there. People told Joseph that he couldn’t reach his dream, and I can identify with that from my own journey. I know that I could have been a prisoner of the negative words that people threw at me in my formative years. I used to wonder how I could ever make it. Joseph probably asked the same question as he sat in the pit and in prison. He must have wondered if the dream he had was really from God. The dream seemed to be fading and getting further away. But through all that, God was building character and looking back, I know the same was true for me.

THE DREAM COMES TRUE

I was selected for the All Blacks four years after I received Jesus

into my heart. I was 22 years old. I experienced the highs of playing professional rugby – and it was great. But I can honestly say that talent can get you to the top but only character will keep you there. There are many things that money can't buy. One of those things is the kind of character that is formed by coming from a tough environment and climbing life's hurdles. Real success comes from the journey – by coming up against obstacles, learning from them and overcoming them.

Even after making the All Blacks, I had to walk through a lot of challenges. One of the hardest periods of my life was when I was dropped from the team in 1994. I even lost my starting position playing provincial rugby for Auckland. I was very frustrated.

I had a nigging injury and I didn't know what the coach expected of me. I was being asked by rugby league scouts to switch codes and go overseas. It was a confusing time. I realised that I was trying to do everything in my own strength, aiming to impress the coach and the selectors. God spoke to my heart and said,

Son, this is not about playing for man. You are trying to get the accolades of the coaches. This is about giving glory to Me. Play to glorify Me.

I realised that I had put impressing people ahead of pleasing God. I knew I had to make it all about Him. A real sense of liberty came from that, because every time I played it was not to impress people but for the audience of One – for God. I

ended up making it back into the All Blacks and featuring regularly for Auckland.

TRIALS - WE ALL HAVE TO FACE THEM

My game began to lift and I started playing professionally as a centre for the Blues. In 1998 I got to the All Black trials and played well. The day the All Black team was named, I felt confident I had done enough to make the starting line-up. But when the manager read out the team, I was not named and I wasn't in the reserves either. Then he read out the starting line-up for New Zealand B. He got to the centres and again, didn't read out my name. I found myself in the reserves for the second string team. It was the lowest point in my rugby career, and I just wanted to go home. Michael Jones came over to console me and I remember saying, "Please don't say anything, I think I'm going to cry." I was tired of fighting.

I got on the bus to Hamilton with the New Zealand B team, and opened my devotional book. The heading for that day said, 'Get Up, Get Going'. That was the last thing that I wanted to do! I said, "God, you've got to be kidding!" But it was as if He was speaking straight to my heart and saying, "Eroni, you're right in the middle of My will, you're right where I want you to be. Just trust Me." The Scripture that accompanied the devotional was:

Habakkuk 2:3: For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, it will not tarry (NKJV).

I decided to stick with the team and just be the best I could. Down in Hamilton I was rooming with Tana Umaga, who had also been left out of the All Blacks. Each morning I would get up early, do my devotions and then go and get Tana up for breakfast. I poured my heart into training and constantly called out to Tana to encourage him to keep on going as we ran through the drills. A few years ago I was at a function where Tana was the guest speaker. Tana was asked the question, “Who is the toughest centre you have ever marked?” Tana said, “Eroni Clarke. And furthermore, I remember a time when I had been dropped from the All Blacks and I was rooming with Eroni. Eroni would get up early in the morning, and then he’d drag me out of bed. Then we’d go to training and Eroni was hard out, just getting on with the job. It was like nothing phased him.” I realised that by doing what God told me to do, I was able to be an example for a man who would go on to become one of the greatest All Black captains of all time. Four weeks after Hamilton, both Tana and I were selected back into the All Blacks.

Another incredibly difficult time for my family was when our son, E.J., was born with multiple heart defects. Our precious child had to undergo a seven-hour operation. We spent hours in prayer, asking God to save E.J.’s life and bring him through the surgery. God spoke very strongly to us, telling us that He would take care of our son, and asking us to be there for the other parents who had children in the ward. It was hard to

do, but I put E.J. in God's care and started encouraging and praying with other families who were in the hospital. God did look after our son, and today I work as an ambassador for Heart Children New Zealand, helping spread the word about that excellent organisation.

I held onto my dream to play rugby at the highest level until about 2006. On a camp with my eldest daughter, who was ten years old at the time, I realised that she was growing up fast and I only had a few more years left to be there for her before she reached adulthood. I realised that if I was going to sow things into her life that would have an impact on her future, these were going to be the most crucial years. I began to weigh up my hopes and dreams for my rugby alongside my love for my children and family, and I realised that I would never be able to make up the lost time with my children. All of a sudden my dreams about rugby began to fade away as I looked hard at my priorities. I want to be able to say,

Yes, I played rugby to the highest level, but my greatest achievement was being a dad who served his family.

These are things that money can't buy. The legacy that my father started by trying to find a better life for his family has now been carried on in my own life, as I put aside my rugby career for the sake of my children.

Eroni Clarke's testimony and contribution was taken out of the foreword from the book, 'From the Pit to the Palace'.

PIERRE SPIES



Pierre Spies during the Springboks training and media conference session in Johannesburg, South Africa on November 2011.

Photo by Gallo Images

“You may never play rugby again”

Springbok and Bulls ‘number eight’, Pierre Spies, is a man admired for his skills as a rugby player and more relevantly as someone that kept himself ‘pure’. Pierre values marriage and through his strong faith in God has overcome many challenges. In 2007 the rugby world was looking forward to seeing this exciting loose forward play at the Rugby World Cup in France. Sadly for Pierre it didn’t happen and he almost lost his life through developing blood clots in his lungs. Here is some of what Pierre shares in his upcoming autobiography, Pierre Spies: More than Rugby.

Before we go onto the field as a team we always get together to thank God and ask Him for protection over us. When we pray before games, it is not for victory, but for the protection of our bodies and that the work of our hands may be blessed. We ask God to help us glorify Him through our bodies and our talents. We also thank Him for the opportunity to use the talents that we have been given. I take this a step further: whenever I score a try, you will see me pointing up to the heavens. I do this to acknowledge and give thanks to God for giving me the ability to play and to score. I read once that a reporter thought I was doing this in remembrance of my late dad. He was partly right, but he got the fathers mixed up. I was thanking my Heavenly Father not my earthly one.

To further acknowledge God, a few other players and I wear

crosses on our wrists during the games. We do this on the field as a reminder of our faith and a symbol of God's presence, so that we know we are never alone. Knowing this helps me focus better on the game. I look at it as a tangible way to show and demonstrate my faith, rather than just talk about it. More importantly, it is a constant reminder of why I play in the first place: to glorify God. It's also about expressing our faith in public, not being ashamed and covering it up. The power of the cross is what strengthens me to overcome my weaknesses. Whenever I see the symbol of the cross, it reminds me of the price that Jesus Christ paid to redeem me. I am open about my faith: I don't like to cover it up and be silent. How can I when Jesus died openly and publicly on that cross on Calvary Hill?

Before I became a Christian I had many girlfriends, but I never slept around, and my aim was to get married as a virgin. My wife, Juanné, and I kept ourselves for each other until our wedding night. I believe that for everything we do there are consequences. If you indulge in sex before marriage and sleep around, you may not realise what you've done until you are married. You can't go into your marriage with baggage. Guys need to be strong and not succumb to the peer pressure to sleep around before they are married.

When I made a firm commitment to follow Jesus, I gave up my flirtatious ways. I made a promise to myself that my next relationship would be serious, and with a girl that I intended to marry. I knew that my career was going to take off, and I was

looking for a wife who would complete me. I wanted a wife who would stand with me even when things got rough – for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, until death did us part. It was great having Juannés’ support when I went through my ‘blood clots’ (pulmonary embolism) ordeal. She was a real tower of strength to me, and I thank God for her. When you face the real prospect of death, you quickly realise which are the things that really matter most, and Juanné was clearly one of the priorities in my life. I was told in no uncertain terms by the doctors that I was lucky to be alive and that,

You may never play rugby again

This was two weeks before I was due to go France with the Springbok team to play in the Rugby World Cup, 2007. I was absolutely gutted. At first, a jumble of thoughts raced through my mind:

What, blood clots? God, you must be joking!

We’re on our way to the World Cup, the highlight of my career. This can’t be happening!

I’m walking in your ways, God, and living a healthy life. I look after my body and train hard and don’t use illegal substances. So why me?

At that time of great turmoil in my life, and even though I was questioning God, I felt the peace of God all over me. Immediately I knew that God was in control. I chose to believe God’s Word when He says that He has great plans for us and

that I have been healed by His wounds. There is a particular verse that has encouraged me all through my hard times and really puts things into perspective:

All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose. Romans 8:28

I had to believe that even though the blood clots had ended my chances of going to the World Cup, they were not bad, because God would work it out for good. My faith taught me that no matter what happens to us, we must always stay positive and focused on God. Whenever I drove to the doctors for tests to be done, I would always put on praise and worship music in my car on the way to the hospital. I would shout out and praise God with a loud voice, regardless of whether my lungs were sick or healthy. I was going to praise God because HE IS GOOD. I had to keep on keeping on in God. I knew that God was going to heal me then or later if it was in His plans.

I remember writing on a big poster in faith, 'Healed in Jesus name', and hanging it up in my room. Every day when I woke up and went to sleep, those were the first and the last words that I saw, and I believed them. I knew God had the power to heal me. I can honestly say that my faith was being tested, but I made a decision to praise God whether I stayed sick or got healed. I knew I had to submit to His will. It was an unconditional choice, in the same way that He loves us unconditionally. I don't play down the fact that I was really

shattered at what had happened to me, but the truth is that my faith in God is what carried me through. While all of this was happening, a huge pillar of strength to me was reading the Bible.

Remember, the doctors had not given me much hope of returning to rugby. They'd said it was impossible, that I would never be able to play again, as most people with blood clots never get off the medication. But God is moved by faith, not by anything else. After more check-ups and testing, I was given the all-clear to play rugby again in early 2008. Yes, we humans have limitations, but with God all things are possible. After six months of medication I received my miracle:

GOD HEALED ME!

God showed His great love and mercy to me and answered my prayers. What He did for me I know He can surely do for you or anyone else. It may not happen immediately, but keep holding on and believing in faith. I thank God daily for my healing and for giving me such a supportive wife in Juanné. Even though Juanné and I can still be regarded as newlyweds, I thank God that our marriage is growing stronger each day. Just as I take my rugby seriously and put in the effort to excel at it, so it is with my marriage.

Pierre Spies' full testimony and life story is captured in his autobiography "More than Rugby".

JASON ROBINSON



Jason Robinson as England captain against Australia, 2004

Photo www.photosport.co.nz

"It's the dead fish that go with the flow!"

Jason Robinson is a former England Rugby captain and was part of the 2003 World Cup winning squad. He is a dual international playing for Great Britain in rugby league. Earlier on in his career he struggled with binge drinking and endured the difficulty of being raised in a single parent home subjected to domestic violence. Jason didn't meet his biological father until 2009. Through it all he pressed on. His tremendous resilience and talent to play rugby was the respite that helped him become who he is today.

Inga 'The Winger' Tuigamala had a massive influence on my life when he came to play for Wigan in 1994. At times I don't know how he did it because I used to think he was the happiest person at the club whether we won or lost, and I couldn't understand why. I don't know if he knew it at the time but the lads and I were watching him constantly because he said that he was a Christian. We used to have a routine where we would always be out drinking and we would come in the following morning with our breath stinking with alcohol. Some of the lads used to take the 'Mickey' out of him and breathe on him deliberately. All Inga would do was have a laugh and never condemn them or get agitated. If he did he never showed it and carried on his merry way.

It's one thing to preach and another to live it and I wanted to see some fruit in his life. In all fairness I did. We would observe how he would smash an opponent in a fair tackle and then stretch out a hand to pick him up. This sort of courtesy was

never seen before Inga arrived at Wigan. I know it may seem selfish on my part but I maintain that Inga came to Wigan in 1994 just for me. That was a time when I was going 'bananas'. I was drinking quite heavily, frequenting nightclubs and fooling around with girls. I had given in to the pressures of being in the limelight with all the fame and fortune of being a professional sportsman. At the time I did what I did because that's how you gained a lot of respect in the team and proved that you were one of the boys.

Through rugby I earned a lot of money, but the more I got the more I realised that it did not give me true fulfilment. I tried to find fulfilment in alcohol, chasing after women or indulging in buying fancy cars. Away from all the 'glitz and glamour', I was miserable, alone, empty and totally opposite to what everyone saw when they saw me on the field. Inside I was a right mess.

It irritated me the way that Inga was so happy all the time. I can remember that he was not a Bible basher but at the same time he didn't hide his life. At that time I was against Christianity but even I had to acknowledge that there was something different about him. It was clearly evident even for someone like me at that time that it was because he had the Lord Jesus Christ in his life. Also the guys in the team had a lot of respect for him because he was not a hypocrite. I was used to seeing everyone else being polluted by the lewd environment that we played in but Inga still maintained his integrity.

THE DREAM

I remember that special day when Inga came up to me and said that he had had a dream about me. He asked if he could share what it was. So I indicated to him that he could. He explained that he saw me standing on top of the world with the world under my feet. As he was watching he saw that the world was starting to crumble from under me. That dream of Inga's I will remember till the day I meet the Lord. How did he know how my life was? I was twenty and all I wanted to do was play rugby but the way that I was living my life was pretty messed up.

Through his dream he had really touched on something. I was searching but there was always something lacking in my life. The main reason was that I never knew my father. I didn't have the usual things taught to me by a father and it really hurt me that I didn't have that. The only people I had were the guys and if you go to rugby players and you say you have a problem they would say 'let's go have a pint'. In their way they are trying to help you but it only makes things worse. At the time I was with a girl from whom I had a baby out of marriage and had just got news that I had made another girl pregnant. Because of this I was drinking even more to drown my problems. I can remember somebody telling me something profound:

IT'S THE DEAD FISH THAT GO WITH THE FLOW!

Seeing Inga live out his faith really touched me. When he invited me to sit down with a few of his friends for a

Bible study I accepted. The Bible studies made me question lots of things that were happening in my life. The God of the Bible showed me that without Him I had absolutely nothing. Inga gave me my first Bible and inscribed a Scripture,

Proverbs 3:5-7 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

I cling to this Scripture and it is what I write in other people's Bibles. I don't want to be wise and follow my own thinking. My life changed for the better when I made the decision to become a Christian. I faced a lot of criticism from my mates but I knew that I could not continue living the way I was. I wanted what Inga had, Jesus Christ. When my mates started to see the changes in my life after I became a Christian they knew that I had made the right choice.

People like to blame their environment but I have learnt to put God first and live a life that pleases Him. I try to live the right life within my sport. What others are doing should not dictate to you to follow their way of life and to conform. If you can say that Jason Robinson and Inga don't do it, all of a sudden it is alright not to do it.

Jason Robinson's expanded testimony and the influence of Inga Tuigamala on his life are found in the book, 'Inga My Story'.

INGA 'THE WINGER' TUIGAMALA



Inga Tuigamala Playing for Wigan

Inga Tuigamala (known as “Inga the Winger”) represented the All Blacks 39 times from 1989 to 1993, scoring 14 tries. Switching from rugby union to rugby league, he won a number of titles with Wigan. After returning to union, he won the English rugby premiership title with Newcastle in the 1997 / 1998 season.

I have been encouraged by the testimonies in this book. Sometimes because of the demands of life, as men we can make the mistake of putting our jobs before our families. Let's face it, how many people have you come across or heard about who on their death beds have wished they had spent more time at their office? Or asked for their cheque books, bank statements, cell phones or laptops to embrace to comfort them? More often than not it is their loved ones, their families that they want to be around as they take their last breaths on earth. Why wait to be on your death bed when you can enjoy being around your family now? Don't be a fool and leave it till it's too late.

Maybe there are some changes you need to start making and my advice for you is to start now. Don't put it off any longer until it becomes too late. My greatest priorities in life are to always be improving in my relationship with God, my wife and my children. The rest is secondary. I don't admit to being perfect as I am always learning more each day. These words were relayed over the telephone by my wife, while I was on tour with the All Blacks in 1993, in Europe:

Inga your son thinks that his daddy is dead.

These words were from my then three-year-old son, Jordan, and they are what I started my recent book with, *Inga: My Story*. I chose to start with them because they shocked me and gave me a reality check. They revealed to me my shortcomings in my responsibility to my family, as a father and husband. It was heartbreaking for me to hear those words but who could blame Jordan for thinking I was dead? He hardly saw me around and had reasoned my absence signalled my death. Hearing Jordan's words took me back to my own relationship with my dad. As a child I had always longed for my dad to turn up and watch me play - just as I had noticed the other kids' dads doing. Or to be there for me at night to tuck me in and read a bed time story. I was crushed because my dad couldn't make it to my games due to him having to work to provide for his fourteen children.

I could not comprehend his absences at that time. Why couldn't he be like the other kids' dads? They were at their games, read to their kids at night and tucked them into bed. Later on I realised I was wrong about my dad and fully understood his reasons why. As a father I wanted to make sure that my children had the reassurance that their father would be there for them. I knew how unpleasant it felt not having your dad around, so I made a commitment to be there for my kids. I did not want them to feel the pain I did.

Sure, when I played for the All Blacks I was living the dream of many young men in New Zealand. But, when all is said and done, I ask myself what have I really accomplished if I am not

there for my wife and kids? It was clear I wasn't fulfilling my role as husband and father by being away from my family most of the time. The opportunity to play league for Wigan gave me the best of both my worlds - to play the sport I loved and to have my family there with me to enjoy it.

I believe the way a child spells love is T.I.M.E. All the video games, chocolates and gifts cannot substitute for the precious moments you spend with them. In the long run it's your 'presence' more than your 'presents' that matter for your kids. I don't in any way claim to be the perfect father but it's tragic how many parents by being absent are 'dead' to their children (using Jordan's word). Remember:

Children shut their ears to advice and open their eyes to example.

Through dedication and hard work we can enjoy success and the admiration of other people. We need more than just ourselves to reach our full potential in life. We have to keep going back to the Bible and checking to make sure we are fulfilling our true potential in God. I pray that the advice shared in this book will help you achieve meaning and purpose in your life, as a father, husband and son. We need this kind of godly wisdom. The Bible helped me through my rugby career, through the tough times. No matter what we go through, or what our goals and dreams are, if we give our lives over to God and put Him first in everything we do, then our lives can have meaning and purpose greater than anything we can imagine.

I understand that as guys we face much opposition and challenges to living godly lives, but this is why we need to stay close to God for His strength. I don't expect people to believe in what I believe, as we all have the freedom of choice, whether you are an atheist or a believer in another faith. We are entitled to our own beliefs and we reap the consequences for doing so. The power of the cross is what strengthens me to overcome the weaknesses that I possess. Now in my role as a funeral director I see the reality of how fragile and precious life is.

Let me ask you:

- When last have you given your wife a bouquet of flowers?
- When last have you treated her to something special?

Don't leave it to tomorrow for it may never come, and it may just be too late. Common words that I hear at funerals are 'if only'. If only I had done this or that, things would have turned out differently. Remember we are on planet earth for a brief time so live your life with no regrets. My words of advice would be to pick up a Bible – get a modern translation – read the words of God, read about life and death and what happens afterwards. It is quite amazing that people don't bat an eyelid if you are into any other religion, but if you say you're a born-again Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, they 'freak out'. I believe that preconceived ideas rob people of the truth and simplicity of following Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 7:31 it says,

This world in its present form is passing away.

I was under no illusions that my rugby career would eventually be over. In due course my life and yours will come to an end. We all have to face the 'final whistle' of life. When I die I want to know that I am right with God, don't you? The Bible assures us that if you seek for God, He will be found, but we have to search wholeheartedly. Salvation is the first step towards your new life and God's free gift to you. Maybe you are in a similar place to where my brother, Jason Robinson was, or just searching for God and for the void in your life to be filled. My friend, take it from me, only Jesus can do that!

Look what he has done for Jason Robinson, Bull Allen, Pierre Spies, Morne Steyn, Chilliboy Ralapelle, Jannie de Beer, Nick Farr Jones and Eroni Clarke's lives. Jesus can do the same for you if you are willing to let Him. Even if you are in a place right now that you feel is 'not right' and you need help to change, I can assure you that God can help you even when things seem impossible. The Bible describes Him as the 'God of the impossible!'

NICK FARR JONES



Nick Farr Jones lifts the Webb Ellis Trophy after captaining Australia to victory in the 1991 Rugby World Cup.

Photo www.photosport.co.nz

“Nice guys can win”

Nick Farr Jones appeared in 63 Tests for Australia's Wallabies, and 36 times as captain. He won the 1991 Rugby World Cup as Captain of the Wallabies in Twickenham, England. Nick is still highly respected and is regarded as Australia's most successful captain.

It was such joy to hold aloft the Webb Ellis Trophy as captain of the Wallabies. We had defeated England 12-6 on their home ground of Twickenham in the 1991 Rugby World Cup final, in front of a packed out stadium of about 60,000. On that day, 2nd November 1991, we were crowned the world champions and I had the honour of the trophy being presented to me by Queen Elizabeth II.

The magazine, Rugby News, paid us a huge compliment with a headline that said something along the lines that ‘nice guys can win’. They based this on observing us being a courteous and well mannered team led by our Coach, Bob Dwyer and myself as captain. Upon returning to Sydney, the city turned out for a tickertape parade to honour us. I was further taken aback when I was honoured with the ‘Key to the City’ by the Lord Mayor. Those were very fond memories indeed. On 21 August 1993 I retired from international rugby and was glad to end with a series-winning 19-12 victory over the Springboks in front of my home fans at the Sydney Football Stadium.

SLOW STARTER

Despite all the highs that I achieved in rugby, my early days were not as grand, because I was a slow starter and didn't even make my high school's First XV. That was disheartening and I could have given up but was glad that I hung in and continued to persevere. I was so disappointed because I thought I would end up being one of those schoolboy athletes who would never do anything once they got older. But I was wrong.

At Sydney University where I studied law, my hard work was rewarded when I made the First Colts team as their halfback. That year we went on to win the premiership, and gained promotion to the First Grade side the following year. Even though I was not one of the higher ranked halfbacks in Sydney, I got selected for the Sydney tour to Europe in 1984, after a selector had chanced to see me play. That year I also made the Australian Universities team and in May 1984, the then newly appointed Australian rugby coach, Alan Jones, selected me for his new look Wallaby squad.

My first Test cap came in the Wallabies 1984 Grand Slam Tour of Europe, playing against England. On that tour we went on to win every match, beating England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland. I played in every Test match that tour and also scored my first Test try in our victory over Scotland. My improvement as a player was rewarded in 1987 when I was made captain of New South Wales and in 1988, Coach Bob Dwyer rewarded me with the captaincy for the Wallabies which

I carried through into the 1991 Rugby World Cup. Due to a knee injury I left the field early in our quarter-final match against Ireland. There were some pretty tense moments as I sat on the sidelines, and watched as we almost lost the match - scoring right at the end to win 19-18. In the semi-final we faced the mighty All Blacks and achieved a memorable 16-6 win over them that earned our right to face England in the final.

Over my career, along with meeting the Queen of England, I had the privilege of also meeting Nelson Mandela and many other dignitaries and famous people. However, despite all these amazing experiences, none of them was more fulfilling than what happened to me when I was sixteen years old. At the local pizza shop I was doing what sixteen-year-old boys my age usually do, I was chasing after girls. It just so happened that these girls were Christians. I figured that the only way I could see them again was if I visited their church, so I was delighted when they invited me along. Even though my initial motives were not what some may construe as 'pure' for attending church, I got to hear the Gospel for the first time in my life. Not only did I hear the Gospel but I also got to see the Spirit of God move among the people. There was something special that these Christians had, which attracted me and made me want to have what they had.

HELP WITH MY TEMPER

Over time, I became more involved with my new found

Christian friends and I made a commitment to follow Jesus Christ. This decision of mine had an impact on my life which people close to me noticed straight away. Before I became a Christian I struggled to control my temper and had a short fuse. I can remember one time when I was sitting at a table with my brother Simon and there were some guys sitting next to us drinking heavily. They were drunk and started sliding their empty beer glasses across the table and smashing them into ours. This annoyed me but my faith in Jesus held me back from responding out of anger. I did walk over to them and asked them nicely to stop doing that, but they didn't listen. So I exerted a bit more 'persuasion' by grabbing one of the guys and throwing him against the wall and saying, "Listen mate, I'm a Christian first, and I'm getting very angry and want you to stop that". Thank God the guy listened and we didn't hear from them for the rest of the evening.

I admit that life as a Christian hasn't always been easy and during my ten years with the Wallabies, I began to backslide. I was no saint and sometimes on tour did things that were not Christian. I want to be honest and don't want people thinking that I was a perfect Christian. My Christian life was like a roller coaster and I had my ups and downs. Four years into my Christian life, for whatever reason, I stopped getting up early in the morning to read my Bible and I didn't do a lot of praying. But I thank God that I got back into it and realised that it's the most important thing in my life. In hindsight, I realise how

important it is to be in constant contact with the Lord, to be consistently reading His Word and constantly seeking His will for your life. Through this personal relationship with Jesus, you can't go wrong, and that is how I overcame my short temper problem.

Through my belief in Jesus Christ I live a more fulfilled life with my family. My desire is to not lie back on my deathbed and regret not doing things I should have done for God. I want to be used by God and I know that He has greater plans ahead for me. That excites me as I pray and seek God for exactly what they are. When I get to the end of my life here on earth and look back I want to be able to say,

I sought the will of God and tried my best to do that in my life.

FINAL WHISTLE - JANNIE DE BEER



Jannie De Beer kicks for goal against England in the 1999 Rugby World Cup quarter-final match at the Stade de France in Paris.

Photo by Gallo Images

In 1994 I made a decision that changed my life forever. I recommitted my life to Jesus at a church that my girlfriend, Vicky (now my wife) was attending. At that service I was asked by the pastor if I needed prayer. Even though I thought that I was a good enough guy, I accepted the invitation. With my hands raised and as he prayed, I felt this incredible power from God gently knock me off my feet. I lay on the floor for three hours as God began to work inside of me. I can only describe it as 'heart surgery' that was taking place. There were hurts and issues that needed to be dealt with, and as I lay there on the floor, God was 'operating' on my heart.

At that time I had a difficult relationship with my dad. We were not really communicating much, because I felt that he had not fulfilled his role as a father to me. This had caused us to drift apart. He was also no longer close to God as he once was. When God touched me I knew that we could not carry on like this, and when I awoke from my 'heart surgery', the Spirit of God led me to call him to meet. I forgave him for all his shortcomings and I asked him to forgive me for my attitude towards him. Since then my dad and I have enjoyed a blessed relationship as father and son. My dad also recommitted his life back to Jesus and is serving as a leader in his local church. God had worked through me to draw my dad back to Him.

I appreciated thus far that rugby had opened a lot of doors for me, but the reality I faced was that it had no eternal value - playing rugby would never save my soul! It was a talent that

I am grateful to God for, and something that I only wanted to use for His glory. I put serving God first and made sure that I spent time reading and studying my Bible, praying and spending quality time with my family.

After this realignment of my priorities, my rugby career started to soar, and in 1997 I was selected as a Springbok. Like many guys I also enjoy my time on the golf course, but not at the expense of my priorities. I often take my wife and kids along and enjoy playing a round with them. God had to bring me to a place where I found rest in Him. If you chase a butterfly it will more than likely fly away, but if you stop chasing after it, and rest, it will more than likely come to you. My advice from the Bible is,

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you – Matthew 6:33

You have read the other testimonies in this book, and seen what Jesus has done in theirs and my life. He can most certainly do the same for you if you allow Him to. It does not matter what has happened in your past because He can give you a new future. The Bible says those that are in Christ are new creations, the old things have passed away -

behold you have a new life (2 Corinthians 5:17).

For this new start to life, or to recommit your life back to God, then I encourage you to pray this simple prayer:

Dear Jesus, I need your help, come into my heart, forgive my sins, and save me. Lord I thank you for your blood that was shed that washes away all my sins. Jesus, I make you the Lord over my life!

BOOKS BY MYAN SUBRAYAN



INGA: MY STORY

The fascinating, inspirational story of overcoming hardship, reaching the heights of All Black hero status. Contributions by Inga's former team-mates: Jonny Wilkinson, Martin 'Chariots' Offiah, Jason Robinson, Rob Andrew, Pat Lam, Michael Jones and more.



MORE THAN RUGBY

Much more than a sports biography, this is a moving and very personal story that will inspire and motivate you through life's challenges. Foreword by Victor Matfield and contributions from fellow Christian Springboks: Morné Steyn, Bryan Habana and Juan Smith.

BOOKS BY MYAN SUBRAYAN



FROM THE PIT TO THE PALACE

Biblical truth from the life of Joseph. Featuring foreword and last word by ex-All Blacks Eroni Clarke and Inga Tuigamala.



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INTRODUCING

Myan Subrayan

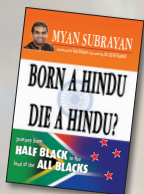
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Myan's Testimony is rich with Godly Wisdom encompassing his :

- Conversion from Hinduism
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- Experience in business – the highs and lows
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A message of Hope and Overcoming for people from all walks of life.



Myan's story is one of God's power at work. An excellent communicator speaking to different cultures/ages. I recommend him as a speaker.

Gary Grut, NZ Manager - ex. Baptist Youth Ministries

Myan shared his past insights that were relevant and hit the mark. He has become a great friend to Promise Keepers and we enjoy his support and encouragement.

Paul Subritzky, ex. National Director of Promise Keepers



Myan's testimony strongly impacted and challenged us - I highly commend him to you.

Brent Douglas - Senior Pastor Encounter Christian Centre.

Myan will inspire and encourage you in your walk with Christ.

Geoff Wiklund - ex. Senior Pastor Eden AOG

Myan is an inspirational speaker and dear friend.

INGA TuIGAMAIA

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Books by Myan



CHAD LE CLOS: UNBELIEVABLE
In his first book ever, Chad reveals how he set about planning to beat his idol and hero, the legend, Michael Pheps in the London 2012 Olympics. Covering aspects of his family and friends this is a great, balanced read!



FROM THE PIT TO PALACE
Biblical truth from the life of Joseph that is inspiring and motivational. Featuring foreword and last word by ex-All Blacks Eroni Clarke and Inga Tuigamala.



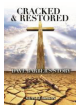
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Humorously written in Afrikaans to inspire and encourage South Africans with a message of hope.



INGA: MY STORY
Inspirational story of overcoming hardship, reaching the heights of All Black hero status. Contributions by Inga's former team-mates: Jonny Wilkinson, Martin 'Chariots' Offiah, Jason Robinson, Rob Andrew, Pat Lam, Michael Jones.



CRACKED & RESTORED: Dave Barber's Story
Dave Barber went from being a drug taking, merciless killer to a lifesaving ordained pastor and drug counsellor. Disillusioned, and on his way to certain death, Dave encounters the love and saving grace of Jesus Christ, and is radically transformed into the person he is today.



YOU CAN
Simple yet profound advice that can change your life - not tomorrow, not one day, but today! Myan uses eight choices to help you attain a 'more rewarding life'. This book forms the basis for his life coaching sessions



JANNIE DE BEER: HIGH FIVE
Insights into Jannie's World Record 5 drop goals at the RWC'99. Foreword by Nick Mallett and contributions by former Boks: Pieter Rossouw, Brendan Venter, Johan Ackermann & Wallaby, Steven Larkham

The team took a lot of his sessions and were certainly lifted and charged up to face what was a very tough season, being out of Super Rugby in 2013. He helped us stay focussed and aligned the team to what their mission, vision and values were - **Johan Ackermann (Head Coach Lions)**

He helped get a team that was down and out, into believing that they can become the best again. I became a better leader and learnt many things that I'll take for the rest of my life! - **JC Janse Van Rensburg (Captain of Lions 2013)**

Myan's sessions reminded me that there is always hope and your attitude determines your altitude! - **CJ Van Der Linde (Springbok)**

Myan has had a significant impact on players and staff at the Lions. His zest for life and positive nature, combined with an unwavering faith inspires us to become better players and people - **Warren Whiteley (Captain Lions /Springbok)**

Having heard Myan speak on a few occasions, his passion and humour are refreshing that keep his listeners interested - **Patrick Lambie (Sharks/Springbok)**

Myan's positive attitude really encouraged me and motivated me many times before games and inspired me to be a better person and player - **Cornal Hendricks (Springbok)**

Myan has played a big role in encouraging me mentally and spiritually, when I needed it the most. I believe he was sent at the right time into my life - **Arno Botha - (Springbok & Bulls)**



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TESTIMONIES TO INSPIRE

Inspiring life stories of rugby stars, all born again with a hunger to impact the world for Jesus. Honest and open they share encouraging testimonies of the power of God at work in their lives.

- Myan Subrayan

"It does not matter what has happened in your past because God can give you a new future."

Jannie de Beer (Springbok flyhalf)

"God's Word says that He has great plans for us and that I have been healed by His wounds."

Pierre Spies (Springbok eightman)



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