

~~DON'T~~

BE A
DICK

HOW ONE PERSON CAN
CHANGE THE WORLD IN THE
MOST UNEXPECTED WAY

MARC ENSIGN

FOREWORD BY CHRIS BROGAN

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INTRODUCTION

“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.”

— ANAÏS NIN

My name is Marc. And I am a Dick.

I’m a Dick to all of my friends. And to my family. I’m a Dick to people I know. And to people I don’t know.

In fact, if we were to bump into each other someday, whether it be online or in real life, I would probably be a Dick to you, too.

It’s nothing personal. It’s just who I am. And who I believe we all should be.

But in order for any of this to make sense, we need to go back in time to New Jersey, where it all began.

(Cue Flashback Sequence)

I was only about five or six years old the first time I remember the thought passing through my mind.

I'm going to change the world.

I blame my mom for that one. She would sew two small metal snaps onto the shoulders of all of my pajamas. And then every night before going to bed, I would attach the superhero cape she made me and reenact one of several life-saving missions. This usually involved balancing on the arm of the couch while preparing to jump onto the ottoman and then the recliner in one swift motion. All in an effort to single-handedly correct the course of an entire planet while avoiding the hot lava below.

Now, there is something that happens to you as a kid when you wear a cape. I'm not talking about those cheap ones that come with the old Superman Halloween costumes. I'm talking about the cape your mom made with the first initial of your name ironed on the back.

It changes you.

To anyone looking from a distance, they would see a kid with a superhero complex and a wild imagination. But to me, that cape was a constant reminder of how my mom saw me and what I was capable of becoming. Through her eyes, I could do anything. And in my mind, that included changing the world.

This, of course, is all normal behavior for a six-year-old. Not so much for a forty-something-year-old. And yet, here we are.

You see, while I firmly believe that most kids spend their childhood dreaming of becoming a superhero or an astronaut, I also believe they eventually outgrow it and end up in dental school or someplace worse.

But not me. I didn't get the memo.

I refused to grow up into a reasonably responsible adult with a safe job, a nice house, and a family, only to

disappear into the void without leaving much of a trace beyond a few plastic bottles sitting in a landfill somewhere in Nevada.

I was determined to take a different path.

As I got older, I spent the vast majority of my adolescent years sporting a pair of thick brown glasses, awkwardly curly hair, buck teeth, and braces. And on occasion, I would round out the ensemble by adding a calculator watch. That alone would have been enough to scar most kids for life. But my parents decided to kick it up a notch by moving us to a new town in the middle of third grade.

Moving to a new town is hard. Moving to a new town in the middle of the school year is really hard. Moving to a new town in the middle of the school year when you have thick brown glasses, awkwardly curly hair, buck teeth, and braces is impossible.

Yet, I walked into that classroom with a level of optimism that can only come from a kid who spent most of his life up until that point wearing a cape. I figured this move was a chance for me to start over. Maybe the kids at my new school would see through my appearance and get a glimpse of who I really was on the inside.

Spoiler alert. They didn't.

My time in high school wasn't all that much better. I mostly did my best to stay off of everyone's radar. If there was an award for "Most Likely to Be Forgotten" in the yearbook, I was the clear frontrunner. And between you and me, I was pretty okay with that because I knew I was going to be getting out of there soon enough. And that's when my life would really begin.

When I finally graduated from high school, I prepared to leave my hometown with both middle fingers displayed proudly as I left for what I assumed would be the last time. Vowing never to return. It's not that I didn't like New Jersey. I was just pretty sure that if anyone was going to make a massive difference on a global scale, they wouldn't be coming from Exit 163 off of the Garden State Parkway.

Sorry, Jon Bon Jovi.

So, with little more in my pockets than a few scattered memories, an extra pair of underwear, and a chip on my shoulder, I set out into the world to knock it off its axis.

My first stop was Boston, Massachusetts, where I attended Berklee College of Music with the goal of becoming a professional musician. You might be wondering how one chooses to change the world as a musician. And a bass player, no less.

Good question.

My original plan was to become an architect until, one afternoon, my high school jazz band went on a class trip to perform at a senior center crawling with old people. By the time we arrived, it appeared as though we were too late because everyone looked like they had already passed away. But then we started playing. And even though we weren't very good, every single person in that room got out of their wheelchairs or stepped out from behind their walkers and began to dance and clap.

Seeing the joy on their faces lit me up. And as hard as I tried, I was not able to shake that feeling. When I got home later that afternoon, I told my parents I wanted to be a musician so I could spend the rest of my life making people feel like that for a living.

So that's what I set out to do.

I spent the next few years traveling around the world with my electric bass strapped to my back. Performing in run-down little bars in Alaska. Touring through Costa Rica on a horse the size of a large dog. Visiting every state in America. Recording with Grammy Award-winning artists. And performing on Broadway in New York City.

And just in case that wasn't enough, I carved out quite a little career for myself off-stage as well. Upon seeing so many incredible musicians struggling, I came to the conclusion that I must be pretty good at marketing. If I could somehow promote myself onto a Broadway stage with no experience, perhaps I could help them do the same.

So I started my own marketing agency.

Within my first year in business, I was working with several Fortune 500 companies like Nike, American Express, and Berkshire Hathaway. At the time, my company consisted of me in a pair of sweatpants working out of a spare bedroom in my small Brooklyn apartment. Of course, I didn't want them to know this, so I took pictures of about a dozen of my friends and added them to my website with fake names and bios. And just like that, I was running a big agency.

Now, this is where things get a little fuzzy.

I woke up about ten or fifteen years later to discover that I had somehow become a reasonably responsible adult with a safe job, a nice house, and a family. Not only that, but I was living a stone's throw away from where I grew up in New Jersey.

Literally.

I mean, you could literally throw a rock out of my bedroom window, and if you didn't hit the house I grew up

in, you would at least take out someone I went to high school with.

Looking at this reasonably, I understood that moving back to New Jersey didn't really mean anything.

But this was no time to be reasonable.

Having moved back home was all the proof I needed that I had failed miserably in my mission to do something meaningful with my life. In fact, I was right back where I had started with nothing significant I could point toward as proof that I had made any kind of difference in the world.

Anywhere.

I had never built a school in a third-world country. I had never walked from New York to California to raise money for a good cause. And I had never run into a burn-house to save someone I didn't know.

In fact, I had never even rescued a cat from a tree. (Mostly because I'm allergic to cats and afraid of heights, but still.)

Instead, I had come home to New Jersey empty-handed with my tail neatly tucked between my legs and my mission of changing the world on life support.

I had failed. Miserably. And I knew it.

Now, don't get me wrong. There is no shortage of evidence to prove that I have achieved a level of personal and professional success of which any mother would be proud.

I'm happily married to the woman of my dreams. Together, we have two healthy children who are incredibly good people. We live in a nice house in a nice neighborhood in a nice part of the world. I'm blessed with a career that has given me the rare gift of experiencing

life as a professional musician, a marketing consultant, a speaker, an author, and an entrepreneur. And that career has allowed me the opportunity to see much of the world and connect with some of the most inspiring and accomplished people in it.

Yet, there was something missing. And in my mind, it was all New Jersey's fault.

So, I did what any rational person would do at that moment. I convinced my wife and kids to sell everything we owned, abandon all of our friends and family, and move twelve hundred miles away to Tampa, Florida. Leaving behind a life I didn't really care for very much anyway.

Now, here's the thing about Florida. If you were to have asked me to make a list of all of the places where I would want to live, Florida would have been on the bottom. Right below Kalamazoo, Michigan and above Slickpoo, Idaho.

Yes, that's a real town. I looked it up.

Where I come from, Florida is considered the birthplace of all ten plagues: frogs, locusts, flies, lice, boils, hail, humidity, bad drivers, mullets, and old people. Why anyone would actually move there on purpose was beyond me.

And yet, here we are. Loading everything we have left into a moving van as we prepare for a twelve-hundred-mile journey south to a place we've never been.

It was a surreal moment. If you have ever moved what feels like halfway around the world from everyone and everything you've ever known, you have probably experienced that overwhelming feeling when the initial excitement of walking through the front door for the first time

begins to wear off. It's like a punch in the face. You don't know anyone. You can't go anywhere without getting lost. And there isn't a decent slice of pizza for miles.

That feeling ultimately got the better of me while standing in our new house, staring at the mountain of boxes littering up each room.

What did I just do? I thought to myself as I looked around at the chaos.

I stole my kids away from their school. I tore my wife away from her friends. I sold most of our stuff. And I uprooted my business.

Everything that was once safe and familiar to us is now gone.

I could feel my blood pressure beginning to spike as the room started to spin.

This is it.

This is how it ends.

I was pacing back and forth, going over the events in my head, searching for the reason why I would voluntarily do this to myself and my family. Mumbling under my breath.

“What have I done? I mean, things were pretty bad, right? I know I wasn't happy. At least, I don't think I was happy. Or maybe I was. I don't even know anymore. How did I screw this up so badly? And why is it so hot around here!?”

As regret and resentment began to bubble to the surface, I found myself wishing I could get a do-over. Wishing there was a reset button I could press. Wishing that I would wake up tomorrow and things would be normal again.

But it was too late.

There was no turning back.

So, I did the next best thing.

I left.

I abandoned my wife and headed out the front door to take a walk around the neighborhood to catch my breath and talk myself off of the ledge.

But before I could escape, my wife insisted that I take the kids with me. She claimed it was for the fresh air, but I'm pretty sure it was an insurance policy to make sure I didn't start running north, never to return.

And that's when I met Dick.

WHAT HAPPENS?

Good question. But if I told you, then you would not truly experience what it means to be a Dick at a level of...oh, who am I kidding. I want you to buy the book!

It would mean a lot.

Partly because I have so many of them to get rid of before we end up having a garage sale and my wife makes me unload them. But also because I believe that if there were a lot more Dicks in this world, it would be a much better place.

And if that's not enough to convince you to pick up a copy, I don't know what will.

So, here are a few ways you can get your hands on my Dick book. (Boy, that line break came at an awkward time, didn't it?)

- Amazon: dickstuff.com/amazon
- Barnes & Noble: dickstuff.com/bn
- Books-a-Million: dickstuff.com/bam
- Apple Books: dickstuff.com/apple

Or you could go to iwanttobeadick.com for books, swag, stories, pictures and other Dick upgrades!

PRAISE FOR BE A DICK

"This is the one time it's okay to be a Dick."

WIL WHEATON, ACTOR AND WRITER

"One person really can make a difference, and that person can be you. In this funny and yet sometimes painfully honest account of a moment in his life, Marc Ensign tells a story about his neighbor Dick that will not only make you want to be a better human, it actually will make you a better human."

HAL ELROD, INTERNATIONAL KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND BEST-SELLING
AUTHOR OF *THE MIRACLE MORNING* AND *THE MIRACLE EQUATION*

"Every now and then a book comes along that forces you to pay attention. A wonderful work of self-discovery!"

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THE MOST HUMAN COMPANY WINS*

"Marc masterfully weaves narrative, self-help, and how-to to help us all make a little more sense of how to be better people in a world fraught with apocalyptic click-bait and family feuds on Facebook. This positive, uplifting story will have you laughing, crying, and ready to make positive change in the world. It's time we all grasped our inner Dick and made the world a better place."

MIKE GANINO, THE MIKE DROP MOMENT PODCAST

*"If you're thinking you want to change the world,
start by being a Dick."*

PHIL GERBYSHAK, SPEAKER AND AUTHOR

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