

PREFACE



A number of years ago I was in Los Angeles, California, on a business trip. The hotel in which I was staying was hosting a convention at the time. I wasn't part of that convention, but I certainly could identify with its theme. For there, in the middle of the hotel lobby, stood a very large sign with these three words emblazoned upon it in bright blue letters: MAKE IT HAPPEN!

Make it happen. To me, those three words were much more than one company's war cry for the week. To me, those three words were the motto of my life. For I had always believed that if I wanted to get anything in particular out of life, then it was up to me—and me alone—to

make it happen.

The way I saw it, the world wasn't out to do me any favors. Nothing came easy. And nothing came for free. And to put my faith in anyone or anything other than myself? Well, that seemed foolish to me. Whatever the goal, the only way to achieve success, I thought, was through hard work, determination, and, above all, control.

What a set-up for disappointment and frustration that was! I believed that I had to be in control of my life, yet nothing seemed to be in my control. I was consistently thwarted in my efforts to achieve the exact outcomes I desired. No matter how carefully I planned something, or how hard I worked to *make it happen*, it sometimes seemed as if the whole world was working against me. And even when I did manage to force things to go the way I wanted them to go, my victories were often hollow—hard won and hardly worth the effort. Or worse, my triumphs would set up a whole new set of problems. Life began to feel like one long, losing battle.

Then one afternoon I was working on an advertising project with my partner, Randee, and she got angry with me because I was once again second-guessing her work and trying to force things to go my way. “You know, Steve,” she said, “your way is not the only way. It’s just a different way. You don’t have all the answers. And you don’t always know what’s best. You need to let go and let me do my job.”

It was not the first time that I had been confronted with my mistrusting and manipulative behavior. But it was the first time I was willing to concede that the criticism was justified. And it was the first time I was willing to admit that my way of living life simply wasn’t working. Life seemed far too difficult. I was far too unhappy. And I was making my friends and my family miserable, as well.

At that point, I felt as if I had no other choice but to do exactly what Randee suggested I do. Slowly—ever so slowly—I began to let go of my tenacious hold on how I thought things had to be.

And lo and behold, every time I let go, a miracle would occur.

The moment I let go of the idea that everything *had* to go my way, suddenly everything *did* go my way—maybe not the way I expected, but certainly in a way that was greatly to my benefit and to the benefit of all involved. Instead of working *against* me, it now felt as if the whole world was working *for* me. I experienced less stress, and more success. I let go. And I experienced the miracle of something called . . . the flow.

This book represents part of what I have learned over the last twenty-three years about what it means to let go and go with the flow. It is based on what I have personally experienced, and what I have come to believe after a long process of observation, contemplation, and what I consider to be nothing less than divine inspiration.

I am sharing these principles with you, dear reader, for one simple reason. They have helped me live a life that is immensely more joyful, dramatically more fulfilling, and, on top of it all,

remarkably effortless. And I believe that if you follow these principles—principles that I have condensed into one easy-to-remember set of instructions—then you, too, can experience a life of greater happiness, satisfaction, and ease.

INTRODUCTION



Have you ever had a day in which everything seemed to go absolutely perfectly? A day in which you always seemed to be in the right place at the right time? A day that felt as if the entire universe was trying to make life easy for you? Would you like every day to be a day like that? Would you like every moment of every day to feel like one miracle happening after another? It's possible. It's called being in the flow. And that's what this book is about.

Being in the flow doesn't necessarily mean that your day will unfold exactly as you planned it, although that can happen. More

often than not, it will mean experiencing something that's even better than what you planned, or at least its equivalent.

When you are in the flow, life ceases to be a struggle. You don't have to fight for what you want, or defend what you have. When you are in the flow your every need is met so easily, so completely, so consistently, there's only one reasonable explanation for it. There must be a higher power at work on your behalf.

It makes no difference whether you picture this higher power as a very real supreme being or some kind of conscious cosmic energy. The effect is the same. It feels as if something infinitely greater than yourself is operating in this world, and you are directly benefiting from its assistance.

I call this something God. But a more neutral term like Universal Intelligence, Divine Mind, Creator, or Source is equally valid if you are more comfortable with that. It is not my intention to impose a specific face on the source

of this force that I call the flow. My intention is only to make you more aware of the flow's presence in your life, and to help you understand what you must do if you want to experience its miracles more freely and more frequently.

Fortunately, this is not a difficult thing to teach or to learn. For it is all summed up in this one short set of instructions:

ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT,
GENTLY DOWN THE STREAM,
MERRILY, MERRILY, MERRILY, MERRILY,
LIFE IS BUT A DREAM.

I'm sure you recognize these words as the lyrics to a simple little song you learned as a child. While most "rounds" of this kind came to us from England, this one is believed to have originated in the center of America—its author unknown—sometime in the mid-1800s. Perhaps oarsmen used this song to set the pace and relieve the tedium as they rowed up and down the Mississippi River.

Whatever its origins or actual intentions, I have found *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* to be a profound metaphor about how to live life more peacefully and abundantly. In a few short words, it tells you exactly how to get what you want out of life without stress or strain. It tells you how to manifest your fondest dreams almost effortlessly, and how to satisfy your deepest desires more fully.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat is a song about living life in the flow—the divine flow—and the sheer joy of the journey. Join me now as I explore this happy song word by word, and reveal its important message for us all.