

CHARIOTS ON *Fire*

THE
WINNING FORMULA FOR
HAPPINESS AND **SUCCESS**



GINA GARDINER

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The WINNING FORMULA FOR HAPPINESS AND SUCCESS

This is a combination of gripping autobiographical accounts of tough circumstances combined with powerful practical advice from Gina, who overcame adversity when forced to use a wheelchair, and then fought with determination to learn to walk again twice as an adult.

**By
Gina Gardiner**

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What the reviews said

“This book offers a treasure trove of empowering concepts, which can be considerably helpful in supporting your wellness, success and happiness.

Gina's principles are powerfully simple and results oriented.”

Tracy Dyson, Founder of Tracy Quantum, LLC

“This is a thought – ‘Good health is a positive state of wellbeing – ‘Chariots on Fire’ will undoubtedly help us find a way’.

Professor Leslie J Findley, consultant neurologist.
(MD, MRCS, DRCOG, DCH, FRCP)

“In Gina's new book she tells a personal story of overcoming adversity and harnessing the energy of the event into a positive outcome. Couple this with Gina's acute talent for tactical and strategic planning and you have a recipe for success for anyone struggling to find a way past their current challenges.”

Gavin Perrett, Director of Liddle Perrett Worldwide Ltd

“A brilliant book which challenges the reader to view things from a different perspective and is filled with so many simple and practical ways to enhance every aspect of your life. Truly inspirational!”

Alison Scott Corporate Governance & Support Manager & PA to NPSA
Chairman

"Gina is a hugely inspirational lady with a heart of purest gold. Her story will move you and educate you, as she pulls off that rare trick of marrying hope and inspiration with practical grounded-ness."

Joel Young, Author, Speaker & Creator of NPA (Non-Personal Awareness)

"A clever piece of writing using considered theories from her significant personal health and life challenges, and transposing them so well into a practical know-how. This is a work of authentic passion and a determined spirit to inspire the reader's self-empowerment."

Eamonn Downey – International Lecturer

"Gina decided that, this is me and I can only live as a can do person. Happiness comes from positive thinking and the satisfaction of completed tasks done to the best of one's ability. This book demonstrates exactly how that can be achieved."

Barry Hancock BA BEd MSc FRSA
Education Consultant UK Universities

"Gina's book is both inspirational and motivational with many practical suggestions for the reader to use to increase his/her happiness, well-being and resilience."

Pam Lawrence Dip HSM, LCA, MISMA, MAC
Member of the International Stress Management Association UK

"Thank you so much for your great little book. It is full of positive ideas and suggestions. I hope that I manage to do some of them already, but it is certainly going to make me try to be even more

upbeat than I am now. I only wish that I had read it when I was 18. I wish you every success with it."

Joy Wale

"Truly inspirational book, makes me want to start my days again. "

Sarah Hunter

"A motivational and refreshing read. Seeing daily struggles through other's eyes makes you re-evaluate all aspects of life and want better. "

Charlotte Todd

"Enlightening, structured read. Read and follow the steps to a happier more motivated, fulfilled life."

Theresa Wingrove

About the Author

A serious ski accident in 1983, meant Gina Gardiner was forced to use a wheelchair, but in her leadership role as head teacher of a large primary school, it was imperative that she looked at the bigger picture in order to overcome the significant challenges facing her.

Because Gina was in a wheelchair she was unable to access most of the classrooms. She had to develop ways to motivate and engage staff so that they were self-reliant and understood how to deliver excellence and take responsibility for their own performance.

Today, Gina is a highly successful and experienced Leadership Consultant and Trainer, Speaker, Executive and Life Coach.

Gina learned to walk twice as an adult and the fight for better mobility is ongoing. It has given her a unique understanding of how empowering or limiting beliefs have the power to hold us back or to help us forge ahead. Just as important has been a true sense of how a shift of perspective changes everything. A wheelchair can be seen as a significant limitation or as a chariot on fire offering freedom and empowerment. It is all about choice. What choice do you think she made?

Preface

It is a while since I wrote “Chariots On Fire” and the first edition was published. Since then many people have read the book and the feedback has been incredible. My thanks to those who have taken the time to contact me to share their feedback which has been overwhelmingly positive.

This second edition of “Chariots On Fire” has come about as result of reader feedback. The book has now been revised and updated and includes a section of Case Studies. These share how clients have used the principles, insights and strategies identified within the book to significantly improve the quality of their lives. I hope that as you share their journey and see which approaches they found helpful that it will offer you even greater insight into your own life. My work with these clients helped them answer the following questions. I know from my work that they are not alone in grappling with these issues.

Who Am I? is the challenge when dealing with transition and change

How to create a great relationship with yourself and your partner?

What to do when crippling anxiety runs your life?

I hope you enjoy the book and find it of help. I’d love to know your thoughts.

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INTRODUCTION

Chariots On Fire – The Winning Formula For Happiness And Success

This book is all about YOU living the very best life possible.

How would you like to live a happy and fulfilled life – in all aspects of your life?

If you have ever used the excuse you don't have the time, or the experience, you are too old, too young, not educated enough, not brave enough, too fat, too short, too broke, too unlucky, or you have too many restrictions such as your fitness, your debts, your mortgage, the bills, the boss, the wife, the kids, the elderly parents etc. to stop you from moving forward, this book is for you. Choosing to focus on making the very best of things is incredibly liberating. You have one life and it is up to you to make the most of it whatever your circumstances.

Creating a wonderful, fulfilling life is all about addressing and dealing with those inner fears, the limiting beliefs and self imposed restrictions you might have about yourself: 'I can't because... It won't work because... The reasons may seem to be too many and too difficult, seem very real and they can all too easily get in your way. Yet every one of these can be overcome and dealt with. The life you want CAN be yours. Whatever challenges you face, it is your choice whether they grind you down or they help you to achieve greatness.

You may be striving for promotion or the perfect career or creating a successful business opportunity. You might be struggling to find your true vocation or life's purpose. You may yearn to fulfil the dream of creating a loving, meaningful relationship or want to forge a positive relationship with your partner, parents, your boss or the neighbours. Your goal of having the money to fulfil your dreams or aspirations or

buy the lovely home you desire may seem out of reach. The relationship with yourself may need attention, if you want to feel great about yourself and confident about what you do, how you look and who you are. No matter what your personal circumstances, you have the choice to have a wonderful life. Life is absolutely what you make it.

This book is all about helping you to achieve a fantastic life NOW.

In this book I share with you some of my secrets of how to minimize the “can’ts” and maximise the ‘cans’ and at the same time share the real life stories of people who have conquered their fears and limiting beliefs and have made amazing changes in their lives.

I will show you how to conquer obstacles as I conquered mine. I will reveal how I discovered that finding the positive advantage is a ‘winning formula’ for living a fantastic life. It is what prompted my interest in every aspect of coaching because it worked so well for me. As a result I have worked with many people who have found it worked incredibly well for them too. Now I want to share my winning strategies with you.

Instead of allowing negative thoughts to become obstacles to stop you achieving, together we can strip those away. Once you decide to make the very best of what life has to offer rather than make excuses, the quality of your life and your relationships will change radically for the better.

In “Chariots On Fire – Creating The Positive Advantage” I share with you my own personal journey, which I hope will inspire you. I had to overcome great challenges, adversity and disability. But instead of sinking into a big black hole and giving up on life I took the bull by the horns and decided I was going to be one of life’s winners. Every potential obstacle became a positive challenge. The strategies I deliver have developed through personal experience and through my work with others, firstly as a Head Teacher of a highly successful school and in later years as a consultant, trainer and coach.

I did not take the decision to share my story lightly. The paradox is that for twenty five years I did everything possible to make nothing of my disability. It was impossible to hide – a wheelchair is pretty visible. But my overriding intention was always for the wheelchair to be of as little account as possible.

I was often struck at how the people I worked with were limited by their negative thinking about themselves and I began to think of the wheelchair as a metaphor for all those things we believe about ourselves, which hold us back in life. The belief that we are not good enough, clever enough, confident enough, that we're too shy, or no one will want to listen to us. In some ways those thoughts are potentially more likely to hold us back from achieving our potential and our dreams than being unable to walk. Why? – Well you can get into a wheelchair and wheel away, but you always take your limiting beliefs with you. The only way to get past those limiting beliefs is to face them and deal with them.

Do I ever find life challenging? Of course I do. Do I let those challenges defeat me? Quite the contrary; Over twenty five years ago a ski accident triggered a chain of events, which has spanned a quarter of a century, offering highs and lows and lots of opportunities for self-discovery and growth. I have used every one of the strategies in the book and my life has been successful, fulfilling and much richer as a result.

Time, experience and life's hard knocks help us to learn. The things which seem vitally important when we are a child, assume a different perspective as we get older. Fortunately we don't have to experience everything first hand to learn the important lessons in life. By learning from others' experience it is possible to short circuit the learning process and avoid some of the pitfalls. Modelling excellence is the finest way of learning how best to do things in the shortest possible time.

“You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink”, is a well-known saying. It is absolutely true that if things in your life are going

to change you are the only one who can effect that change. The fact that you are reading the introduction to this book shows that you are open to change. If you read this book with an open mind it offers you some constructive suggestions and approaches to support you in achieving the quality of life you dream of and deserve.

Many people find the thought of a long journey or doing something new really daunting. They worry about how they will find their way or if they will manage along the way. Some will consider all the things which might go wrong and the potential for failure and decide it is easier not to bother. Others allow the fear to spoil the experience. I have discovered quite literally that if you simply concentrate on taking the first step and then the next, and the next you suddenly realise you have travelled a significant distance.

Choosing to see things differently has the capacity to change your life enormously. It doesn't have to be difficult, unless you decide to make it so. As you read the strategies I have no doubt that some will resonate with you and your current situation, whilst others will appear to have little relevance; for now.

If you make just one small change and apply it consistently over time it will make a significant difference. I suggest you choose one or two strategies in the first instance and introduce those into your daily life. Having established those then you will be ready to add in others.

Having the positive advantage, being a winner and living a winning life is a choice. I believe you deserve the very best life has to offer. The question is DO YOU?

CHARIOTS ON FIRE

It All Began On February 19th 1983

The sun was shining in an amazingly blue sky. Majestic snow covered mountains surrounded us as we sat on five foot moguls on a black run far above St Anton in Austria.

The day before, I had made a spectacular bindings check - a fall to the uninitiated. All week I had wrestled with the new pair of skis I'd had for Christmas. They were 10 cm longer than those I had been used to. It had been quite a challenge keeping up with the other skiers in the party. I had fallen some distance and I was shaken and bruised and extremely cross to have split my posh new ski suit from thigh to ankle.

It was Friday, the last day of our holiday. I'd decided to spend the morning skiing at the back of St Anton where there was a lovely, gentle run, which went on for miles. The others wanted to go off and ski something far more challenging. We agreed to meet at a favourite restaurant for lunch. In the meantime I had a relaxed morning, skiing in beautiful surroundings, enjoying the sunshine and practising my ski technique.

Lunch was great. I'd worked up a real appetite and the banter was fast and funny. My friends were really enthusiastic about a fabulous run they had discovered that morning. They asked me to join them that afternoon as they wanted to ski it one last time before leaving for home the next morning. It sounded fun.

As we sat on the chair lift the views were spectacular. Huge, rugged mountains, deep purple monoliths, covered in sparkling, white snow filled the horizon. The snow was so dazzling it hurt my eyes even through my sunglasses. The air was crystal clear and I could hear faint bells from a church in the distance. I could smell the freshness and the scent of pine in the air.