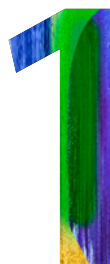


**GRAVEL will be complicated and daunting. That's why so many people avoid the GRAVEL and fail to attain their goals.**



## rocks GRAVEL sand

The Arizona desert I call home is a rocky place. Mountains rise a thousand feet from the valley floor surrounding Metro Phoenix. If you do any hiking at all, you'll be climbing on, stepping over, and marveling at the abundance of rocks. Some are the size of houses, others the size of skyscrapers. The grandeur of it is nothing short of awe-inspiring.

I spend most early mornings on the trail. One of my “rock” goals is to collect at least 200 sunrises (I call it “Catching Hope”) every year.

Nature gifted Arizona with magnificent dawns, so they're worth missing an hour of sleep to see in real time. Catching one or two might mean setting your alarm clock on a given day. But 200? Seeing that number of sunrises takes much more than avoiding the snooze button.

**For the record,  
here are my  
CATCHING HOPE  
stats:**

2017 = 171  
2018 = 156  
2019 = 199  
2020 = 238  
2021 = 273  
2022 = 274

Making my way each morning in the dark desert before the sun begins to light the sky, I've had plenty of opportunity to contemplate just how often **in life we have big rocks to climb, leap over, work around, or move.** Raising money for a startup business. That's a big rock. Achieving the title of Vice President at your company. Another big rock. Running in your first marathon is a big rock, as is finding that perfect partner and starting a family. In each case, conquering those big rocks requires work. Lots of work.

You'll also find sand in the Arizona desert, particularly in the dry riverbeds. Walking through sand inevitably reminds me of the time I spent in the Sahara Desert running 150 miles, completing the seven stages of the fabled Marathon de Sables, and finishing 49th. During that year (the course changes each year), we got the "opportunity" to climb the tallest dune in Africa. Now *that* is what I call sand! Taking two steps forward and half a step back was the rule as I made my way through the desert.

In life, we encounter sand, too. In the beginning, sand can be exciting, like a new beginning or challenge. Then reality sets in. You're on your hundredth networking video conference, you've had six discouraging job interviews, and you feel like



"DON'T COUNT THE DAYS. MAKE THE DAYS COUNT." — MUHAMMAD ALI

you're going nowhere. Or how about the long, grueling hours you have to spend learning the ropes at your new job once you finally land it? And we all have experienced the pulled muscles that sideline your workout just as you get in the groove. Traveling the sand seems like the easy path, but it isn't. **Sand is where you are most in danger of getting trapped. Sand is where you are likely to quit.**

Spend any time in the wilderness, and you're sure to know that a third type of terrain exists between the rocks and the sand. It's GRAVEL. Hiking, I notice that nature does the hard work of weathering those big rocks, sometimes thanks to water run-off. Sometimes wind breaks them down. Often, it's both. And the GRAVEL that remains offers a defined route up the mountain and to the sunrise.

FANTASTIC LIFE RULE #8

**Use the 2% Rule**

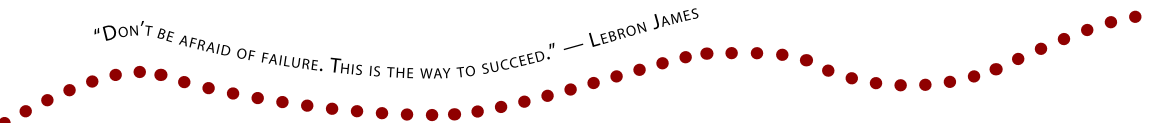
Work 2% harder  
than everyone else.

This book shows  
you exactly  
what to work on,  
and how to  
make it count.



I've learned in life to never be lured directly into the sand first when I have big rock goals I want to achieve. I've learned that the way to avoid getting mired in the sand is to **do what nature does—break down the rocks and pave the way with GRAVEL.** The trail may feel harder and less direct—after all, the sandy path is right there. But even though the GRAVEL path looks less inviting than the soft sand, it's the shorter, most direct route. It's one you can believe in and stick to when the going gets tough, which it will. And one that will absolutely take you to your destination if you persist.

In life, there is no rain or wind to chip away at the rocks. You are the wind and the rain. You must do the work of making GRAVEL, of breaking down your big rocks into smaller chunks, paving your way. **And GRAVEL is where I find most people, without even realizing it, abandon their dream.** For example, you may have finally decided to make a job change. You don't like where you work or what you are doing. The GRAVEL work is what lies between that rock goal of a new job and the sand work of pulling your resume up on your computer to start updating it. GRAVEL is, in this example, taking the time to evaluate where you are, where



"DON'T BE AFRAID OF FAILURE. THIS IS THE WAY TO SUCCEED." — LEBRON JAMES

you want to go, what your ideal future might be, what you think the path is to get there, and more. Often, people miss this critical work entirely, or start it, and then rush ahead into the sand or avoid it altogether. “I’ll just slug it out at my job. Maybe it will get better.” That’s a story that never ends well.

If only it were a straight climb up the mountain. It never is. Which is why **this entire book is about GRAVEL. How to take your rocks, make GRAVEL, and turn that into sand worth traversing.** In my experience, GRAVEL is messy, and only some people know how to work their way through it. GRAVEL is most likely not what you think it is, and it usually gets a bad rap. GRAVEL equals change, and change is uncomfortable. But what if it wasn’t? What if you had a means, a method, to grow and change in a way that wasn’t scary or filled with a high probability of failure? What if growth became your life?

**GRAVEL is the answer to the question: How do I live a Fantastic Life, get what I want and enjoy that feeling of accomplishment along the way?**

FANTASTIC LIFE RULE #6

**Set Goals**

Once defined, set dates  
and outline steps.

You’ll be surprised  
what you will  
achieve.

## Glass Jar

There's a great story about a Professor who had a glass jar on his desk filled with **rocks**.

He asked his students, "**Is the jar full?**" When they replied, "**Yes, the jar is full,**" the Professor pulled out a bag of **GRAVEL** from under his desk and poured it into the jar.

The **GRAVEL** fell between the **rocks**. "**Is the jar full now?**" he asked again.

The students replied, "**Yes, now it is very full.**"

Then the Professor pulled a bag of **SAND** from under his desk and poured it into the jar filling the gaps in the rocks and **GRAVEL** to the top.

**Only then was the jar really full.**

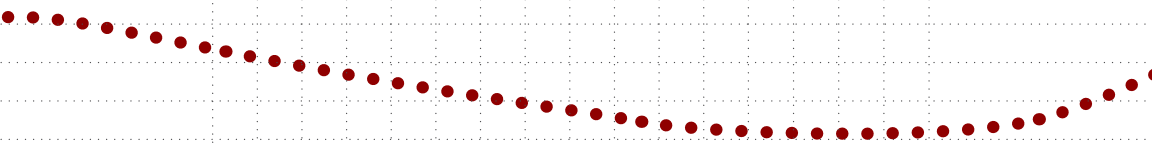
"THE WORST THING I CAN BE IS THE SAME AS EVERYBODY ELSE." — ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER



## This jar represents your life.

Rocks are the most important things. They are your dreams, your goals, your desires. They are very difficult to get out of the jar in one piece. The GRAVEL, are the smaller, more manageable milestones and parts of rock that are easier to get out of the jar. You can reach in a grab a handful. Sand is small and hard to get out of the jar. It includes your daily habits, tasks, and routines. Sand flows to the bottom. It's hard to get at around the bigger rocks and GRAVEL.

This jar called your life explains why when you have big rock goals you first must do the work of breaking them into GRAVEL before you can effectively do anything with the sand.





**Living a Fantastic Life is really the continual act of breaking big rocks into the GRAVEL that makes the things you do every day—the sand—more effective.** Instead of two steps forward and half a step back, like climbing the Sahara dunes, how about taking five or ten steps forward before even taking half a step back? This book will show you how to keep moving in the direction toward your Fantastic Life while you live it in the process.

## The rocks, GRAVEL, sand of Life

Even if you aren't the kind of person who writes down rock goals, you probably have them. Rocks are things like getting and staying healthy, having friendships, advancing your career, finding a place of spirituality, raising kids into productive citizens, learning a foreign language, paying your rent, and many others. **You can't start the work on tackling your rocks until you know what they are.**

"SOME PEOPLE WANT IT TO HAPPEN, SOME WISH IT WOULD HAPPEN, OTHERS MAKE IT HAPPEN." — MICHAEL JORDAN

# Ask yourself:

**What are your rock goals? Write them down now.**

**Are they works in progress? Of course they are.  
But where do they stand?**


**Pipe dreams? Absolutely! List them here and get started.**

My 200-sunrise goal is just one rock I've prioritized in my life. Another is seeing my kids, who are now grown and on their own, every 60 days minimum. Some don't live in Phoenix, so that rock means getting on a plane multiple times a year. Another rock for me is coaching others inside and outside my commercial real estate business to help them achieve more in life. Yet another rock is continuing to grow my own mindfulness. I have other rock goals, and I work on them all at the same time.

### **The Fantastic Life = Hitting all your rocks.**

This book is not about how to achieve one big goal; it's about how to **live a complete life of satisfaction filled with many achievements at once.** A life that you'll look back on and know you earned.

But it's not enough to know what your rocks are. Next, you need to get deliberate and precise with your plan to achieve your rocks. You will never achieve your rocks if you aren't focused, intentional, and deliberate with your rocks, GRAVEL, and sand.



*"POTENTIAL IS NOT A LIMITATION. IT'S A GOAL."*

I accomplish a lot because I do GRAVEL work on ALL of the rocks I prioritize. And I do it all the time. I don't just stay focused on how to get to the top of my big rocks. Instead, **GRAVEL is always on my mind. GRAVEL is how I build a path to the top of my rocks.** I never step foot in the sand without having crushed some GRAVEL. That keeps me out of the time-wasting and energy-zapping sand mire of two steps forward and a half a step back. Do you know how draining and demoralizing that pattern is? It is a recipe for quitting. GRAVEL keeps me focused, knowing that I'm taking the right steps, the most effective steps, and am on the right course for everything that matters in my life. I am working on GRAVEL every day.

**GRAVEL is the efficiency-generating work you must do between your big rock goal decisions and the sand...**

which I define as your daily activities. GRAVEL connects the things you do on a daily basis (sand) with your big desires and goals (rocks).

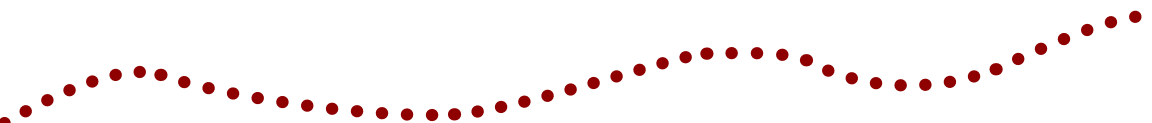
Once you understand the difference between GRAVEL and sand, you start to understand why it can bog you down and undermine achievement. Your daily habits and tasks can either help or hurt you in pursuing your larger rocks. For example, you might say to yourself, “I’m going to double my earnings this year, and I’m going to work really hard to do it.” Then you sit down at your desk, log in to your computer and find 300 emails in your inbox you need to clear out. That’s sand, and it can be goal-crushingly debilitating. Instead of getting on the phone and making cold calls to drum up more business, you’re sifting through emails. Then the morning is gone, and so is your energy.

Here’s another one. You say to yourself, “I’ve never run a marathon. I’m going to run my first one this year.” That’s a very big rock to add to your life. But remember, it’s not your only big rock. You have other things demanding your attention, like doubling your earnings. So, filled with energy,

FANTASTIC LIFE RULE #9

**Recognize There Are  
Two Kinds of Pain**

You’ll soon find the daily sand  
work will replace things you  
used to do. The pain of that  
discipline is real,  
so prepare for it.



you put your running shoes on the next morning and begin training (sand). You tell yourself, I'll run every other day. After that first run and the second, you start to wonder if this marathon thing was a good idea. Your legs are sore, and your feet have blisters. You miss the third day and then the fourth because of an early morning sales opportunity. You struggle mentally on the fifth. And little by little, this big rock goal gets forgotten as others demand your attention. Just focusing on the daily activity, the sand, will likely never get you to the starting line 12 months from now.

**GRAVEL makes up the gap between sand (daily tasks) and rocks (big goals).** But it has to come first. Our ambitious sales professional would have been smart to set some boundaries for returning emails and establish a schedule for making sales calls. That's GRAVEL. As a marathon hopeful, he would have been way better off skipping those morning runs and doing GRAVEL work, like researching training strategies and setting a weekly or monthly schedule, before actually hitting the streets. How about figuring out how to fit the training into the work week and how to establish boundaries with friends, co-workers, and family to fit in a one-hour run that will ultimately turn into a several-hour run? There are so many details to consider and plans to develop if the big rocks are ever going to happen.

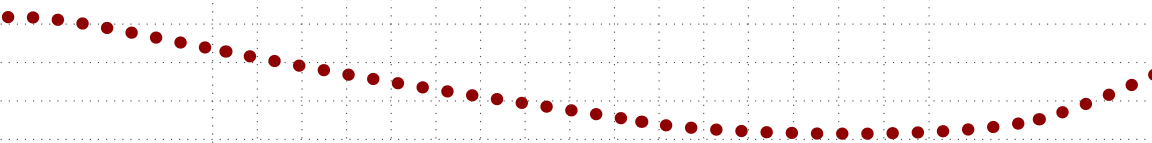


"THE SKY HAS NO LIMITS. NEITHER SHOULD YOU." — USAIN BOLT

## Hard Facts About GRAVEL

I have been a student of goals since high school in the late 1970s, and no one talks about GRAVEL. GRAVEL is seldom discussed anywhere, and if it is, it's brushed over. But I have found **it's critical to achieving anything in life.** GRAVEL is the setup. It's the goal achievement work that happens behind the scenes, and it takes thought more than action. It's the discovery before the strategy, the planning, and the decisions that go along with it. GRAVEL is evaluating what it will take to achieve your goal, finding the obstacles and, setting up systems to help you get past them, then monitoring your progress. GRAVEL is the first thing I recommend you do when you set out to achieve anything. Often GRAVEL is the stuff you really don't want to do; it's not very glamorous, and it can be tedious work. But believe me, if you want to achieve anything, **GRAVEL is the answer.**

"WHETHER YOU THINK YOU CAN, OR YOU THINK YOU CAN'T, YOU'RE RIGHT." — HENRY FORD





I've coached many people on how to run a marathon, having run many myself, guided by some really great coaches. And like our example earlier, everyone I've coached wants to start training right away. They want to hit the street and start running. The idea of getting started is an adrenaline rush, and I've seen it a million times. I've felt it myself. It's exciting to tell your co-workers, "Yeah, I started training this morning for a marathon that's happening in 12 months." It feels good to hear those words come out of your mouth in the break room while pouring coffee. "It was brutal. But I made it two miles. It was an awesome workout." I guarantee you this happens every day countless times over. I hear it from the people I coach, and yeah, it worries me because that extra 50 pounds of visceral fat they're carrying in their midsections could be lethal to their progress.

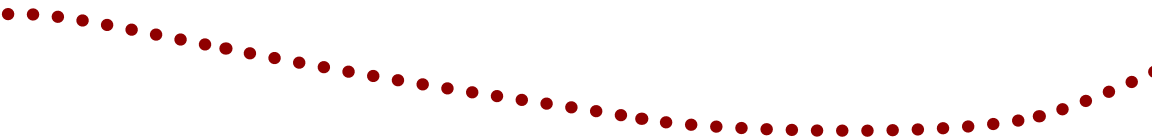
When people ask for my help, I take a completely different stance with them. I say, "Yeah, excellent. I'm glad you've decided to run a marathon. Here's what I want you to do. No, I don't want you to start running tomorrow. I want you to get up an hour earlier and start researching how to train for it. You and me, we're going to work together on it. First on the list is I want you to start looking into nutrition plans so you can begin shedding that extra weight. Find a calorie diary app for your phone. One you'll use. I'll start formulating your physical training. That's what we'll do for the first month or so. By month two, you might actually be ready to do a little running."

"SUCCESS IS WHAT COMES AFTER YOU STOP MAKING EXCUSES." — LUIS GALARZA

Then, because they can't help themselves, many of the people I coach may ask the obvious, "When am I going to start actually running? Isn't all this planning just procrastination?"

**The point is** you have a lot of other things to figure out first. Like in addition to your diet, starting to modify your day so that you can fit a run in and still spend time with your kids. Juggling work, too. And all the GRAVEL work you have to do in advance to **stick to your big rock goal**. This is the kind of work I do for my rock goals and what I coach others to do for theirs.

"Wouldn't you just start running? That's what I'd do. I'd start running and see how it goes," your friends might say, falling right into the pattern of going from big rock to sand in one "easy" step. They just don't realize the monstrous leap between the two is precisely why so many people fail to achieve the things they say they want in life.



## GRAVEL Makes sand

Eventually, of course, you have to get into the daily work it takes to achieve the big rocks in your life. Again, this book is about determining **everything that matters to you and living a Fantastic Life with many big rocks all in progress at the same time.** It's more realistic and probably healthier for you and the most important relationships around you to balance the things you want to achieve in life. It is not about achieving one big goal and one big goal alone.

Now, if you think about it, sand is all execution, not thought. The **sand work becomes very deliberate, measured, and focused only after you do the GRAVEL work.** Instead of just getting up and running, you're now waking up and—because it's part of the plan you formulated—stretching for ten minutes, preparing a pre-workout drink, putting on the right running shoes with custom-fitted orthotics, so you keep your feet, ankles, knees, and hips healthy. You pull out your running tracker to see what kind of workout is in store this morning and execute your endurance training, mid-range effort, etc. You get the idea. That's very different than just getting up and jogging, hoping for the best. You'll never achieve your best at anything by winging it.

"IF SOMETHING STANDS BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR SUCCESS, MOVE IT. NEVER BE DENIED." — DWAYNE JOHNSON

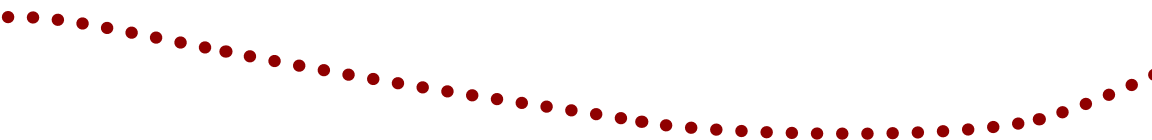
**If done right, sand is simply executing your GRAVEL work.** Sand is not easy either, but once you recognize that consistency, day in and day out, it makes for big changes and progress. You won't mind working the sand every day according to the plan. Some rocks will be harder for you to achieve than others. Some rocks may break down into GRAVEL work that is not necessarily natural to you. That doesn't mean you shouldn't go for those goals; it just means they might take more effort to achieve than others that more fully engage your God-given gifts.

FANTASTIC LIFE RULE #12

**Do Nothing in  
Moderation**

If you're going to live, live  
it with energy. Moderation  
breeds mediocrity. Why be  
content with average.

"Excess breeds success,"  
says Oscar Wilde.



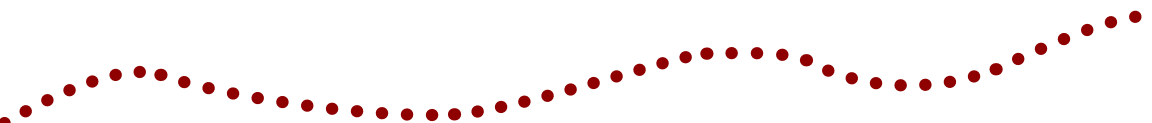
## Start with GRAVEL

How do you get through the sand without taking two steps forward with a half step back? It still will take effort; this is not a walk in the park, after all. Without exception, the pathway to getting through the sand starts with doing the GRAVEL work. And that GRAVEL work must take into account you and your strengths.

### FANTASTIC LIFE RULE #10

#### **Take the Decision Out of the Moment**

When you do the  
GRAVEL work, the daily  
sand is just what you do.  
There's no decision required;  
you just go for it  
and get it done.



It is common to have to go back and do more GRAVEL work after you have stepped into the sand. A GRAVEL plan is almost never fully formed. It's messy; it's non-linear; it's not defined. And for really challenging rocks, GRAVEL may take more time to figure out. I have been working on my GRAVEL to change my eating habits for a long time...years. People say just eat better (sand), others say it is good for your health (rocks). But no one knows me and why I eat except me. The GRAVEL process for this rock is so complex for me. I am attacking it from multiple angles every day. And I will solve it.

Going back to our overweight marathoner, his GRAVEL and the sand that comes from it would be different from the GRAVEL and sand for a person who is at an ideal body weight, is physically active, plays tennis three times a week, but who has never run a marathon. It's possible that the physically active person might take to running easier than the person who needs to lose weight at the same time. But the training will be just as grueling. What I'm getting at is that the sand will be difficult for each of these people because the GRAVEL work is different for each of them.



*"WORK HARD IN SILENCE. LET YOUR SUCCESS MAKE THE NOISE." — UNKNOWN*

**The key is doing  
the GRAVEL work  
thoughtfully  
and thoroughly  
so that your daily  
sand effort is  
meaningful  
and inspires  
you...**

...not your friend, your sister or brother, but you. The sand work should move you forward as efficiently as possible. Remember, you'll be working the sand on several rocks in your life simultaneously. And you'll be working the GRAVEL on others before you get to the sand. Your Fantastic Life is multifaceted, with many rocks and lots of GRAVEL and sand all coming in and out of the picture, preferably every day. Don't worry. This book will show you how to handle all this and accomplish more than you ever thought possible.

"NO MATTER HOW GOOD YOU GET, YOU CAN ALWAYS GET BETTER. THAT'S THE EXCITING PART." — TIGER WOODS

