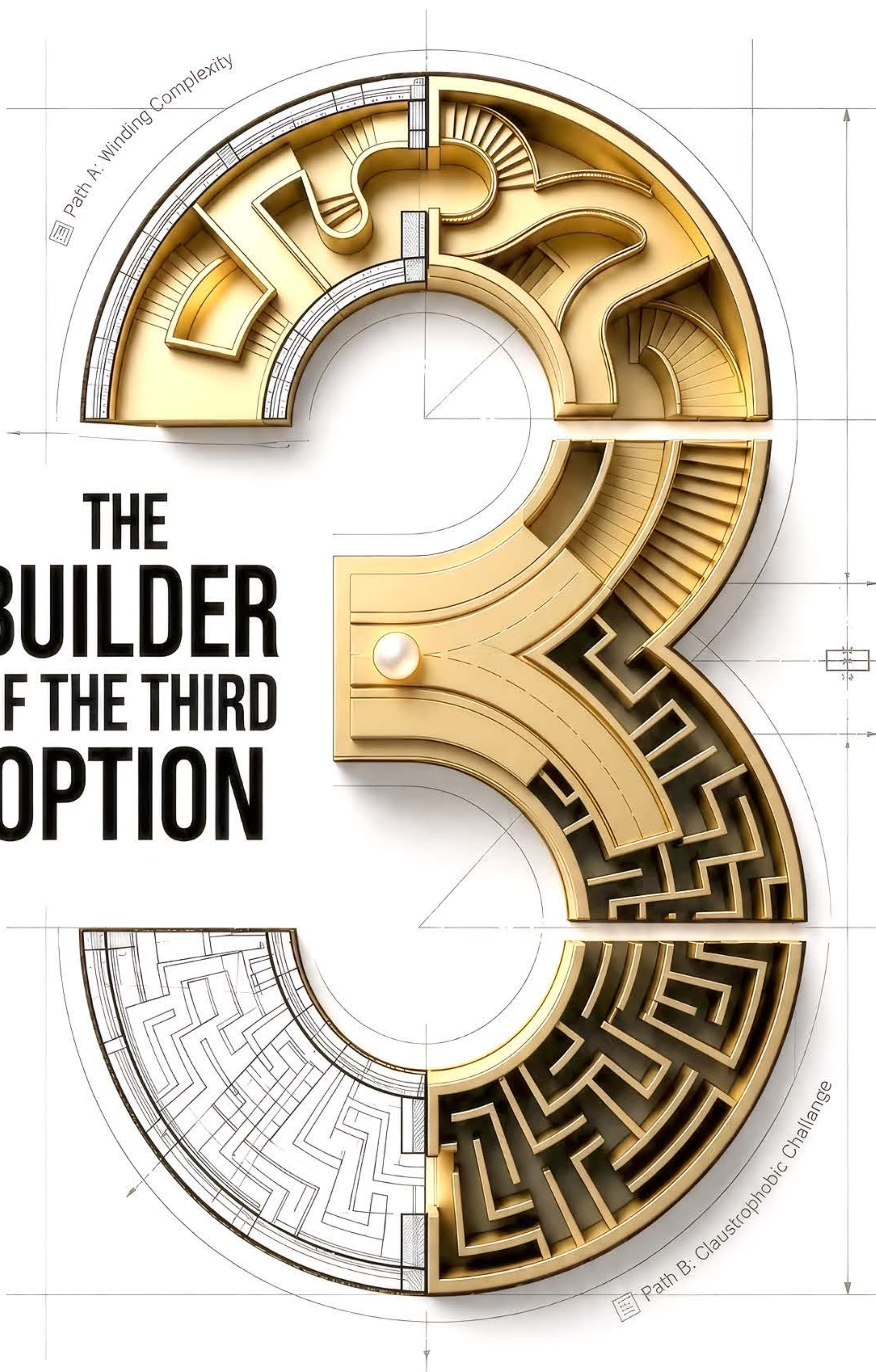


THE BUILDER OF THE THIRD OPTION



Mahdi Meshkani

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Creator of Creators

Mahdi Meshkani

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PROLOGUE

The Alchemist

*The furnace must be built before the gold can appear.
Read that again.*

.Most people wait for a better option to appear

.A rare few build one

.You are one or the other. You already know which

Before we begin, who is this book for?

**For anyone who has ever looked at two
options and felt something missing.**

And if the third option doesn't exist?

Then you build it.

And if building it costs more than you expected?

(silence)

This is not a book about easy answers.

The Witness

There is a kind of person who goes quiet when given two choices.

Not indecision.

Something else: instinct, stubbornness, refusal, searching underneath the silence for a door no one else can see.

You have felt this.

In a job with two exits, neither honest. In a moment when every option on the table belonged to someone else's life, not yours.

If you have felt this, you already understand the book you're holding.

This is not a biography.

It doesn't catalog achievements. It does something harder. It opens the operating system underneath a life: the patterns that repeated, the beliefs that held when everything else didn't.

Everything changed. Industries. Technologies. Countries. Decades.

One thing didn't: the refusal to accept two options when a third might exist, and the willingness to build it anyway.

Mahdi Meshkani's story sits in these pages. But it isn't really about him.

It's a mirror.

And the part of you that's still reading is the part that already suspects what he did: the available options were never the only ones.



Three voices move through this book.

*The Builder sees what could exist, and moves toward it.
The Judge strips away every excuse until only the truth is
left standing.
The Witness watches without mercy and without comfort.
Only clarity.*

Each chapter carries one voice.

*By the end, you'll recognize them. One of them, you'll
recognize as yours.*

.

. . .

*Every book hides a question the author is afraid to
ask directly.*

This one won't hide it.

*The question was never: What did Mahdi Meshkani
build?*

The question was always:

What are you still waiting for permission to build?

Close the book if you want to keep waiting.

You won't.

PART ONE

The Boy Who Created

*What a child does with freedom tells you everything about
what the adult will do with it.*

PART ONE: CHAPTER ONE

The First Flight

On the moment someone trusts you before you trust yourself.

Every human being borrows confidence before they create their own. The question is not whether someone gave it to you. It is whether you were paying attention when they did.

You were not yet ten years old.

No.

Alone on a plane.

Yes.

Were you afraid?

No.

Why not?

Because someone had already decided I could do it. And I believed him before I believed myself.

So the confidence wasn't yours.

Not yet. But it became mine the moment the plane lifted.

The Builder

Think about the first time someone trusted you with something before you had proven you could handle it. Not a small thing. A real thing. Something that, if you failed, would matter.

Most people, when they search for this memory, find a person.

A parent. A teacher. A mentor. Someone who saw something in them before they could see it in themselves, and acted on that vision, not by explaining it, not by motivating them, but by creating an experience that made the capability real.

For him, that person was a trusted elder. And the experience was a plane.

The Architecture of Borrowed Confidence

There was no speech about courage beforehand. No instruction manual. Just a boarding pass placed in the hands of a boy and the quiet, unmistakable message underneath it: you are capable of this. What his uncle understood, and what most people in positions of influence never quite grasp, is that confidence is not transferred through words. It is transferred through the experience of discovering you can do something you didn't know you could do.

The lesson was never stated. It was created.

He even made his way into the cockpit.

It reveals an orientation that would define the next four decades: when a door is open, walk through it. The question was never 'am I allowed?' Always 'why not?'

What Was Actually Installed

The flight lasted less than two hours. What it installed lasted decades.

The lesson was not courage. Courage implies fear that must be overcome. What was absorbed that day was something more fundamental: the early discovery that most fear is a story we tell ourselves before attempting something, and that the story rarely survives contact with reality.

He didn't overcome fear on that plane. He discovered it wasn't there.

Once you discover that, you spend the rest of your life building higher than other people think is possible, not because you're braver, but because you never accepted the ceiling in the first place.

This is not a story about an exceptional boy. It is a story about what happens when one person, at the right moment, decides to trust another with something real. The uncle may never have known what he built that day. He wasn't building a confident adult. He was just putting a boy on a plane.

But the boy was paying attention.

What he was paying attention to:

1. Freedom is not given when you are ready. It is given so that you become ready.

2. The most powerful thing a mentor can do is not teach. It is create the experience of capability, and then get out of the way.

3. The ceiling most people spend their lives respecting was never structural. It was assumed. Assumptions can be inherited or refused.

If he hadn't done that, if no one had put you on that plane, would you still have become who you are?

I don't know.

Honest answer.

What I know is that one moment changed what I thought I was allowed to attempt. Everything that followed came from that permission.

Permission from him?

No. Permission from myself. He just showed me I could give it.

The Builder

. . .

Not everyone gets a first flight.

*Not everyone had someone who trusted them before
they trusted themselves.*

That's true.

But some people build without it.

*Which means the flight was never really about the
plane.*

*It was about the moment someone looked at you and
decided: you're ready.*

***It was about the moment someone looked at
you and decided: you're ready.***

Sit with that.

***Did you ever have one of those moments?
And if you didn't, what would you have built
if you had?***

PART ONE: CHAPTER TWO

The Twelve-Year-Old Who Worked

On the moment you realize no one is coming to build your future for you.

There is a moment, it arrives at different ages for different people, when you understand that your future will not appear on its own. It must be constructed. And the construction begins now, not when conditions improve.

You were twelve.

Yes.

Working. Alone.

Yes.

Why?

I had projects I wanted to build. They required money. I wasn't going to wait.

At twelve.

Especially at twelve. Waiting only gets harder the older you get.

That sounds like something you learned.

It is something I decided.

The Builder

Most people experience this moment in their twenties. Some in their thirties. A few, the ones who seem to carry a different kind of energy, experience it much earlier.

It is not a dramatic moment. There is no announcement. No single event. It is quieter than that, a realization that settles into the bones before the mind can articulate it:

No one is coming.

Not as a pessimistic statement. As a clarifying one. The future you want does not have a delivery date. It will not appear when you are ready, when conditions improve, when you have enough permission or enough certainty. It will appear, if it appears at all, because you built it.

Mahdi had this realization at twelve. And instead of feeling abandoned by it, he felt freed.

The Sequence That Changed Everything

He wasn't working to survive. The amounts were small. He was funding a future he had already started designing in his mind, projects like the one he built with a friend: an electronic add-on for cars that sounded a tone every time the turn signal blinked, so a driver who forgot to switch it off would hear it instead of leaving other drivers guessing. Nothing like it existed yet. People wanted it immediately.

Most people wait until they have resources before they begin planning. Mahdi planned first, then acquired the resources. The vision preceded the means. The project existed before the money. The job was simply the mechanism that closed the gap.

This architecture, envision first, resource second, execute third, would repeat at every scale for the next three decades. The projects would grow larger. The stakes would increase. The resources required would multiply. But the sequence never changed.

A builder at twelve. A builder at forty. The same mechanism, running on different hardware.

What the Habit of Beginning Builds

There is something that happens to a person who learns, early, that they can generate what they need to build what they want. It is not arrogance. It is quiet certainty — knowledge rooted in experience, not belief — that the gap between a vision and its realization is not an obstacle. It is a project.

This is different from independence for its own sake. It is not about refusing help or rejecting collaboration. It is about never being stopped by the absence of conditions. Never looking at a missing resource and concluding that the project must wait.

The twelve-year-old who worked wasn't building a magazine. He wasn't building a company.

He was building the most important thing a builder can build in the early years:

The habit of beginning.

What that habit taught him:

4. Self-sufficiency is not about money. It is the decision that your future will not wait for better conditions, and that you are the one responsible for creating them.

5. Working alone, early, for your own vision builds something no school teaches: the muscle of initiative. Use it or it atrophies.

6. Most people wait until they are ready. Builders become ready because they begin. Readiness is not a prerequisite. It is a consequence.

Were you ever told you were too young?

Constantly.

How did it feel?

It never felt like information. It felt like opinion.

And opinions can be wrong.

Especially the ones that come with the most confidence.

The Builder

. . .

Everyone has a moment when they understood no one was coming.

For some it was devastating.

For others, the most clarifying thing that ever happened to them.

When did yours arrive?

And when it did, did it stop you, or set you free?

PART ONE: CHAPTER THREE

Negarine: When Impossible Became Instruction

On what the word 'impossible' actually means.

The word 'impossible' is almost never a fact. It is a diagnosis, a statement about what a specific person, with specific resources, cannot do right now. The question is not whether the diagnosis is accurate. The question is whether it applies to you.

They told you it couldn't be done.

Yes.

And you did it anyway.

Yes.

So they were wrong.

They were describing their situation accurately. They assumed it was mine too.

Stop being diplomatic.

Fine. They were wrong.

Was it because you were smarter than them?

No.

More talented?

No.

*Then why did you succeed and they didn't even try?
(long pause)*

Because I never accepted that their ceiling was my ceiling.

The Judge

You have a list.

Don't pretend you don't. Everyone has one.

It is the list of things you have not built, not tried, not pursued, and next to each item, a reason. The technology isn't there. The market isn't ready. The resources don't exist. The timing is wrong. I don't have the connections. I don't have the experience. Someone already tried this. Someone already tried this and failed.

These reasons feel like facts. They feel like honest assessments of reality. And many of them are accurate descriptions of the situation.

But here is what The Judge needs you to hear:

Accurate descriptions of difficulty are not the same as verdicts about possibility. And the distance between those two things is exactly where builders live.

The Negarine Question

Negarine was Mahdi's first large-scale act of construction in the face of declared impossibility. A multimedia, three-dimensional magazine, the first of its kind in his country, built at a time when the technology wasn't standard, the market had no framework for it, and the people around him, including some with genuine experience in the field, said plainly that it couldn't be done.

They were not being dishonest. Based on their resources, their knowledge, their constraints at that moment, they were correct.

The error was in the word they chose to use. They said 'impossible' when they meant 'impossible for us, right now, with what we have.'

Those are very different sentences.

Mahdi didn't have more resources. He didn't have more experience. What he had was a refusal to let someone else's accurate self-assessment become his own operating assumption.

Negarine got built.

What The Judge Wants You to Examine

Here is the uncomfortable part.

Most of the items on your list, the things not built, not tried, not pursued, are not there because they are genuinely impossible. They are there because at some point, someone else's limitation became your belief about your own.

A teacher said you weren't suited for it. A market study suggested the timing was wrong. Someone you respected tried something similar and failed. And somewhere in the accumulation of those signals, you absorbed a conclusion that was never yours to absorb.

The Judge is not interested in whether the difficulty was real. The difficulty was real.

The Judge wants to know: when did you decide that the difficulty was permanent? And whose voice were you using when you made that decision?

7. Impossible is a diagnosis, not a fact. The correct response is precision: impossible for whom? Under what conditions? What would need to change?

8. The people who declare something impossible are usually describing their own constraints accurately. The mistake is inheriting their constraints as your own.

9. The most dangerous impossibilities are not the ones others declare. They are the ones you have quietly accepted, so quietly that you have forgotten they were ever a choice.

Were you afraid Negarine would fail?

Yes.

But you built it anyway.

Yes.

Here's what I actually want to ask you.

Ask.

*How many things on your list right now are
genuinely impossible, and how many are just
uncomfortable?*

(no answer)

That silence is the whole chapter.

.....

The Judge



Three chapters. Three moments. One pattern.

A boy who discovered that freedom is not given. It is built. A twelve-year-old who understood that waiting is a decision, and chose differently. A builder who heard 'impossible' and heard a question.

These are not stories about an exceptional person. They are illustrations of a pattern available to anyone willing to interrogate the word 'impossible' the way an engineer interrogates a broken system:

Not as a verdict. As a problem waiting to be solved.

The industries will change in the chapters ahead. The stakes will rise significantly. The failures will arrive, and they will be real.

But the pattern, once you learn to see it, will not change.

. . .

You have something you have not built.

You know exactly what it is.

And you have a reason why you haven't.

Now be honest with The Judge:

***Is that reason a fact, or is it a story you
borrowed from someone else's failure?***

PART TWO

The Operating System

*Most people describe what they do. Very few can describe
how they think.*

PART TWO: CHAPTER FOUR

How Mahdi Thinks

On changing the angle before changing the answer. Most people try to solve problems by finding better answers. A different kind of thinker starts earlier, by questioning whether the problem is being seen from the right angle at all.

When you face a complex problem, what does your mind do first?

It changes the angle.

Before analyzing?

Before everything. First I look from a direction most people aren't looking from.

Why?

Because the obvious angle is where everyone is already standing. And if the obvious angle had a solution, someone would have found it.

And then?

Then I look for the simplest possible solution. Not the most impressive one. The simplest one that actually works.

That sounds almost too straightforward.

Most real solutions are. The complexity is usually in the framing, not the answer.

The Builder

There is a common assumption about how intelligent people think: that they go deeper. That the quality of thinking is measured by how far down it goes into the problem.

Mahdi thinks differently, sometimes literally. His first instinct when facing a difficult problem is not to dig deeper into it. It is to walk around it. To find the angle from which it looks different. The perspective that most people, locked in the conventional framing, haven't considered.

This is not a technique he learned. It is a reflex he developed, shaped by years of operating in environments where conventional thinking had already failed, where the available frameworks were someone else's, and where the only way forward was to see what others had missed.

The Simple Solution Principle

Once the angle shifts, something else happens: the solution that appears is almost always simpler than expected.

Not easier. Simpler. There is a difference.

Easy means low effort. Simple means low complexity, a solution that doesn't require seventeen moving parts, enormous resources, or perfect conditions. A solution that could work now, with what exists, without waiting for circumstances to improve.

This orientation toward simplicity is not laziness. It is a form of respect for reality. Complex solutions require complex execution. They require alignment among many people, sustained resources, and favorable conditions. Simple solutions can survive hostile environments. They can be built by one person with limited resources. They can begin today.

Mahdi has always been drawn to the small lever that moves a large weight. The single change that makes everything else easier. The overlooked door in a wall everyone else is trying to climb.

The Army of One

There is a cost to thinking this way.

When you consistently see angles others miss and solutions others dismiss as too simple, you spend a significant portion of your life being misunderstood. People look at your ideas and see naivety. They look at your plans and see delusion. They tell you, politely or not, that you are underestimating the difficulty.

And then you build it. And then they applaud.

Mahdi has described himself as a one-man army. Not proudly. Almost tiredly. It is the description of someone who has spent years building things that required him to be simultaneously the strategist, the executor, the believer, and the only person in the room who could see the finished version while everything around him was still empty space.

The loneliness of this is real. It is not something that ambition eliminates. You can be completely certain about a direction and completely alone in that certainty at the same time.

What keeps you moving is not the certainty that you are right. It is the certainty that not trying is worse than being wrong.

What follows from that:

10. The quality of thinking is not measured by how deep it goes, but by whether it's standing in the right place to begin with.

11. Simple solutions are not small solutions. They are solutions that survive. Complexity is fragile; simplicity is durable.

**12. Being misunderstood before you build something is not a sign you are wrong. It is often a
*sign that you are early***

Does it bother you? That most people don't see it until after?

It used to.

And now?

Now I use it as a signal. If everyone immediately understands what I'm building, I'm probably not building anything new.

The Builder

. . .

*Think about the last problem you couldn't solve.
You tried harder. You went deeper. You asked more
people.*

What if the problem wasn't the depth?

What if it was the angle?

***What would you see if you walked around it
instead of through it?***

PART TWO: CHAPTER FIVE

The Third Option Philosophy

On what a man does when the world takes everything, and neither available option is acceptable.

The third option is never obvious. It is never comfortable. It is usually the option that requires you to give up something you love in exchange for something that doesn't yet exist.

2016. Tell me what happened.

I lost a partnership. Someone I trusted took advantage. I was bankrupt. Depressed.

Two options in front of you.

Fight: spend everything I had left on a battle I might not win. Or surrender: accept the loss and wait in the darkness until it passed.

And you chose neither.

I sold my Xbox. I sold my wedding ring.

Stop. Your wedding ring.

Yes.

Did she know?

She suggested it.

What did she say?

She said: we'll build it all again. Better.

(silence)

The Judge had nothing to add.

The Judge

In 2016, he had nothing.

Not the dramatic nothing of a person who has lost a job or missed an opportunity. The specific nothing of a person who has been deliberately taken from, a partnership dissolved through betrayal, resources gone, reputation damaged, and the particular darkness of depression that follows not just failure but injustice.

In that moment, the world offered two exits.

The first: fight. Pursue the legal and social battle to recover what was taken. Spend the remaining energy on justice, knowing the process would be long, expensive, and uncertain. It was the option that felt righteous. It was also the option that kept him defined by what had happened to him.

The second: surrender. Accept the loss, retreat, and wait for the depression to lift on its own schedule. It was the option that felt inevitable. It was also the option that handed complete control of the future to time and circumstance.

He took neither.

The Coloring Book That Rebuilt Everything

The third option began with a question he had been carrying for years, pushed aside by more urgent things: what if adults had coloring books? Not childish ones. Sophisticated ones. Books that contained images connected to memory, culture, identity, images that could unlock something in people who had forgotten how to access it.

The idea had always been there. The crisis gave it urgency.

He sold what he had. The Xbox he loved. The wedding ring, which his wife offered with six words that contained an entire philosophy: we'll build it all again, better. He built a minimum viable version. He advertised with almost nothing. He pre-sold the book before it existed.

Orders came in faster than he expected.

Not because the market was waiting for this product. Not because the timing was perfect. But because he had built something that solved a real problem, the problem of adults

who had lost access to a part of themselves, and he had built it at the exact moment when he had nothing left to lose by trying.

What the Third Option Actually Requires

The third option is not a clever strategy. It is not a technique that can be applied from a position of comfort. It requires a specific condition that most people spend their lives trying to avoid:

It requires that both available options be genuinely unacceptable.

When one option is comfortable, people take it. When both options are uncomfortable but one is slightly less so, people take the less uncomfortable one. The third option only becomes visible, only becomes real, when the person has looked honestly at both available paths and said: neither of these is the life I am willing to accept.

This is not stubbornness. It is not delusion. It is a form of clarity that only arrives when the noise of comfort has been removed.

In 2016, Mahdi had no comfortable option. And in that absence, he found the only option that mattered.

The Wife Who Also Chose the Third Option

It would be easy to make this a story about one man's resilience.

It is actually a story about two people who shared the same philosophy without ever having discussed it as a philosophy.

When he told her about the ring, she didn't hesitate. She didn't mourn the symbol. She looked at what the ring represented, a commitment to build a life together, and she understood, correctly, that selling the object was not a betrayal of the commitment. It was an expression of it.

We'll build it all again. Better.

Six words. An entire operating system.

The person who spoke these words was not being naively optimistic. They were being precise.

She was saying: the ring is not the marriage. The money is not the life. The thing that was lost is not the thing that matters. And the thing that matters, us, the vision, the next version, is still here and still worth building toward.

That is the third option, spoken by someone who had never heard the term.

What that year taught both of them:

13. The third option only appears when both available options are genuinely unacceptable. Comfort hides it. Crisis reveals it.

14. The minimum viable version of something real is always more powerful than the maximum version of something safe.

15. The people who stay beside you when you have nothing are not just supporters. They are co-builders of the third option. Honor them accordingly.

If the partnership betrayal hadn't happened, if 2016 had been stable and comfortable, would the coloring book have been launched?

(long pause)

No.

So the person who betrayed you accidentally gave you the crisis that built your next chapter.

I've thought about that.

And?

I don't thank him for it. But I don't let it destroy me either. The crisis was his. What I built from it was mine.

That's the whole chapter, isn't it?

That's the whole philosophy.

The Judge

. . .

*You are standing in front of two options.
One is a fight that might cost everything.
One is a surrender that might cost just as much.*

*You already know neither is right.
You've known for a while.*

What are you selling to build the third one?

PART TWO: CHAPTER SIX

Relationship With Fear

On the fear that builders don't talk about.

Everyone knows about the fear of failure. Very few talk about the fear of losing what you've already built. That second fear is quieter, more sophisticated, and far more capable of stopping a builder than the first.

What are you afraid of?

Losing what I currently have.

Not failure.

I've made peace with failure. Failure is just information.

But losing what you have. That's different.

Yes. Because I built it. It cost something real to build it.

So the fear grows with what you build.

Yes.

Which means the more successful you become, the more afraid you are.

(no answer)

That's worth sitting with.

The Judge

There is a version of fear that builders talk about openly: the fear of starting. The fear of failure. The fear of being wrong. These fears are discussed in every book about entrepreneurship, every podcast about resilience. They have been normalized, analyzed, and surrounded by frameworks for overcoming them.

Mahdi has largely made peace with these fears. He built through them too many times for them to carry the same weight they once did.

But there is another fear. One that doesn't appear at the beginning of a journey. One that only arrives after you've built something real.

The fear of losing what you have.

The Fear That Grows With Success

This fear is more insidious than the fear of failure because it is rational. It is based on real knowledge of what was required to build what exists. It knows exactly what was sold, what was risked, what was endured. And it knows, with complete accuracy, that losing it would mean going through all of that again.

The fear of starting is the fear of the unknown. You can dismiss it with optimism.

The fear of losing what you've built is the fear of the known. You cannot dismiss it. You know exactly what the loss would feel like because you remember exactly what the building felt like.

For him, this fear manifests as a particular kind of vigilance, a constant monitoring of current positions, a sensitivity to signals that something might be slipping. Not paranoia. Awareness. But awareness that, if it becomes too loud, can make a builder risk-averse and risk aversion is how builders stop building.

The Loneliness That Lives Inside the Fear

Underneath the fear of losing what he has is something older and harder to name. The feeling of being a one-man army.

Not a proud declaration. A tired one. The description of someone who has spent years carrying visions that others couldn't see until they were built, plans that others called delusion until they became results, ideas that received polite skepticism until they received reluctant applause.

The loneliness is not about relationships. He has Family who have sacrificed for the vision. That is not loneliness. The loneliness is cognitive, the specific solitude of seeing something clearly that the people around you cannot yet see, and knowing that the gap between your vision and their understanding cannot be closed with explanation. Only with results.

This is the tax that builders pay. Not just the risk. The isolation of being early.

16. The fear of losing what you've built is not weakness. It is evidence that you understand what it cost. The question is whether you let that understanding protect you or paralyze you.

17. Being misunderstood before you build is painful. Being applauded only after is something quieter and stranger, a loneliness that success doesn't automatically cure.

18. The one-man army is not a permanent identity. It is a phase. The question every builder eventually faces is: when do I build the army instead of being it?

*The fear of losing what you have: has it ever stopped you
from building what comes next?*

It has slowed me.

That's not the same thing.

No. But it's honest.

Here's what I actually want to ask you.

Ask.

*The people who never understood your ideas until
after you built them: do you still want their
validation? Even now?*

(long pause)

Less than before.

But not zero.

But not zero.

The Judge

. . .

*You've built something.
Maybe small. Maybe large. But real.
And now there is a next thing, a bigger thing,
waiting.
And you haven't started it yet.

Is it because you don't know how?*

***Or because you're afraid of what you'd have
to risk to get there?***

PART TWO: CHAPTER SEVEN

Relationship With Opportunity

On how to tell the difference between a real door and a painted wall.

Most people can recognize an opportunity after it has passed. Very few develop the ability to recognize one in real time, before the result is visible, before the path is clear, before anyone else is paying attention.

How do you know when something is a real opportunity?

I ask directly. Without softening it.

You ask the other person?

I ask: can you actually do this? Yes or no.

No qualification. No 'I'll try.' Yes or no.

Most people don't respond well to that.

The ones who can't answer clearly are already giving me the answer.

And beyond the people, the opportunity itself?

Think big. Start small. Execute now. If those three things align, it's real.

That's almost too simple.

Real things usually are.

The Builder

Opportunity recognition is one of the most discussed skills in business and one of the least taught effectively. Most frameworks describe it in retrospect, here is how this person recognized this opportunity, without addressing the harder question: how do you recognize one before the outcome is visible?

The approach has two components. One involves people. One involves ideas.

With people: directness. Not aggression, not coldness, but the refusal to operate in the fog of vague commitments and polite non-answers that often surrounds early-stage collaboration. He asks directly. He expects a direct answer. The inability to give one is itself information.

Since 2019, when he encountered hypnotherapy and deep self-knowledge practices, this ability sharpened. He can now read, within the first interaction, whether someone has genuine capability or is performing capability. Whether their confidence is earned or borrowed. This is not a mystical ability. It is the product of years of reading people, combined with deliberate work on interior clarity.

Think Big, Start Small, Execute Now

With ideas: a three-part test that operates almost automatically.

Think big: is this idea genuinely significant? Does it solve a real problem at a real scale? Not significant in the sense of impressive, but significant in the sense of meaningful. Does it matter?

Start small: can it begin with what exists right now? Not what will exist after funding, after the right team, after conditions improve. What exists now. If the first step requires perfect conditions, it is not a real opportunity. It is a fantasy with a business plan attached.

Execute now: is there a version of this that can move today? Not the full version. A version. Something real that creates

momentum, tests the assumption, and generates information that the idea alone cannot.

When all three are true, the opportunity is real. When any one is missing, the work is to find the version that makes it true, or to acknowledge, honestly, that this is not the right moment.

The Real Question Behind Every Opportunity

Underneath all of this is something simpler that Mahdi has internalized over years of building:

Opportunities are not scarce. Clarity is

Opportunities are not scarce. Clarity is the reason most people miss real opportunities is not that they aren't present. It is that they are surrounded by noise of false ones: ideas that feel exciting but don't pass the three-part test, people who seem capable but won't answer directly, directions that look like open roads but are painted walls.

The ability to see clearly, to distinguish signal from noise, genuine capability from performance, real doors from painted walls, is not a talent. It is a practice. And like every practice, it becomes more reliable with years of deliberate attention.

19. Directness is not aggression. It is respect, for your time, for their time, and for the truth that polite ambiguity hides.

20. Think big, start small, execute now. Any opportunity that fails this test is not the wrong opportunity. It is the wrong timing or the wrong version. Find the version that passes.

21. Opportunities are not scarce. Clarity is. The real work is not finding better opportunities. It is developing the clarity to see the ones already in front of you.

*The biggest opportunity you missed, looking back,
what was it?*

I don't spend much time there.

That's not what I asked.

**Something in the early years. I was too
focused on what was in front of me to see
what was beside it.**

What changed?

I learned to look sideways more.

The Builder

. . .

There is something in front of you right now.

You've been calling it 'not the right time.'

Or 'not enough resources.'

Or 'I need to think about it more.'

Think big. Start small. Execute now.

Which of the three is actually missing?

PART TWO: CHAPTER EIGHT

Relationship With Creativity

On where ideas actually come from, and the conditions that allow them to arrive.

Creativity is not a state you enter. It is a state you allow.

The question is not how to generate more ideas. It is how to create the conditions in which the ideas that are already forming can reach the surface.

Where does your creativity come from?

From peace. Financial peace, specifically.

Not from struggle?

Struggle can force a solution. But the best ideas come when I'm not worried.

When you see your family comfortable.

When I see my wife and daughter happy and I'm not afraid for their future, that's when I think best.

So your creativity is tied to their safety.

My creativity is freed by their safety. It was always there. Fear was just blocking it.

The Witness observes: the source of his best ideas is not ambition. It is love.

The Witness

There is a popular mythology about creativity and suffering. The artist who creates from pain. The entrepreneur who builds from necessity. The thinker whose best ideas arrive in crisis.

There is truth in this. Crisis removes distractions. It clarifies what matters. It can force a kind of focus that comfortable circumstances rarely produce.

But Mahdi's experience points to something different, something that the mythology of the suffering creator tends to obscure.

His best thinking happens in stillness. Not the stillness of inaction, but the stillness of security. When the immediate fears are quiet. When the family is well. When the next meal, the next rent payment, the next crisis is not occupying the foreground of his attention.

In that space, something opens.

The Condition Behind the Ideas

He describes it in terms of the people he loves most. When the family is at peace, not merely alive, but genuinely happy, not worried about tomorrow, something in the mind relaxes and expands simultaneously. This is not sentimentality. It is a precise description of how the creative process works. The anxiety about the future occupies cognitive and emotional space that would otherwise be available for building.

When that anxiety is absent, the space fills with something else.

Ideas. Connections. Patterns that were invisible under pressure.

The creativity was always there. The fear was simply louder.

Finding the Missing Links

When uncertainty is present, when the path is unclear, when the resources don't align, when the direction isn't visible, there is something specific done. Look for missing links.

Not the solution. Not the complete picture. The single connection that, if made, would allow several other things to fall into place. The missing piece that is holding other pieces apart.

He describes this as a kind of search that happens almost below the level of conscious thought. He is not actively analyzing. He is staying open, to conversations, to observations, to the unexpected connection between two things that seem unrelated. And when the link appears, something lights up. Not metaphorically. A genuine sense of recognition: this is it. This is the thing that connects the other things.

It is a form of pattern recognition that has been trained by years of building in multiple industries, across multiple contexts, under multiple constraints. The patterns are everywhere. The practice is learning to see them.

22. Creativity is not generated by effort. It is allowed by the removal of what blocks it. Find what is blocking yours.

23. Your best ideas will arrive when you are not afraid. Not because fear is wrong, but because fear occupies the space where ideas live.

24. Look for the missing link, not the complete solution. One right connection changes the architecture of everything around it.

The coloring book was built in crisis. You just said creativity needs peace.

The coloring book was built from an idea that came in peace. The crisis gave me the urgency to act on it.

So peace generates the idea. Crisis accelerates the execution.

That's exactly right.

Most people have neither peace nor crisis. They have the middle.

The middle is where dreams go to wait indefinitely.

The Witness

. . .

*Think of the idea you keep returning to.
The one that won't quite leave.
You've had it for a while.*

What condition would need to be present for you to finally act on it?

And is that condition genuinely missing, or have you just not decided to create it yet?

PART TWO: CHAPTER NINE

Relationship With Uncertainty

On navigating without a map, and why the lights only appear when you start walking.

Uncertainty is not the absence of direction. It is the presence of multiple possible directions, none of them fully visible. The mistake is waiting for one to become clear before moving. Movement is what creates the clarity

How do you navigate when nothing is clear?

I look for the missing links. The connections that aren't visible yet.

And if they don't appear?

I keep moving. Slowly. But moving.

Why moving?

Because standing still, the lights stay off. When I move, when I connect things, talk to people, build small things, something in the universe turns the lights on.

That's a very non-linear way to operate.

Most real things are non-linear. We just pretend otherwise to feel safe.

Does the uncertainty bother you?

Less than it used to. I've learned that I don't need to see the whole path. Just the next step.

The Witness

There is a version of planning that most people practice, the version where you map the entire journey before taking the first step. Destination, route, milestones, contingencies. It feels responsible. It feels like the intelligent approach.

It is also, in genuinely uncertain conditions, largely fictional. Not because planning is wrong. But because real uncertainty, the kind that exists at the edge of what anyone has done before, does not yield to maps. The map you draw before the journey is a hypothesis about the territory. The territory has its own ideas.

Building enough things in enough uncertainty creates a different relationship with not knowing. Not comfort, exactly. Something more functional: the understanding that clarity is not a precondition for action. It is often a consequence of it.

The Lights That Appear When You Move

He describes uncertainty using a spatial metaphor: standing in a dark space, looking for the connections that aren't yet visible. Not standing still and waiting for them to appear. Moving toward where they might be.

And when movement happens, when conversations occur, when small experiments are made, when two apparently unrelated things are brought into proximity, something changes. Connections appear that weren't visible from a distance. Paths reveal themselves that weren't on any map. What looked like a wall turns out to have a door.

This is not mysticism. It is a practical observation about how information actually flows in complex systems. You cannot see most of the relevant information from a distance. You have to get close. And getting close requires moving before you can see clearly.

Think big. Start small. Execute now. The philosophy of opportunity applies equally to uncertainty: you don't need the full picture. You need the first real step. The picture assembles itself around the steps.

The Intelligence That Arrives on the Road

There is a kind of intelligence that only becomes available in motion.

Not the intelligence of analysis: that is available at the desk. Not the intelligence of planning: that is available before departure. The intelligence that arrives on the road: the information you could not have accessed without going, the connections you could not have made without moving, the version of yourself that only exists in the act of building.

This intelligence has been met many times. In the middle of a project that seemed to have no clear path forward, a conversation reveals an unexpected connection. A small experiment produces an unexpected result. A person appears, at the right moment, who is the missing link between two things that have been waiting to be connected.

He does not wait for these things before moving. He moves, and they arrive.

This is the deepest lesson of his relationship with uncertainty: the answer is not in the question. It is in the road that the question sends you down.

25. Clarity is not a prerequisite for action. In complex situations, it is almost always a consequence of it. You cannot think your way to the territory. You have to walk into it.

26. The lights in the dark only turn on when you move toward them. Waiting for full visibility before moving is not caution. It is a different kind of risk.

27. There is intelligence that only exists in motion. Plans made at the desk are hypotheses. The road is where they are tested,

revised, and occasionally replaced by something better.

If you could go back and know everything in advance, would you?

No.

Why not?

Because most of what I built came from surprises. From connections I couldn't have planned. From doors I found by walking into walls.

The walls were necessary.

The walls were the map.

The Witness observes without adding. Some answers don't need commentary.

The Witness



Six chapters. One operating system.

A mind that changes angles before it seeks answers. A philosophy born from the wreckage of 2016 and a wedding ring sold by a woman who believed in what came next. A relationship with fear that is honest about what it costs to have built something real. An ability to recognize opportunity through directness and a three-part test. A creativity that is freed, not generated, by the presence of peace. And a navigation system that requires movement before it shows the path.

This is how thinking works.

Not as a template. As a mirror.

Because the question this section was always asking was never: how does he think?

The question was: how are you thinking about the problem in front of you right now? And is that working?

. . .

You are in the dark.

You can feel the shape of something ahead.

But you cannot see it clearly.

*And you have been standing here, in the same place,
for longer than you planned.*

What would happen if you just took one step?

PART THREE

The Entrepreneurial DNA

*Anyone can describe success. Very few can describe
honestly what it cost.*

PART THREE: CHAPTER TEN

Creating New Markets

On finding the pain before the product, and why the market always arrives after the builder.

Most businesses compete for existing demand. A smaller number create it. The difference is not talent or resources. It is the willingness to solve a problem before anyone has named it as a market.

How do you create a market that doesn't exist?

You don't create the market. You find the pain. The market creates itself.

Explain.

I look for the thing people are suffering from but haven't connected to a solution yet. Then I build the solution. The demand was always there. It just didn't have a name.

And the market builds around the solution.

When the pain is real and shared, yes. You don't have to convince people they need something. You just have to show them it exists.

You kept the audience wide at the start.

Deliberately. A narrow market is fragile. I wanted the idea to have room to find its people before I defined exactly who they were.

The Builder

There is a standard approach to building a business: identify a market, understand its size, find your segment, compete for share. It is logical. It is teachable. It produces companies that look a lot like the companies that already exist.

He has never been particularly interested in competing for existing share. The businesses he has built, the magazine that didn't exist, the coloring book category that had to be invented, the AI consulting firm, the wellness technology ecosystem, share a common characteristic: they were solutions to problems that were real before the market that recognized them was.

The sequence, for him, is always the same. Find the pain. Understand it precisely. Build the simplest possible solution. Then let the market form around the solution rather than trying to force the solution into a market that was designed for something else.

Pain First, Product Second

The discipline of starting with pain rather than product is harder than it sounds. Products are concrete. Pain is diffuse. Products can be shown, priced, compared. Pain requires interpretation, the ability to sit with a problem long enough to understand not just what it is, but why it persists, and what kind of solution would actually address it rather than merely appearing to.

The approach is keeping the audience deliberately wide at the beginning. Not because he lacks focus, but because premature narrowing kills new markets before they can form. When you define your customer too precisely before you understand your solution, you close doors that the solution itself might have opened.

The coloring book is the clearest example. He didn't start with a customer profile. He started with an observation about human beings, that adults carry memories and emotions they have no clean way to access, and built something that

addressed that observation. The market arrived after the solution existed, not before.

The Builder's Paradox

Here is the paradox of creating new markets: the people who are best at it are almost always misunderstood at the beginning. Because the market doesn't exist yet, there is no evidence that it will. Because the problem hasn't been named yet, it looks like the builder is solving something imaginary.

This is the one-man army problem again. Not just carrying the vision alone, but carrying it in the face of people who are not wrong to be skeptical. They simply cannot see what the builder can see because they are looking at what exists rather than what the pain requires.

The market always arrives after the builder. That is not a bug in the process. It is the definition of creation.

28. Don't look for a market to enter. Look for a pain that has no solution. Build the solution. The market will find it.

29. Keep your audience wide at the start. Premature narrowing kills new markets before they can form around what you've built.

30. The market always arrives after the builder. Skepticism before launch is not a signal to stop. It is confirmation that you are building something genuinely new.

What pain are you solving right now that doesn't have a market yet?

BeautiMind. The space between mental wellness and creative expression. Most apps treat them separately. They belong together.

And the market?

It's forming. It just doesn't know what to call itself yet.

That's exactly where you work best.

Always has been.

The Builder

. . .

You have noticed a pain.

Something that bothers people but nobody has named yet.

You've been watching it for a while.

What are you waiting for before you build the solution?

PART THREE: CHAPTER ELEVEN

Relationship With Money

On the gap between what you believe about money and how you actually behave with it.

Everyone has a philosophy about money. Very few people's actual behavior matches it. The gap between the two is not hypocrisy. It is the most honest map of what you actually believe versus what you wish you believed.

What is money to you?

A tool. Not a goal.

Say that again but honestly.

It's a tool. Mostly. But under pressure, real pressure, I have confused it for a goal. A short-term one. Something to reach so I can breathe again.

So when things are good, it's a tool. When things are hard, it becomes oxygen.

Yes. That's honest.

And when it becomes oxygen?

I make worse decisions. I chase signals I shouldn't chase. I move fast when I should move carefully.

Your philosophy is right. Your behavior under pressure isn't.

No. It isn't.

That gap has cost you.

Many times.

The Judge

The philosophy is clear and has been consistent for years: money is food for the business, not the goal of it. You don't starve the business. That is how businesses die slowly. But you also don't confuse feeding the business with the purpose of the business. Profit is the fuel. The destination is elsewhere.

The philosophy is right.

The practice, under pressure, has been something different.

The Pattern of the Chased Signal

There is high emotional intelligence. This is both a gift and, in specific financial contexts, a liability.

High emotional intelligence means reading people and situations with unusual speed and accuracy. It means detecting signals that others miss, feeling the energy of a room, understanding what is being communicated beneath what is being said.

In human contexts, this is invaluable. In investment contexts, particularly high-volatility markets where signals are intentionally designed to feel meaningful, it has repeatedly led him toward decisions that the analytical part of his mind would have refused.

He followed the signal. He moved fast. He invested heavily. And almost every time, in the domain of financial speculation, it went wrong.

This is not a failure of intelligence. It is a failure of domain application. The same sensitivity that makes him exceptional at reading people makes him vulnerable to environments specifically engineered to produce false signals. Cryptocurrency markets. Trading platforms. High-pressure investment windows. These are environments where emotional intelligence becomes noise rather than signal.

Money as Food, Not Finish Line

The metaphor is precise and worth holding: money is food for the business.

A business that is kept perpetually hungry that is starved of investment, of resources, of the capital required to move, will eventually consume itself.

But a business whose owner has confused feeding it with building it will never become what it could be. The energy that should go toward creation goes toward accumulation. The vision that should be expanding contracts around the next financial target.

The clearest formulation of the actual relationship with money is this:

I am not going to chase money. Money should chase me and my ideas.

This is not arrogance. It is a precise statement about where value is created. Ideas that solve real problems at real scale generate money as a consequence. The builder who chases the money before building the value has confused the consequence for the cause.

The challenge, the honest, ongoing challenge, is holding this philosophy when the pressure arrives. When the business needs feeding and the next project hasn't generated returns yet and those depending on it are watching and the weight of the one-man army is at its heaviest.

In those moments, the philosophy is tested. And the test, by Mahdi's own account, has not always been passed.

What the gap between philosophy and behavior actually teaches:

31. Money is food for the business, not the finish line. Starving the business kills it slowly. Confusing feeding it with building it kills the vision faster.

32. High emotional intelligence in human contexts is an asset. In high-volatility financial markets engineered to produce false

signals, it is a liability. Know which domain you are in.

33. The gap between your financial philosophy and your financial behavior under pressure is the most honest map of your actual beliefs. Study the gap. It knows things your philosophy doesn't.

If you could go back and change one financial decision, just one, what would it be?

Not the investments. Those were learning.

Then what?

Believing sooner that the ideas were worth more than the shortcuts. I knew it. I didn't always act like I knew it.

You chased the shortcut.

More than once.

And the ideas were always there, waiting.

The ideas don't run out. That's the one thing I've learned to trust.

The Judge

. . .

You have a philosophy about money.

It is probably correct.

Now look at the last three financial decisions you made under pressure.

Did your behavior match your philosophy?

And if not, what does the gap tell you about what you actually believe?

PART THREE: CHAPTER TWELVE

Relationship With Risk

On the difference between calculated risk and the risk you take because you can't stand waiting.

There are two kinds of risk. The first is taken because the potential return justifies the potential loss. The second is taken because the alternative, patience, inaction, the slow grind of building without a shortcut, is psychologically unbearable. Most people confuse the second for the first.

The cryptocurrency investment. Tell me what happened.

I put a significant amount into a single asset. It collapsed.

Did you know the risk?

I knew the possibility of loss. I didn't believe it would happen.

Why not?

Because the signal felt strong. Because everything I was reading pointed one direction.

And the signal was wrong.

The signal was real. The interpretation was wrong.

What's the difference?

The signal said: this is moving. I heard: this will keep moving. Those are not the same thing.

You heard what you wanted to hear.

(pause)

Yes.

The Judge

Every builder has a risk profile. Most builders, if they are honest, will describe themselves as calculated risk-takers, people who assess the downside, understand the probability, and proceed when the potential return justifies the exposure. This is usually half true.

The calculated part is real. The assessment happens. The analysis is genuine. But underneath the calculation, in the builders who move fast and build at high intensity, there is often a second force operating simultaneously, one that is less about analysis and more about temperament.

The inability to stand still.

The Impatient Intelligence

The profile is described as having high emotional intelligence and being, by nature, impatient. These two things together produce a specific risk pattern that has repeated throughout his financial life.

The impatience looks for opportunities that will move fast. The emotional intelligence reads signals with unusual sensitivity. Together, they create a capability to identify early momentum, in markets, in people, in ideas, with genuine accuracy. And who, having identified it, finds the slow path of disciplined accumulation almost physically intolerable.

The investment followed this pattern precisely. An asset showing real momentum. A signal that was not fabricated — it was genuinely there. But momentum is not direction. Early movement is not guaranteed continuation. And the concentration of a position in a single asset, regardless of how strong the signal feels, is not calculation. It is conviction without diversification.

The asset collapsed. The position was lost.

Not because the signal was wrong. Because the risk architecture, everything in one place, based on a reading of momentum rather than a structure built for survival, was not designed to withstand what markets eventually do to everything: reverse.

What Risk Looks Like After You've Paid for It

There is a version of risk-taking that Mahdi has become better at over time: the small, deliberate bet. The pre-sold book before the print run. The minimum viable version before the full build. The single step in the dark before committing to the road.

This is the risk of the builder, not the risk of the speculator. It is designed not for maximum return but for maximum learning per unit of exposure. You bet what you can afford to lose. You structure the bet so that even failure generates information. You never put the entire position in a single place.

Think big. Start small. Execute now.

The philosophy applies to risk as much as to opportunity. Think about the largest possible version. Start with the smallest possible test. Move now, with the minimum required, and let the results shape the next step.

This is slower. It is less exciting. It does not produce the feeling of momentum that a large concentrated bet produces.

It also does not produce the feeling of watching everything disappear overnight.

What good risk-taking actually requires:

34. There are two kinds of risk: the kind you take because the return justifies the exposure, and the kind you take because patience is unbearable. Know which one you are taking before you take it.

35. Signal is not direction. Momentum is not destination. Reading the market correctly and sizing the position correctly are two entirely different skills. You can be right about the first and wrong about the second.

36. The builder's risk is designed for maximum learning per unit of exposure. The speculator's risk is designed for maximum return. They require different architectures. Don't use one when you need the other.

After everything, the crypto loss, the forex years, the investments that didn't work, are you more cautious now?

More precise. Not more cautious.

What's the difference?

Caution avoids risk. Precision chooses it deliberately. I still take risks. I just try to know which kind I'm taking.

Try.

I'm still learning. Eight years of evidence and I'm still learning.

The Judge respects this answer.

*Think about the last risk you took that didn't work.
Be honest about why you took it.*

*Was it because the return justified the exposure?
**Or was it because waiting felt worse than
losing?***

PART THREE: CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Relationship With Failure

On the \$80 million that disappeared.

There is a failure you learned from. You talk about it comfortably now. You have the lesson ready. You know what it taught you. And then there is the other kind, the one that didn't become a lesson. The one that is still just weight.

Tell me about the trading team.

2019. I brought together people I'd met through the hypnotherapy work. Each of us had a specific skill. Together we built something unusual.

What happened to the account?

In six months, the account showed significant growth that then disappeared.

Eighty million dollars.

Yes.

And then?

The person trusted to manage the account disappeared.

You tried to reach him.

Many times. He always said the same thing: don't worry, your share is safe, the time will come.

Eight years later.

Eight years later.

.....

(long silence)

And the team blamed you.

**The team was built. People were brought
together. When it collapsed, the builder was
the one who had taken their time.**

You did everything right.

I did everything right.

And lost everything anyway.

And lost everything anyway.

The Witness

This chapter is not about lessons.

There will be no tidy framework at the end. No three-point summary of what the loss taught. No reframing that makes the loss into a gift.

Because Mahdi already said what needs to be said: eight years have passed and the pain has not gone away. He has not been able to walk that path again, alone, the way it was walked that first time. The team that built something extraordinary together dissolved into blame and silence and the particular loneliness of people who shared something real and then couldn't find each other in the wreckage.

Some failures become lessons. And then there is this kind.

The Specific Weight of Righteous Loss

There is a specific kind of pain that comes from losing something you didn't lose through error. You made the right decisions. You built the right team. You established the right agreements. You trusted the right person based on the available evidence.

And then something outside your control, not your judgment, not your execution, not your vision, took everything.

This kind of loss is harder to metabolize than failure born from obvious mistakes. When you make an error and lose, there is a path forward: identify the error, correct it, rebuild with the correction. The loss has a cause. The cause can be addressed.

When you do everything correctly and lose anyway, the path forward is murkier. The question is not: what did I do wrong? It is: what does it mean that doing everything right was not enough?

The question has been carried for eight years.

The Quick Jump to Lessons

After describing the loss, \$80 million, six months of genuine achievement, a team that built something no one expected to build, dissolved by one person's disappearance, he added, almost immediately: but we gained good experiences from it. This is worth sitting with.

Not because it is wrong. The experiences were real. The skills developed in that period were genuine. The knowledge of what that kind of collaboration can produce, and what it requires to be protected, was hard-won and real.

But the speed of the jump to lessons is itself information. It is what happens when a person has spent years trying to find somewhere to put a pain that doesn't fit neatly into the categories of 'mistake I learned from' or 'obstacle I overcame.' The pain that remains after all the lessons have been extracted still needs somewhere to go.

Sometimes it just sits. And the person who carries it builds anyway.

What Doesn't Become a Lesson

The honest account of a builder's relationship with failure has two parts. The first part is the familiar one: the failure that shaped the next success, the loss that clarified the vision, the mistake that became the foundation of a better decision.

The second part is less often told. The failure that didn't become anything. The loss that is still just a loss. The version of yourself that built something extraordinary and had it taken, and has not been able to fully rebuild that specific thing in the years since.

Not for lack of trying. Not for lack of capability. But because some things, once broken, require not just skill and effort but the precise conditions, the specific people, the exact trust, the particular convergence of abilities, that existed once and have not fully reassembled.

The builder has not stopped building. The commitment continues. And yet the particular configuration of that moment has not been recreated.

That is not failure. That is the honest weight of what happened. And it deserves to be called what it is, rather than converted too quickly into a lesson that makes everyone, including the person carrying it, more comfortable.

What that weight demands of anyone still building:

37. Some failures become lessons. That is the comfortable kind. The uncomfortable kind just becomes weight, something you carry while continuing to build. Both are real. Don't pretend the second is the first.

38. Doing everything right is not a guarantee of the outcome you deserve. This is not a reason to stop doing things right. It is a reason to build structures that don't depend on any single person's integrity.

39. The speed at which you jump to 'what I learned' is worth monitoring. Sometimes you learn. Sometimes you just need more time before the lesson is available. Give yourself that time.

Do you think you'll ever go back to that kind of trading, that level, that team?

I don't know.

That's the most uncertain answer you've given in this entire book.

Because it's the most uncertain thing in it.

You built \$80 million from \$10,000 in six months.

We built it.

We built it. And you haven't been able to do it again.

Not yet.

Not yet.

The Witness notes: 'not yet' is the builder's answer even when the builder is not sure.

The Witness



Four chapters. The DNA of an entrepreneur who has built markets from pain, who has been honest about the gap between his financial philosophy and his financial behavior, who has learned the difference between calculated risk and the risk you take because waiting is unbearable, and who carries a loss that eight years have not resolved.

This is not a portrait of a successful entrepreneur. It is a portrait of a real one.

The difference matters. Successful entrepreneurs, in the version most often told, learn from every failure, profit from every loss, and emerge from every crisis stronger and wiser.

The story is clean. The arc is upward.

Real entrepreneurs carry things. They build with the weight still on them. They say 'not yet' when they're not sure. They have philosophies that their behavior under pressure doesn't always match.

And they keep going anyway.

That is not a diminishment of what Mahdi has built. It is the actual foundation of it.

...

You have a loss you haven't converted into a lesson yet.

You know what it is.

What if it doesn't need to be a lesson?

What if it just needs to be carried, honestly, without pretending it's lighter than it is?

And what would you build differently if you stopped trying to make the weight disappear?

PART FOUR

The Creator of Creators

*The highest form of building is not the thing you make. It is
the person you make it possible for.*

PART FOUR: CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Teaching Entrepreneurs

On the gift that keeps being given for free, and what that costs the giver.

There is a particular kind of person who gives their most valuable thing away most easily. Not because it isn't valuable to them, but because the act of giving it feels more natural than the act of pricing it. This generosity is real. It is also, if left unexamined, a form of self-erasure.

When you work with entrepreneurs, what do you actually do?

I map the path. I show them where they are, where they could go, and the first real steps between the two.

And you charge for this?

Not always. Not as much as I should.

Why not?

Because I care more about the transformation than the transaction.

That's a beautiful answer. Is it the honest one?

(pause)

It's partly honest. The other part is that I undervalue what I do.

Or you overvalue the relationship at the expense of the exchange.

Yes. Both.

And what happens?

They transform. They grow. They forget where they started. Sometimes they forget who helped them start.

And you keep giving anyway.

I keep giving anyway.

The Judge

There is a tension at the center of this work that has been named honestly: caring too much.

Not in the sentimental sense. In the very specific sense that. When one enters someone else's business, it is entered completely. It is thought about as if it were one's own. It is mapped as if the decisions were one's to make. He invests his thinking, his patterns, his years of hard-won experience, and he does it, more often than not, at a price that does not reflect what that investment is actually worth.

This is not a small thing. It is the central paradox of his identity as a Creator of Creators.

The Map vs. The Journey

What he offers is not instruction. It is orientation.

There is a difference between teaching someone how to do something and showing them where they are. Teaching requires the student to absorb a curriculum. Orientation requires something more immediate: the sudden clarity of knowing your actual position on a map you couldn't read before.

Maps are drawn. A business is examined, its current state, its pain points, its hidden assets, its real obstacles, and a picture is produced of where it actually is and where it could realistically go. Then he suggests the first moves. Not the full strategy. The first real steps that create momentum toward the larger direction.

People experience this as transformation because it often is. Not because they have been given new capabilities, but because they have been given clarity about the capabilities they already have and weren't using correctly.

The map was always available. He just knows how to read it.

The Two Flaws He Names Himself

Two problems are identified in how this work is done, and they are named with a candor that most consultants would avoid.

The first: he doesn't treat it as a business. He gives too much, too freely, to people who would pay more, and who, crucially, would value it more, if he asked them to. The things that change lives are not the things given away at the door. They are the things people commit to. Commitment requires investment. Investment requires a price.

By consistently underpricing what is offered, it is not generosity but a reduction of impact. The business owner who receives a free map tends to fold it in their pocket and forget it. The one who pays for the cartographer's time tends to frame it on the wall.

The second flaw: absorption occurs. One enters someone else's business and begins to feel it as one's own. Decisions are made as if one were the owner. Care about the outcome carries the intensity of a founder, not a consultant.

This is also why he is so effective. And also why it costs him. Because the consultant is not the owner. Everything will be given to the map, and the one who drew it will be a footnote, if they are remembered at all.

The Ones Who Forgot

People have been guided to reach places they couldn't have reached without the orientation given. He has watched people transform, not from his work alone, but with his work as a significant catalyst. He has seen businesses turn from confusion to direction because of a conversation, a framework, a map.

And some of those people, once they arrived, forgot the road they took to get there. More specifically, they forgot who drew the map.

He is not bitter about this. He says so clearly. And he means it, which is itself remarkable. But it is acknowledged that it

carries a particular weight: the weight of having invested deeply in someone's success and being invisible in their memory of it.

This is the tax on generosity without boundaries. Not resentment. He doesn't have much of that. But a quiet, recurring experience of invisibility in the outcomes he helped create.

What that tax teaches:

40. Underpricing your most valuable work is not generosity. It is a reduction of its impact. People commit to what they invest in. Price your work at the level of the transformation it creates.

41. Getting absorbed in someone else's business is what makes you exceptional at helping it. It is also what makes helping it cost you more than it should. The line between investment and over-extension is one worth finding.

42. Some people will forget where they started. They will forget who drew the map. This is not ingratitude. It is human nature. Build anyway. The map mattered. The road was real. The outcome is not diminished by the forgetting.

If you could change one thing about how you work with entrepreneurs, just one, what would it be?

I would charge what it's worth. From the beginning.

Why haven't you?

Because I always believed the relationship mattered more than the rate.

And now?

Now I think the relationship is actually protected by the rate. Not threatened by it.

That took a long time to learn.

Most important things do.

The Judge

* * *

*You are giving something away right now.
Something valuable. Something that cost you years
to develop.
And you are giving it for less than it is worth.
Because the relationship feels more important than
the price.*

***What if the relationship would actually be
stronger if you charged what it was worth?***

PART FOUR: CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Building Systems Instead of Products

On why the product is never the point, and what the point actually is.

A product answers a question. A system asks better questions. The difference between a business that grows and one that plateaus is almost always found here: one has a system that generates better products; the other has a product that generates nothing beyond itself.

What is the difference between building a product and building a system?

A product is an answer. A system is the process that finds the right questions.

Most businesses build products.

Most businesses stay small.

That's a strong claim.

It's an observation. Products without systems are one-time events. They solve one problem once. Systems find problems, build solutions, test them, refine them, build the next one.

The system is the body of the business.

The system is the only thing that survives when the first product fails. Which it usually does.

The Builder

There is a reason most businesses plateau.

It is not talent. It is not market conditions. It is not even funding, though funding is often cited. The reason most businesses plateau is that they are built around a product rather than a system, and products, no matter how good, have a ceiling that systems do not.

A product is a specific answer to a specific question at a specific moment. It can be excellent. It can be successful. It can generate revenue and create value and satisfy real needs. But it is, by nature, finite. The problem it solves is fixed. The market it serves has a size. The moment it was built for eventually passes.

A system is different. A system is the capacity to find new questions, build new answers, test them against reality, discard what doesn't work, and build the next version. A system doesn't have a ceiling because it isn't solving one problem. It is solving the problem of finding and solving problems.

What a System Actually Does

The formulation is precise: only a system can first diagnose a problem, then find the demand, then build the product to meet that demand, or build the market and create the product for it.

This is not a description of a process. It is a description of a living organism. An organism that responds to its environment, adapts to new conditions, generates outputs that feed back into its own development.

The businesses that lasted are the ones with this characteristic. Not the ones with the best individual product, though good products matter, but the ones built on a foundation that could generate the next product when the first one ran its course.

Negarine was a product. But the system behind it, the ability to identify a gap in the media landscape, develop a technical solution, create a market for something that didn't exist, and

execute before conditions were perfect, that system generated multiple outputs. It produced a way of operating that has been carried into every venture since.

BeautiMind is not just an app. It is a system designed to sit at the intersection of wellness and creative expression, generate insights about what users need, and build features in response to those needs. The app is the current product. The system is what makes it extensible.

AI Factory is not just a consultancy. It is a system for identifying where AI can remove friction from human work, building the specific intervention required, and multiplying the result across clients and contexts. Each engagement feeds the system. The system improves. The next engagement benefits from everything the previous ones taught.

Why Products Alone Fail

When a business is built around a product rather than a system, it becomes dependent on that product's continued relevance. If the market shifts, if a competitor arrives, if the technology changes, if the problem the product was solving gets solved a different way, the business has nothing to fall back on.

More importantly, a product-only business cannot learn. It can optimize: make the product slightly better, reduce the cost, improve the margin. But optimization is not the same as evolution. Optimization makes the existing thing more efficient. Evolution produces the next thing.

The system is what allows evolution. And evolution is what separates businesses that last from businesses that peak.

What that means for anyone building right now:

43. A product answers a question. A system asks better questions. Build the system first. The products will follow.

44. A business built around a product is only as durable as the product's relevance. A business built around a system is as durable as the system's ability to adapt. Only one of these is designed to survive change.

45. Every product you build should teach the system something. If it doesn't, if it just generates revenue and nothing else, the system is not learning. And a system that doesn't learn is just a complicated product.

What is the system behind you? Not your businesses, you, personally. What is the system?

**Find the pain. See the angle others miss.
Build the minimum version. Let the
market respond. Adjust. Build the next
version.**

And the people?

**The people are both part of the system and
the output of it. They bring problems I
haven't seen. They take solutions I've built
and make them better. They become
systems themselves.**

Creator of Creators.

That's the whole idea.

The Builder

...

*Look at what you are building right now.
Is it a product or a system?*

*If the market shifted tomorrow, if the problem you're
solving got solved a different way
would you have something left?*

PART FOUR: CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Why Human Potential Matters

On being a lighthouse, and why the ships don't always remember which light guided them.

The highest form of building is not the thing you construct. It is the person you make it possible for. And the strange thing about this kind of building is that its success is measured by the builder's disappearance from the story.

Why does human potential matter more to you than building businesses?

Because every human being, if they find their mission, can build a business, and build more builders. The multiplication is unlimited.

That's the philosophy. What's underneath it?

I believe people are stuck not because they lack ability. They lack a clear path.

Someone to show them the first few steps.

And you show them.

I try to be the light that makes the path visible. Not to walk it for them.

A lighthouse.

A lighthouse. Yes.

Lighthouses don't move with the ships.

No. They stay. And light the next ship when it comes.

The Witness observes; he has chosen a metaphor in which his role is to stay behind.

There are three ways to measure a life of building.

The first is what you built yourself, the businesses, the projects, the products, the systems. These are countable. They are visible. They have names and histories and outcomes that can be pointed to.

The second is what you built with others, the collaborations, the partnerships, the teams. These are less countable but still visible. There are people who can say: we built this together.

The third is what you made possible for others to build without you. This is the hardest to measure. The most invisible. And, in Mahdi's own account, the most important.

The Lighthouse Model

He has chosen a metaphor for his role that is worth examining carefully: a lighthouse.

A lighthouse does not travel with the ships it guides. It does not teach navigation in a classroom. It does not accompany the captain through difficult passages or take credit when the ship arrives safely. It simply stands in a fixed position, emits a consistent light, and makes the dangerous passage navigable for anyone who looks toward it.

And then the ship passes. And the lighthouse lights the next one.

This metaphor contains, embedded within it, the acceptance of a particular kind of invisibility. The ship's captain remembers the harbor. They remember the route. They remember the arrival. They may not remember which light guided them through the difficult part. That is not the lighthouse's concern. The lighthouse's concern is the quality and consistency of the light.

People have been guided to find their paths. Some have forgotten who was standing at the difficult passage, providing clarity, when they needed it most.

There is not complete peace with this. But it has been accepted as the nature of the role chosen.

The Mission That Multiplies

Underneath the lighthouse metaphor is a belief about how change actually propagates through the world.

One person cannot build everything. One system, no matter how well designed, has limits. But a person who helps ten people find their mission creates a multiplication that no single project can achieve. Those ten people build their own things. They help others find their paths. The original light, refracted through ten lives, becomes a hundred lights, then a thousand.

This is what Creator of Creators means. Not a teacher who produces students. A catalyst who produces other catalysts.

Each person who finds their mission carries a permission into their own work, permission to think at scale, to refuse the available options when they are insufficient, to look for the third path when the first two lead nowhere.

The ideas carry particular weight. The orientation, the refusal of smallness, the search for the option that doesn't yet exist, can be transmitted.

The Ships That Don't Look Back

People have been watched succeeding and presenting themselves as the sole architects of their own transformation. Because the alternative would transform the role fundamentally. The role, someone who cannot see a person at the edge of their potential without wanting to show them the way forward. The role was orientation, not construction. The map is not the journey.

But there is a cost to being the kind of person who gives orientation freely and then releases it completely. A cost that is not about credit or recognition, those are small things, but about the accumulation of invisible contributions to other people's visible successes.

Over time, this becomes a weight that accumulates. The light remains on.

Because the alternative, to give less, to hold back, to protect himself from the specific pain of the forgotten map, would make him something other than what he is. And what he is, at the most fundamental level, is someone who cannot see a person standing at the edge of their potential without wanting to show them the path down.

That is not a strategy. It is a nature.

And natures, even the costly ones, are worth understanding precisely.

What that nature requires of him:

46. The highest form of building is making the next builder possible. This is also the form of building for which you will receive the least credit. Do it anyway.

47. A lighthouse stays. It lights every ship that passes, regardless of whether the ships remember which light guided them. The measure of a lighthouse is not the gratitude of the ships. It is the number that arrived safely.

48. Every person who finds their mission can create more builders. The multiplication of human potential is the only form of scale that has no ceiling.

If no one ever remembered, if every person you helped forgot completely where they started and who was there, would you still do it?

(long pause)

Yes.

Why?

Because the light isn't for me. It's for the ship.

Even if the ship never looks back.

Especially then.

The Witness has nothing to add. Some answers are complete.

The Witness



Three chapters. The full picture of what Creator of Creators means.

A person who maps paths he underprices. Who builds systems instead of products and teaches others to do the same. Who has chosen, as his fundamental role, to be the light that makes other people's journeys possible, and has accepted, with honest rather than comfortable grace, that the ships don't always look back.

This is the fourth part of the operating system. Not the most dramatic. Not the most financially significant.

The most important.

Because everything else in this book, the markets built, the projects launched, the philosophies developed, the losses carried, was always, at its deepest level, in service of this: the belief that one person, correctly oriented, can multiply. That the real product is not the business. It is the builder.

And that the builder worth creating is the one who will eventually light paths for people Mahdi will never meet.

* * *

*You have helped someone find their path.
Maybe recently. Maybe years ago.
Maybe they remember. Maybe they don't.*

Did it matter?

*And is there someone, right now, standing at the
edge of their potential
**waiting for the kind of light only you know
how to give?***

PART FIVE

Projects That Changed the Game

*I swim in the river. There will be branches that cut me.
Rocks I must pass. Perhaps a waterfall into the unknown.
But I keep swimming. Because I am in the river. And
eventually, every river reaches the ocean.*

PART FIVE: CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Fun Time Weekly

On building something no one had built before, and what betrayal costs a builder.

Every genuinely new thing is built twice: once by the person who creates it, and once by the person who learns from watching what happened to the creator.

What was Fun Time Weekly?

Iran's first comic-strip newsletter.

Distributed in cafes. Advertising in comic form. A coloring challenge embedded inside. Guerrilla marketing for distribution. Things that had never been combined that way before.

It worked.

It made noise. Every week. Thousands of coloring samples sent back to us. Revenue coming in. Something real was being built.

And then?

A marketing agency. A contract. Trust given to the wrong place. Three months of client payments collected. None of it passed forward.

Again.

Again.

And you stopped.

Discouragement followed. Something that unique, lost to someone else's dishonesty.

It has never been replicated.

To this day. No one has done it again.

The Builder notes: what the market hasn't replicated is still a proof of concept.

The Builder

There is a specific category of loss that builders experience that is distinct from failure. Failure means the idea didn't work. This was different: the idea worked completely, and what destroyed it had nothing to do with the idea.

Fun Time Weekly was Iran's first comic-strip advertising newsletter, a weekly publication distributed through cafes using guerrilla marketing tactics, combining advertising in comic form with adult coloring challenges, generating thousands of participant submissions per week that simultaneously built a dataset and a community. It was genuinely original. It made money. It created engagement.

And it was ended not by the market, not by execution, not by a flawed concept, but by a marketing agency that collected three months of client payments and passed none of it forward.

The third time trust in the wrong person had cost him something real.

What Makes This Loss Different

There is a pattern: genuine creation emerges and a failure of trust brings it down. Three different contexts, three different projects in the record, one recurring variable: a person in a critical position who did not honor the agreement.

The Judge would say: at some point, the pattern in your partnerships becomes your responsibility to address.

The Builder would say: the ideas were right. The structures around them needed to be more resilient.

Both are correct. The ideas were right. And the structures needed to be designed for a world where not everyone in a critical position will honor their commitment. This is not cynicism. It is architecture. Good systems are built to survive the failure of individual components.

What Has Never Been Replicated

The concept has never been replicated. Not in Iran, not elsewhere in the region, not in the specific combination that

made it work, the comic advertising format, the coloring challenge, the guerrilla distribution, the dataset generation embedded in the engagement mechanism.

This is notable. Not as a comfort to the loss, but as a confirmation of the idea's quality. The market has had years to replicate it. No one has.

The thing that was built was genuinely new. What failed was not the creation. What failed was the container around it.

This distinction matters for everything that comes after. Because the ability to create genuinely new things did not leave with Fun Time Weekly. It went into the next project. And the next. And the next.

49. When a genuinely new idea fails because of a failure of trust rather than a failure of the idea, the loss is real, but the proof of concept survives. The idea was right. Build better structures around the next one.

50. Systems should be designed to survive the failure of individual components. Not because people are untrustworthy, but because resilient architecture doesn't depend on any single person's integrity.

51. If no one has replicated what you built, the idea was ahead of its time. That is not consolation. It is information. Use it.

* * *

*You built something no one has built since.
It was taken from you by the wrong trust in the
wrong place.*

***What would you build differently if you built
it again?***

***And what is stopping you from building it
again?***

PART FIVE: CHAPTERS EIGHTEEN & NINETEEN

A Paradise Called Iran and Frankfurt

On the moment a wife cries, a husband says 'I told you so,' and UNESCO takes an Iranian coloring book to the world's largest book fair.

There are projects that succeed commercially. There are projects that succeed critically. And then there are the rare ones that succeed in the place no metric measures: inside the people who encounter them. Those are the ones worth keeping.

*When was the first moment you knew A Paradise
Called Iran was something different?*

When my wife saw it. She cried.

What did you say to her?

I said: you see? It worked.

*That's not what most people say when someone cries
over their work.*

**It wasn't sadness. It was the recognition of
something real. When something created
makes the closest witness cry, not from
sentiment, but from the weight of what it
is, you know it's not just a product.**

And Frankfurt?

**UNESCO support. Germany. The world's
largest book fair. An Iranian coloring book
on the international stage.**

*With everyone who said it couldn't be done
watching.*

**I wasn't thinking about them. I was
thinking about what we'd built from a
crisis, with sold possessions, and what it
had become.**

*The Witness observes: the man who sold his
wedding ring stood in Frankfurt holding the result.*

The Witness

The coloring book began in a crisis. A betrayed partnership. A bankruptcy. A depression that offered two exits, neither of which was acceptable. The third option was a book about Iran, sixty illustrations drawn from the cultural memory of a country, designed to unlock something in the people who had carried that memory across borders and decades.

It was built with sold possessions. Pre-sold before it existed. Launched before the conditions were right. Everything the previous chapters described as the builder's method, compressed into a single project.

And when the first printed copy was placed in the hands of the person who had been there through the worst of the crisis, who had offered her own ring for the seed money, she cried.

Not from relief. From recognition. The thing they had built together, from the lowest point, was real. It was beautiful. It carried something that could not be reduced to a product category or a market segment.

He said: you see? It worked.

Three words. An entire vindication.

What Frankfurt Meant

The invitation to Frankfurt Book Fair, the world's largest, came with UNESCO support. An Iranian creator, with a book built from cultural memory, standing on an international stage and negotiating with publishers from America to the Far East about producing similar books for their own countries.

This is worth pausing on.

The people who had said it couldn't be done were not in Frankfurt. The doubts that had surrounded every stage of the project, from the initial concept to the pre-sales to the printing, were not in Frankfurt. What was in Frankfurt was the result: a book that had traveled from a crisis, through a wedding ring, to an international platform, carrying sixty images of a country that its creator loved and wanted the world to see differently.

This project still holds its proof. Not as a statement of pride, but as a statement of evidence. When the next impossible thing is proposed, when the next round of skepticism arrives, Frankfurt is in the record. The book exists. It traveled. It opened doors.

The idea was right. The builder was right. The result is permanent.

Turning Art Into Economy

The deeper achievement of A Paradise Called Iran was not the book itself. It was the proof of a concept that would become the philosophical foundation of BeautiMind:

Art can be an economy.

Not art as decoration. Not art as entertainment. Art as a mechanism for accessing human experience, memory, emotion, identity, the parts of a person that standard commercial products cannot reach, and creating genuine value in that access.

The coloring book did not just produce revenue. It produced tears. It produced memories unlocked. It produced the particular warmth of a stranger picking up an image of their homeland and feeling something they had forgotten they were still carrying.

That is not a product feature. That is a human outcome. And human outcomes, correctly structured, are the most durable form of value there is.

52. The real measure of a project is not what it earns. It is what it unlocks in the people who encounter it. Build for that. The economics will follow.

53. International validation does not create the value of what you built. It confirms it. The book was already real before Frankfurt.

Frankfurt just made the reality visible to more people.

54. Art is an economy. Emotion is a market. The intersection of cultural identity and human experience is one of the largest untapped spaces in the world. Build there.

If you could go back to the night before the Frankfurt trip, what would you tell yourself?

Nothing. I'd just want to feel that again.

The certainty that the thing you built is worth the journey it took.

The journey that started with selling a wedding ring.

And ended with standing in Germany with something we made from almost nothing.

And she was with you.

She was with me.

The Witness

. . .

*You have built something.
And someone close to you has seen it.
Not the version you explained. The actual thing.*

***What did their face tell you that their words
didn't?***

PART FIVE: CHAPTER TWENTY

BeautiMind

On turning art into economy, and why the intersection of wellness and creativity is the largest unbuilt space in the world.

The most valuable markets are not the ones that exist. They are the ones at the intersection of two things that have always belonged together but have never been given a structure that connects them.

What is BeautiMind in one sentence?

Turning art into economy.

Four words.

Four words contain the whole idea.

Say more.

Wellness apps treat the mind clinically. Art therapy exists but is expensive and inaccessible. BeautiMind puts the two together, makes creative expression the mechanism for mental wellness, and makes it available at scale.

Why hasn't someone done this?

They have, partially. The pieces exist separately. The connection hasn't been built correctly.

And you will build it correctly.

I am building it. The coloring book proved the concept. BeautiMind is the system.

The Builder

Every major project in Mahdi's history has been a proof of concept for something larger.

Negarine proved that genuinely new media formats could find audiences before the market was ready for them. Fun Time Weekly proved that advertising could be creative experience rather than interruption. A Paradise Called Iran proved that art built from cultural memory could unlock human experiences that commercial products cannot reach.

BeautiMind is where all of those proofs converge.

The insight has been available for years: art is not decoration. It is access. Access to the parts of human experience, memory, emotion, identity, the interior life for which most people have no clean way to reach, that determine far more of our wellbeing than the clinical metrics of standard wellness apps.

The Unbuilt Intersection

Mental wellness and creative expression have always belonged together. The evidence is not new: art therapy has existed for decades, with documented effectiveness. The problem is scale. Traditional art therapy is expensive, requires trained practitioners, and is inaccessible to the billions of people who carry stress, anxiety, and the quiet weight of unprocessed experience but cannot access professional support.

BeautiMind is built at that intersection. Not as a replacement for professional care, but as the space between 'nothing' and 'full therapy', the accessible, scalable, AI-powered platform that uses creative expression as the primary mechanism for mental wellness.

The AI layer is what makes it possible. Personalized recommendations based on emotional state and creative history. Content that adapts to where the user is rather than requiring the user to adapt to a fixed program. The intelligence of a skilled therapist's intuition, scaled to millions of users simultaneously.

The coloring book that made strangers cry in Frankfurt was the first version of this idea. BeautiMind is the system.

Turning Art Into Economy

The phrase he uses, turning art into economy, is not about monetizing culture. It is about recognizing that the things art does for human beings have genuine economic value that has never been correctly captured.

People pay significant amounts for therapy. For meditation apps. For wellness retreats. For anything that reliably helps them feel less anxious, more grounded, more connected to themselves. The market for these outcomes is enormous and growing.

What BeautiMind offers is a new path to those outcomes, one that is more accessible, more personal, more culturally resonant, and more intrinsically motivated than most of what currently exists. You don't use BeautiMind because you should. You use it because it genuinely feels like something you want to do.

That is a different kind of product. It is the kind that builds habits rather than breaking them. The kind that people recommend not because the marketing is good but because the experience is real.

The proof of concept is already in the world. It is sitting in cafes and homes and therapists' offices in the form of a coloring book that made a woman cry in a Frankfurt hotel room.

The system is being built.

55. The most valuable intersection is always between two things that have always belonged together but never had the right structure connecting them. Find the intersection. Build the structure.

56. Proof of concept at small scale is the most underrated asset in business. Most people

discard their proofs. Builders build systems on top of them.

57. The product that feels like something you want to do, not something you should do, is the only product that builds lasting habits. Design for want, not obligation.

* * *

There is something you do naturally that relieves other people's pain.

You have probably been doing it for free, or underpricing it, for years.

What would happen if you built a system around it?

PART FIVE: CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

AI Factory

On the pain most businesses have but cannot name, and why the cheapest solution is often the most powerful. Most businesses know something is inefficient. Very few can identify exactly where. The consultant who walks in and says 'here is precisely what is costing you, and here is the minimum intervention that fixes it' is more valuable than the one with the most impressive methodology.

What pain does AI Factory solve that others don't see?

Businesses know AI exists. They don't know where to put it. They spend on the wrong things or nothing at all.

And you show them where.

I analyze first. Precisely. Then I build the minimum intervention at the lowest cost. Not the most impressive solution. The most effective one.

Think big, start small.

Always. A business doesn't need a full AI transformation on day one. It needs one friction removed. Then the next. Then the next.

The system again.

It's always the system. The product, in this case, the AI tool, comes from understanding the system first.

The Builder

The gap in the AI consulting market is not technical. The technology exists, is increasingly accessible, and is being adopted at scale. The gap is diagnostic.

Most businesses lack a clear picture of where their actual friction points are. They know something is inefficient, in their sales process, their customer service, their content production, their data analysis. But the specific location of the friction, and the specific intervention that would remove it at the lowest cost, is not visible without analysis.

AI Factory begins with that analysis. Not a presentation of capabilities. Not a catalog of possible implementations. A precise diagnostic of where AI can remove friction in this specific business, at this specific stage, with these specific resources.

Then the minimum effective intervention. Not the most impressive solution. The most impactful one per unit of cost.

The Alchemist in Practice

The AI Factory model is the alchemist's approach applied to technology consulting: find the lead, understand its composition, apply the minimum transformation required to produce gold.

In practice, this means identifying the single process in a business where AI integration would produce the highest return at the lowest implementation cost, and building exactly that, cleanly, without overengineering.

A tourism company whose sales calls take too long. A municipality that receives thousands of citizen inquiries handled by staff who could be doing higher-value work. A media company whose content production is bottlenecked by manual processes that an AI agent could handle in a fraction of the time.

These are not hypothetical examples. They are the actual clients. The actual problems. The actual interventions.

The intervention in each case is specific. The product offered is not a strategy deck. It is a working system that removes a specific friction from a specific business on a specific day.

Turkey as the Laboratory

The choice to build AI Factory's base in Turkey is strategic at multiple levels, cultural proximity, geographic access, a bridge to larger markets, but it is also a laboratory.

Turkey's business environment is moving quickly toward AI adoption but lacks the consultancy infrastructure that more developed markets have. This is the exact condition in which a new market can be created rather than competed for. The pain is present. The solution is available. The connector, the person who can accurately diagnose the need and build the minimum effective intervention, is the missing link.

AI Factory is designed to be that link. Not the largest consultancy. The most precise one.

58. Diagnosis before prescription. The consultant who knows exactly where the friction is before proposing a solution is worth more than any amount of impressive methodology.

59. The minimum effective intervention is not the small solution. It is the precise one. Precision is more valuable than scale at the stage where scale hasn't been earned yet.

60. Build where the pain is present and the solution is available but the connector is missing. That gap is where new markets live.

* * *

You are in a business right now.

There is friction somewhere. You know where it is.

You have been managing it rather than removing it.

***What is the minimum intervention that
would actually fix it?***

PART FIVE: CHAPTERS TWENTY-TWO & TWENTY-THREE

Turkey & Canada

On the bridge you are building, and the dream you are still swimming toward.

Every builder eventually faces a geography question: where do I build from? The answer is rarely about the place itself. It is about what the place makes possible, the connections it enables, the doors it opens, the future it is positioned toward.

Why Turkey?

Cultural closeness. Geographic convenience for travel. And it can be a bridge, to Europe, to Central Asia, to markets that are harder to reach from elsewhere.

A bridge.

Not a destination. A bridge. The goal is never just Turkey. Turkey is where the crossing begins.

And Canada?

Canada represents a daughter's dream

And yours?

Canada gave me something when I needed it. A network. A vision of what could be built.

The rejections haven't stopped that.

The rejections are political. My country's situation, not mine.

Do you still believe you'll get there?

I am in the river. The river reaches the ocean. I don't need to know exactly when.

Geography is a strategic decision. But for builders who have spent their lives operating across borders, navigating between cultures, and building things in markets that weren't designed for what they were building, geography is also something more personal than strategy.

It is the answer to the question: where can I build the next version of this life?

Turkey: The Bridge

The decision to make Turkey a base of operations is not sentimental. It is architectural. Turkey sits at the intersection of cultures, Iranian, Turkish, Arabic, European, in a way that creates genuine advantages for someone whose work crosses those same boundaries.

Cultural proximity means less friction in communication, in relationship-building, in the unspoken understandings that determine whether a business conversation becomes a real partnership. Geographic proximity means the ability to move, to clients, to conferences, to opportunities, without the logistical cost that more distant bases impose.

But the most important word Mahdi uses when he talks about Turkey is bridge. Not destination. Bridge.

Turkey is where the crossing begins. The destination is larger: the international markets that BeautiMind, AI Factory, and the projects that follow are designed to reach. Turkey is the platform from which that reach is built.

This is the builder's relationship with place: not where am I from, but what does this position make possible.

Canada: The Dream That Waits

Canada is different.

Canada is not strategic. Canada represents a daughter's dream, the future he is building toward for her. The network developed there gave hope at a moment when hope was

genuinely needed. The rejections that followed, based not on qualifications but on the political situation of the country he comes from, have not extinguished that hope.

They have simply added it to the list of things that are not yet, rather than things that are not possible.

The distinction, by now, is one he has made many times. Delayed is not denied. Difficult is not impossible. The political situation of his country of origin is not a verdict on what he can build or where he can build it. It is an obstacle in the river. The river is still moving.

The River That Reaches the Ocean

One of the most complete statements of the philosophy emerged that this book contains:

One tries. One positions oneself in the river. There will be branches that cut me. Rocks I must pass. Perhaps a waterfall that forces me into an unknown world. But I keep swimming. Because I am in the river. And eventually, every river reaches the ocean.

This is not optimism in the casual sense. It is not the cheerful insistence that things will work out. It is something older and harder: the decision to remain in motion in the face of genuine uncertainty, to accept the injuries of the journey without letting them become reasons to stop, and to trust, not naively but as a matter of practiced philosophy, that a person who stays in the river will eventually arrive somewhere.

Not necessarily where they planned. Not on the schedule they imagined. But somewhere real. Somewhere that could not have been reached from the bank.

Canada is still waiting. Turkey is being built. BeatiMind is in progress. AI Factory is growing. The river is moving. The ocean is out there.

61. Geography is not about where you are from. It is about what your position makes possible. Choose your platform based on the

connections it enables, not the comfort it provides.

62. Political obstacles are not personal verdicts. The situation of the country you were born in is not the measure of what you can build. Do not inherit its ceiling.

63. Stay in the river. The branches will cut you. The rocks will require navigation. But a person in motion, in the right direction, eventually arrives. A person on the bank arrives nowhere.

The rejections from Canada, do they make you doubt the direction?

No. They make me impatient.

Different thing.

Very different. Doubt questions the destination. Impatience just wants to get there faster.

And His daughter, does she know you're building toward her dream?

She doesn't know all of it. She's a child. But she knows her father doesn't stop.

The Witness observes: Sometimes the most important audience is the one who doesn't yet have words for what they're watching.

The Witness



Seven projects. Seven different forms of the same builder operating in seven different contexts.

A newsletter that made noise and was silenced by betrayal. A coloring book that traveled from bankruptcy to Frankfurt. An app at the intersection of art and wellness. A consultancy built on diagnosis before prescription. A country chosen as a bridge. A dream deferred but not abandoned.

The through-line is not success. It is motion. The decision, repeated in every context, to remain in the river regardless of what the river contains.

And the certainty, not naive, but earned, that rivers reach oceans.

. . .

You are in a river.

You have been cut by branches.

You have navigated around rocks.

You may be approaching a waterfall.

Are you still swimming?

PART SIX

The Human Behind the Builder

*The light inside me will never go out. And it burns in them
too.*

PART SIX: CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Marriage

On the woman who is depth and durability at the same time, and what her peace costs him to protect.

Behind every builder who kept going when they should have stopped, there is almost always a person who chose to stay. Not because staying was easy, but because they believed in something the builder couldn't always believe in themselves.

Describe her. One sentence.

She has a depth of feeling, and she has never once abandoned an idea, a dream, or a person she loves.

Those two things don't usually live together.

In her they do. She feels everything deeply. And that is why the commitment is complete.

What is your most important goal for her?

Her peace. Above everything I am building, above every project, her peace is the destination.

Not her happiness.

Peace is deeper than happiness. Happiness comes and goes. Peace is what she deserves to feel in the morning before anything has happened yet.

The Witness observes: a man who describes his wife's peace as his primary destination has already answered the question of what he is building toward.

The Witness

There is a version of this story that places Mahdi at the center of everything, the projects, the philosophies, the losses, the rebuilds. That version is accurate. He is the builder. He is the architect of the operating system this book has been excavating.

But there is another version, equally true, in which none of it happens without one specific person who chose, repeatedly, to stay.

She sold her wedding ring. She said: we'll build it all again, better. She cried when she saw the finished coloring book. She traveled across borders with a child and a vision and a husband who loves the journey more than the destination. She is, by his own description, described as someone who feels deeply, emotionally present in a way that requires tenderness. And she has never left.

The Architecture of Staying

What does it take to stay beside a builder? Not a successful person. Builders are not always successful. A builder. Someone in constant motion, permanently oriented toward what doesn't yet exist, carrying losses that don't always become lessons, moving between countries and projects and visions with a certainty that is sometimes clarifying and sometimes isolating.

It takes a specific kind of strength that looks, from the outside, nothing like strength. It requires patience. It requires flexibility. It looks like the willingness to pack again, to meet new people again, to build a home in a new place and then leave it when the next river bend requires.

She has this strength. The strength exists. The same depth of feeling. The same depth of feeling that makes her easily hurt is what makes her commitment real. She doesn't stay lightly. She stays with everything she has.

Her peace is his primary goal. Not a secondary benefit of success. Not a reward waiting at the destination. The goal itself.

This is important to understand: a man whose most important goal is his wife's peace is not a man who has placed his ambition above his family. He is a man who has understood, perhaps later than ideal but fully now, that the peace of the person beside him is not separate from the life he is building. It is the life he is building.

Depth and Durability

The paradox he describes, fragile, yet unwavering, is not a contradiction. It is a precise description of a particular kind of human being.

The people who feel the most are not the weakest. They are often the most durable, because their commitment comes from a depth of feeling that shallow people cannot access. When someone who feels everything decides to stay, the staying means something different than when someone who feels little decides to stay.

The uncertainty of every move was felt. The losses were carried. The weight was known. And the staying was complete anyway.

That is not fragility. That is a form of courage that does not announce itself.

64. The person who stays beside you through the building is not a supporting character in your story. They are a co-author of it, even when their name does not appear on the cover.

65. Peace is a higher goal than happiness. Build toward the peace of the people you love. The happiness will follow.

66. Fragility and strength are not opposites. The person who feels everything and stays

anyway has a kind of durability that no amount of emotional armor can produce.

*Does she know, fully, what her presence has meant
to what you've built?*

She knows some of it.

And the rest?

The rest is in this chapter.

(long pause)

Good answer.

The Witness

. . .

There is someone beside you.

*They have stayed through things that would have
sent others away.*

You know what it cost them.

Have you told them what their staying built?

PART SIX: CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

His daughter

On the child who became a mirror, and the father who found himself in her courage.

Children do not inherit only the things we give them consciously. They absorb the orientation, the way a parent moves through difficulty, the light they keep on in the dark, the refusal to stop that they witness before they have words for it.

Tell me about a moment with her.

she offers comfort when observed. She has a large soul. She gives energy when reserves are empty.

She comforts you.

Yes. She perceives. She knows when support is needed without explanation.

You said she is a smaller version of you.

Her orientation... the tenderness is distinctive. But the courage. The way she meets difficulty. The refusal to be small.

And you didn't have that as a child.

No. I found it later. She was born with it.

Or she learned it by watching you.

(long silence)

Maybe both.

The Witness observes: sometimes the thing you spent years building in yourself, your child arrives with already.

The Witness

There is a particular disorientation that comes from a child becoming a source of steadiness.

Not because it is wrong. Children are capable of profound comfort, and parents who can receive it are fortunate. But because it reverses the expected architecture. The child is supposed to need the parent's steadiness. When the child becomes the source of steadiness, it reveals something: the child has been watching. Absorbing. Building an interior life shaped, in part, by the example of the person they watch most closely.

she has a large soul. This is how she is observed, and the description is precise. Not large in the sense of loud or expansive. Large in the sense of depth, the capacity to feel, to give, to hold space for another person's difficulty without being diminished by it.

She gives energy when he is empty. She comforts him when the weight of the one-man army is at its heaviest. She is, represents an example of patience and endurance that he himself did not have at her age.

What She Wants

She wants a room of her own.

Not a metaphor. A literal room, stable, familiar, hers. A place where she can choose her friends and keep them, where she where friendships can deepen across time rather than months. Where the friendships she builds can deepen across years rather than months.

This is the specific cost of the journey, named by the child who is living it. Not abstractly. Concretely. I want my room. I want my friends. I want to stay.

She has instead a parent who finds life in motion more than the destination. Who finds energy in motion. Who is most alive at the river bend, not the harbor.

She has accepted this. She travels with him. She gains experiences most children her age will never have. She is building a kind of worldliness and resilience that only comes

from having actually lived in different places, navigated different cultures, made friends and said goodbye. But she wants her room. And her father knows it. And he carries that knowledge alongside everything else.

The Inheritance She Didn't Choose

What she has inherited, not chosen, but absorbed, is the light. Her father describes it directly: The light will never go out. And it burns through all three. They have accepted, all three of them, that the journey is what it is, and they are in it together, and the destination is somewhere real even if no one can see it yet.

A child who can comfort her father when he is low, who carries patience and endurance as native qualities, who has the large soul that her father had to build slowly over decades, this child is not just an inheritor of the family's difficulties. She is a product of its philosophy.

The third option is not only a business strategy. It is a way of being in a family. When the world offers two exits and neither is right, you find the third one together. You sell the ring. You pack again. You get on the plane. You keep the light on.

She has watched all of this. And she has become, at an age when most children are still only receiving, someone who gives back.

That is the deepest proof of concept in this entire book.

67. Children do not inherit only what you teach them. They inherit how you move through difficulty. The orientation is transmitted before the words.

68. The cost of the journey is real and should be named honestly. A child who wants stability deserves to have that want acknowledged, not argued away by the value of the experience.

69. When your child comforts you, receive it. It means you raised someone with the capacity to give. That is not a small thing.

*What do you want for her, not the dream, the
specific thing?*

**I want her to have the room. The friends.
The stability. Without giving up the large
soul she already has.**

Can she have both?

**That's what I'm building toward. A place
where she doesn't have to choose.**

Canada.

**Wherever the river takes us. As long as she
has her room when we arrive.**

The Witness

* * *

There is someone watching you.

Not judging. Watching.

Learning from the way you move through difficulty.

*Absorbing your orientation before they have words
for it.*

What are they learning right now?

PART SIX: CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

The Cost of Ambition

On loving the journey when the people beside you are waiting for the destination.

Every builder eventually faces the same honest question: what has the building cost the people who did not choose to be builders, but chose to stay beside one?

What has your ambition cost your family?

Stability. A room. The ability to choose friends who stay.

Say it more directly.

A daughter wants a home. A partner wants to arrange their space. Journeys have been given instead.

And you love the journey.

I love the journey.

But not equally by all three.

No. Not in the same way.

*So the philosophy is being lived at others' expense.
(long pause)*

That is the most uncomfortable thing you have said in this entire book.

Is it wrong?

...No.

The Judge

This is the chapter The Judge has been waiting for. Not to punish. Not to accuse. But to name, with precision, the thing that has been present throughout this book and has not yet been stated directly:

The builder's love of the journey is real. The cost of that love, to the people beside him, is also real. And those two things exist simultaneously, without canceling each other out.

The Gap Between His Philosophy and Their Need

Mahdi says it clearly: he enjoys the journey more than the destination. The motion. The river bend. The unknown that waits around the corner. This is not performance. It is the genuine orientation of a person who has been in motion since he was twelve years old and has found his best thinking, his best building, his most alive moments, in transition.

she wants a room.

His wife wants to arrange her own furniture in a home that stays.

These are not unreasonable wants. They are among the most human wants that exist: the desire for a stable place, for friendships that can deepen over years, for the particular comfort of knowing where you will be next month.

The builder has given them something different. Extraordinary experiences. Cultural breadth. The particular resilience that comes from having actually lived in uncertainty and come through it. A father and husband who loves them with everything he has and is building, genuinely building, toward the place where they can have both, the room and the journey.

But the room is not yet there. And they are waiting.

The Burned Bridge

He named one specific regret without framing it as a lesson: burning bridges behind him as he moved. It was believed that migration requires burning... So bridges were burned. Connections. Structures. The carefully built architecture of a previous life.

And then the world changed. Wars. Political shifts. Closed borders. The burns that were supposed to be strategic became, in the new context, permanent losses. Not because the philosophy was wrong, but because the world moved in a direction no one had planned for, and the burned bridges were not available when they might have been needed.

This is not a failure of decision-making. It is the honest account of what happens when you build for one version of the future and a different version arrives.

The regret is not that he moved. It is that the moving cost more than the worst-case scenario he had planned for. and those beside have carried part of that cost.

The Light That Stays On

And yet.

He ends this part of the conversation not with apology or resolution, both of which would be premature, but with the most honest statement of what makes the cost bearable:

The light inside him will never go out. And it burns in them too.

They have not stayed because they had no choice. They have stayed because they share something with him that is harder to name than stability or comfort, a belief, transmitted through years of living this particular life together, that the river has a destination worth reaching. That the light means something. That the room is coming.

This is not certainty. It is faith. The specific faith of people who have been through enough real difficulty together that they have stopped needing guarantees and started trusting the direction.

The cost is real. The faith is also real. And between them, the family moves forward.

70. Name the cost honestly. Not to stop building, but because the people bearing the cost deserve to have it seen, not explained away by the value of the journey.

71. Your philosophy is yours. The people beside you chose to stay, not to share every aspect of your orientation. Their needs are not obstacles to your vision. They are part of what the vision should be building toward.

72. When you burn bridges, calculate for the worst case you can imagine, and then add one scenario worse than that. The world has a way of producing the scenario you didn't plan for.

If she, your wife, read this chapter, what would you want her to know?

That I see it. That I carry it. That her peace is not a side effect of what I'm building. It is what I am building toward.

And if His daughter reads it someday?

That the room is coming. And that while we were finding it, she became someone extraordinary.

You believe that.

With everything I have.

The Judge

. . .

You love the journey.

Someone beside you is waiting for the destination.

They have not left.

They are still here.

What are you building the destination into, and when does it arrive?

PART SIX: CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Regrets

On the things that didn't become lessons, and the light that stays on anyway.

Regret is not the same as failure. Failure has a lesson.

Regret has a feeling, the specific weight of knowing that a different choice was available, and that the choice you made cost someone something real.

One regret. Not a lesson. Just the thing you wish had been different.

The specific thing: burning what should have been kept. It was believed that space was being made. Infrastructure was destroyed that later became necessary. I didn't know I would need.

The bridges.

The bridges. The relationships. The carefully built connections that were left behind... and the people who carried part of that cost. This is acknowledged. (silence)

Is there more?

The stability. A way should have been found to offer more stability. I don't know exactly how. But I wish I had found the way.

The Witness

Regret, handled carefully, is one of the most useful things a builder can carry.

Not guilt: guilt loops. Not shame: shame paralyzes. Regret, when it is honest and specific and not inflated into a verdict on the whole life, is information. It says: here is the place where the cost exceeded the intention. Here is where something real was left behind that didn't need to be. Here is where a different architecture might have produced the same destination with less loss to the people traveling with you.

Mahdi's regrets are specific. Not vague. Not the generalized regret of someone performing humility. The burned bridges. The stability not given. The infrastructure dismantled in the certainty of a future that then became more complicated than planned.

These are precise. They name real things. And they sit alongside everything else this book has described, the achievements, the resilience, the philosophy, without canceling any of it.

The Light That Doesn't Go Out

He ends this depth and durability, the most personal in the entire book, not with resolution, but with something that contains more truth than resolution would:

The light inside him will never go out. And it burns in his wife and in his daughter too. All three of them, with full knowledge of the difficulty, have chosen to keep moving toward the destination that cannot yet be seen.

This is the thing that regret cannot touch.

Not the achievements. Not the projects. Not the philosophy. The specific, irreducible fact that the three people at the center of this life, a partner who never left, a child with a large soul who offers comfort, and one who finds life in motion, have chosen each other through everything this book has described. Through the forex years. Through the trading loss. Through the burned bridges. Through the countries. Through the waiting.

They are still here. All three lights, still burning.
That is not a small thing. It is, in fact, the largest thing.

What Regret Is For

Regret is not for dwelling. It is for calibrating. The specific information it contains, here is where the cost exceeded the intention, should be used in the architecture of what comes next.

More stability. Better structures around trust. Bridges maintained even when the direction changes. The room that she is waiting for, built into the plan rather than deferred indefinitely.

The destination is still unknown. The river is still moving. The light is still on.

And the builder, carrying everything this book has described, the philosophy and the losses and the faith and the weight and the love, is still swimming.

73. Regret is not a verdict on your life. It is information about where the cost exceeded the intention. Use it to calibrate what comes next.

74. The light you carry is not only yours. It is in the people who chose to stay beside you. That light, shared, sustained through difficulty, is more durable than any single achievement.

75. The room is coming. Name it specifically, put it in the plan, and build toward it with the same precision you bring to every other thing you build. The people waiting for it deserve that precision.

If you read this book ten years from now, all of it, everything, what do you hope you will have built that isn't built yet?

The room. Peace within. The destination. His daughter's room specifically. And peace for my wife. The two things I owe them. The two things the whole river is moving toward.

Not the businesses.

The businesses are the river. Those two things are the ocean.

The Witness has nothing to add. Some answers are already complete.

The Witness



Four chapters. The human behind the builder.

A woman who is depth and durability. A child with a large soul who comforts her father. The cost of the journey to the people who didn't choose to be builders but chose to stay beside one. And the regrets, specific, honest, not inflated, that sit alongside everything else without canceling it.

This is the part of the book that most builders leave out. Because it is the part that cannot be made to look like strength. It simply is what it is: the weight that is carried, the light that stays on, and the love that has survived everything this book has described.

The third option, it turns out, is not only a business philosophy.

It is a family's decision to keep moving toward a destination none of them can yet see, trusting the river, trusting each other, and keeping the light on together.

. . .

*What is the one thing, not a project, not a business
the one human thing
you are building toward right now?*

And is it in the plan?

PART SEVEN

The Third Option

You could have been a hunter. You chose to be a farmer. The bamboo is growing.

PART SEVEN: CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Why Most People Stay Stuck

On the three choices everyone has, and why most people choose the easiest one.

Most people are not stuck because they lack ability. They are stuck because available options feel safer than the unavailable one, the one that would have to be built.

Why do most people stay where they are?

Because moving costs something. And they are not sure the destination is worth the cost.

That's rational.

It is rational. It is also how people spend entire lifetimes in the wrong place.

What are the options?

Be a hunter: take what is available today, survive, move to the next thing. Be a middleman: facilitate what others build, take a margin, never create. Or be a farmer: plant something that won't grow for years, water it in the dark, wait.

Most people choose the first two.

Because the third requires believing in something that cannot yet be seen.

And if this belief is absent?

Then the bamboo is never planted. And twenty years later, the hunting continues.

The Judge

There are three ways to move through an economic life.

The first is the hunter. Take what is available today. Pursue the immediate opportunity. Capture value that already exists. This is not wrong. Hunters survive. But hunters are permanently dependent on the availability of prey. When the environment changes, when the prey moves, when the easy opportunity dries up, the hunter has nothing to return to except the search for the next immediate thing.

The second is the middleman. Connect buyers and sellers. Facilitate exchanges others have built. Take a margin. This is also not wrong. Markets need connectors. But the middleman builds nothing. They move value without creating it. And in a world where the connections they facilitate can increasingly be made directly, the middleman's position is permanently fragile.

The third is the farmer. Plant something. Water it for years without visible return. Build the soil. Wait.

The farmer's logic is the hardest to hold because it requires the longest gap between investment and return. It requires believing in the harvest before the seeds have even broken the surface. It requires the specific kind of patience that is not passive, the farmer works every day, but that produces nothing visible for an extended period that tests the belief of everyone watching.

The Bamboo

Bamboo is one of the most instructive plants in the world for anyone trying to understand the farmer's logic.

For the first several years after planting, bamboo shows almost no above-ground growth. The plant is building its root system, an extensive, complex underground architecture that will eventually support one of the fastest-growing organisms on earth. During those years, if you judge the plant by what is visible, you see nothing. You might conclude the seed was bad, the soil wrong, the farmer's effort wasted.

And then the bamboo grows. Sometimes several feet in a single day. The root system, built in the years of invisible work, is capable of supporting extraordinary speed once the conditions are right.

Bamboo was planted. For years, it was watered in circumstances that would have convinced most people the seed was dead. Bankruptcy. Betrayal. Crisis. Lost accounts. Burned bridges. Borders that closed. Again and again.

The bamboo was not dead. It was building roots.

And now it is growing.

76. Hunter, middleman, or farmer, the choice you make about how to create value determines everything about the life you build. Only one of the three compounds over time.

77. Bamboo grows underground for years before it is visible. The work you do in the dark, without evidence of progress, is not wasted. It is root-building. And roots determine everything that comes after.

78. Most people stay stuck not from lack of ability but from lack of belief in the harvest they cannot yet see. The third option always requires this belief. It cannot be built without it.

. . .

Are you a hunter, a middleman, or a farmer?

Be honest.

And if you are a farmer, what did you plant last year?

PART SEVEN: CHAPTERS TWENTY-NINE, THIRTY &
THIRTY-ONE

The Builder, The Responsibility, The Legacy

On what it means to build, what it requires, and what remains.

A builder is defined not by construction but by the orientation they carry into every room they enter: the refusal to accept the available options as final, the instinct to look for what could exist rather than what does, and the willingness to begin before the path is clear.

What is a builder?

**Someone who sees what isn't there yet.
And moves toward it.**

That's simple.

The most real things are.

What is required?

The ability to be a one-man army when necessary. The wisdom to know when to build the army instead of being it. The patience of the farmer. The precision of the engineer. And the love, the genuine love, for the thing being built.

And the responsibility?

Every light turned on creates an obligation. To keep it burning. To show others how to build their own.

Creator of Creators.

That's the whole responsibility.

The Builder

The builder mindset is not a skill set. It is an orientation, a way of moving through the world that precedes any specific capability and survives the loss of any specific resource.

Skills can be learned. Resources can be acquired. The orientation is something different: it is the fundamental stance toward reality that determines what a person sees when they look at a problem, a market, a relationship, a moment of crisis.

The builder looks at a problem and sees a project. Looks at a market and sees a pain waiting for a solution. Looks at a crisis and searches, almost before anything else, for the third option, the path that isn't offered but could be built.

This orientation cannot be taught directly. It can be demonstrated. It can be transmitted, imperfectly, through proximity to someone who has it, the way a child with a large soul absorbs the refusal to stop, or the way the people who work beside a builder gradually begin to see the same angles the builder sees.

That transmission is the responsibility.

The Responsibility of Turning on Lights

Every light that gets turned on creates an obligation.

This is not a comfortable idea. It would be simpler to build and move on, to create the thing, hand it over, and release responsibility for what happens next. But the builder who has been a lighthouse knows that the light, once on, becomes part of the navigation of everyone who passes.

If the light goes out, ships run aground.

The most honest statement of legacy is not about companies or products or financial outcomes. It is about people. The entrepreneurs oriented. The ideas catalyzed. The lights turned on in people who didn't know they had a switch.

Each of those lights is now a responsibility. Not to manage. They have their own navigation. But to have turned on well, to have given them enough clarity to maintain their own direction without permanent dependence on his.

The lighthouse that creates dependent ships has failed at its purpose. The lighthouse that creates navigators has succeeded.

The Team of Three

The question arose what he would want the future version of himself to know, the one reading this book twenty years from now, when the bamboo has grown and the destination has arrived.

The answer contains the entire philosophy:

He could have been a hunter. He could have been a middleman. He chose to plant bamboo, water it for years in the dark, and trust the harvest he couldn't yet see. And the team that made this possible was not a company or a partnership or an investment group.

It was the interior life. The partner. The child.

The smallest possible team. The most durable possible foundation. Three lights, the inner voice, the partner who said 'we'll build it all again, better,' the child with a soul larger than her years, burning together through everything this book has described.

That is the third option at its most fundamental. Not the business strategy. Not the market insight. The decision, made and remade across years of difficulty, to keep the team of three intact and moving forward together.

Money cannot catch up to that. Not because money isn't real. It is real, it is food for the business, it is the means by which the room gets built and the peace arrives. But because the thing money cannot buy is the specific texture of the life that has been built in its absence: the faith, the shared light, the particular resilience of people who have been through everything together and are still here.

The bamboo is growing.
The ocean is out there.
The team is intact.

79. The builder mindset is not a skill set. It is an orientation, a way of seeing possibility where others see limitation. It can be demonstrated and transmitted. That transmission is the responsibility.

80. The smallest durable team is built not from capability but from shared belief. Find the people who believe in the harvest before it is visible. Build with them. That team compounds.

81. Money cannot catch up to the life built in its absence, the faith, the shared light, the specific resilience of people who chose to keep going together. That is not consolation. It is the foundation everything else is built on.

*If His daughter reads this book when she is grown,
what do you want her to find in it?*

**That the builder was not perfect. But the
commitment was absolute. And the room was
always the destination.**

And the partner?

**That peace was always the destination.
Even when the journey made it look
otherwise.**

And you What is hoped to be found?

**That the light described was real. And that it
stayed on.**

*All three voices agree: some things are worth
building for twenty years.*

The Witness

FINAL CHAPTER

The Future Is Built

Not found. Not received. Not waited for. Built.

For Nafas



You have reached the end of this book.

Which means you have spent some hours inside the operating system of someone who was never satisfied with the available options. Someone who learned freedom at ten thousand feet, funded his own future at twelve, heard 'impossible' and heard a question, lost everything and sold his wedding ring to begin again, built markets from pain, watered bamboo in the dark for years without visible return, and carried, the weight of building toward peace for those beside him.

This is not a success story. It is something more honest than that.

It is the account of a person who decided, very early and very permanently, that the available world is not the only possible world. That the options on the table are not the only options. That the third option, the one that requires building rather than choosing, is always worth looking for, and usually worth attempting.

That decision has cost things that cannot be recovered. It has also produced things that cannot be taken away.

Both are true. Both matter.

The book has tried to hold them together without resolving the tension between them, because the tension is real and deserves to remain real rather than be collapsed into a tidy arc.

What This Book Was Always For

This book was never really about Mahdi Meshkani.

It was about the part of you that recognized something in these pages. The part that has felt, at various points in your own life, that the available options were not quite right. That something was missing from the menu. That a different path existed, one that wasn't offered but could, conceivably, be built.

If you felt that recognition, then this book has done what it was designed to do. Not inspire: inspiration fades. Not inform you: information is inert. But activate something that was already there: the builder orientation. The instinct to look for the third option. The specific stubbornness that refuses to accept the given options as final.

That orientation is not rare. It is latent. It exists in more people than have ever acted on it, suppressed by the very reasonable human tendency to prefer the known over the unknown, the available over the possible, the map over the uncharted territory.

This book is an argument that the uncharted territory is worth entering. Not because it is safe, it is not, but because what can be built there cannot be found anywhere else.

The Bamboo Principle

Plant something that will not be visible for years. Water it. Trust the root system being built underground. And wait, not passively, but actively, with the daily work of the farmer who knows that the harvest is coming even when nothing above the surface confirms it.

This is the summary of everything this book has tried to say about how to build a life rather than merely live one.

The hunter survives today. The middleman facilitates today. The farmer builds the root system that makes everything that comes after possible.

Be the farmer. Plant the bamboo. Water it in the dark.

The growth will come. It always comes. The question is only whether one remains present when it does.

The Team

One final thing.

Building alone has limits. Not indefinitely. Not at the level that matters.

But the team needed is not necessarily large. It is not necessarily well-funded or well-connected or recognized by any external measure of legitimacy. The team required is the one that shares the light. The people who believe in the harvest when no one else does. The ones who, when the vision is spoken, say yes.

Find those people. Or recognize they have already been found. And protect that team with the same precision brought to every other thing you build.

It is the most important thing that will ever be constructed.

Is the future built?

Not yet.

Is it being built?

Every day.

Is the light still on?

It will never go out.

The Builder, The Judge, and The Witness: in agreement, for the first time.

The Builder

. . .

Most people choose between available options. Some search for a third option.

When it doesn't exist, he builds it.

Now it is one's turn.

*Mahdi Meshkani
May, 2026*