

Find an opportunity  
within any crisis!



BE YOUR  
**BEST**

# HOW TO BOUNCE FORWARD

**Change the Way You  
Deal with Adversity**

**SAM CAWTHORN**

WILEY



In this compelling book, Sam Cawthorn shares important life lessons that emerged from his extraordinary experience of overcoming adversity. Sam's inspiring message, conveyed with his characteristic clarity, charm and humour, will empower you to overcome obstacles and savour the joy of living every day.

— **Michael J. Gelb**

Author of *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci*

Sam has an inspirational story of 'life after death'. Sam lives his message and he is the most qualified to talk about this subject. This book has practical tips and advice to overcome any obstacle in life.

— **Dr V.S. Ramachandran**

Best-selling author and one of *Time* magazine's top 100 most influential people in the world

It's not often that a man comes back from the dead and lives to tell the tale but Sam is one of those miracle men.

— **The Telegraph**



# **HOW TO BOUNCE FORWARD**





BE YOUR  
**BEST**

# HOW TO BOUNCE FORWARD

Change the Way You  
Deal with Adversity

**SAM CAWTHORN**

WILEY

First published as *Bounce Forward* in 2013 by John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd  
42 McDougall St, Milton Qld 4064

Office also in Melbourne

This edition first published in 2020 by John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd

Typeset in 12.5/14.5pt Arno Pro

© Empowering Enterprises Pty Ltd

The moral rights of the author have been asserted

ISBN: 978-0-730-38204-1



A catalogue record for this  
book is available from the  
National Library of Australia

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under the *Australian Copyright Act 1968* (for example, a fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review), no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, communicated or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission. All inquiries should be made to the publisher at the address above.

Cover design by Wiley

Printed in Singapore by Markono Print Media Pte Ltd

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

### **Disclaimer**

The material in this publication is of the nature of general comment only, and does not represent professional advice. It is not intended to provide specific guidance for particular circumstances and it should not be relied on as the basis for any decision to take action or not take action on any matter which it covers. Readers should obtain professional advice where appropriate, before making any such decision. To the maximum extent permitted by law, the author and publisher disclaim all responsibility and liability to any person, arising directly or indirectly from any person taking or not taking action based on the information in this publication.



# Contents

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| <i>Preface</i>  | <i>ix</i>   |
| <i>About the author</i>                                     | <i>xvii</i> |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>                                     | <i>xix</i>  |
| <i>Introduction: The Bounce Cycle</i>                       | <i>xxi</i>  |
| <b>Part I: The bounce principles</b>                        | <b>1</b>    |
| <b>1</b> Principle 1: Crisis creates opportunity            | 3           |
| <b>2</b> Principle 2: Proximity is power                    | 45          |
| <b>3</b> Principle 3: Leveraging positivity to fuel success | 79          |
| <b>4</b> Principle 4: Bounce forward not back               | 113         |
| <b>Part II: The 12-day challenge</b>                        | <b>143</b>  |
| <b>5</b> The 12-day crisis turnaround challenge             | 145         |
| <i>Conclusion</i>   | <i>187</i>  |
| <i>Afterword</i>  | <i>191</i>  |



# Preface

There are pivotal, game-changing moments in every person's life — the Greeks called them 'kairos moments'. For some those moments are so significant that they immediately fracture that life, ripping it forever into two parts — everything before that moment, and everything that came after.

My kairos moment occurred just after 3 pm on 3 October 2006. The day had started normally enough. I woke up early as usual, assisted by my eldest daughter Emelia, who was three and a half at the time. As the house stirred into life Milly (as we affectionately call her) left my wife, Kate, and me and went to wake up her little sister, Ebony, who was just 15 months old. The girls watched some cartoons as Kate prepared their breakfast and I got ready for work. It has been a Cawthorn family tradition that we all sit down at the table together, eat our breakfast and discuss our plans for the day. After breakfast the girls and I put on some loud music and danced around the living room. I would throw each one up in the air and catch her as she squealed and giggled with delight. I thought to myself how lucky I was and what a great way it was to start the day.

At the time I was working as an industry adviser to young people's trends and careers, like a youth futurist, an initiative funded by the Australian Federal Government. I'd been in the

job only a few months but I loved it. I was 26 years old; I had a big job, good salary and great company car, plus I had a huge amount of freedom to work how I pleased. Essentially, my job was to follow cultural and economic trends so I could help predict how those trends would affect 13- to 19-year-olds entering the workforce. I would then liaise with employers and government to make sure young people were encouraged to move into industries and professions where there were job opportunities. I also watched for signs of market saturation so I could pass information back to the government, which would alert them to any likely reduction in new jobs in a particular industry or field.

I had a young family and a full-time job that sometimes required that I drive up to 1500 kilometres a week. I was also involved in my local community, running a youth group, and owned my own music studio where I taught hip-hop and singing. Life was *definitely* hectic.

As I climbed into my car — a white Holden V8 Statesman — Kate and the girls stood at the door to wave me off. There was a little L-shaped dent on the roof of the Statesman just above the driver's seat and Milly always thought it looked like a love heart. We felt it was a good omen of love and protection as I set off to work each day.

I had a couple of meetings and a lunch appointment in Burnie, about 150 kilometres from our home in Launceston in Tasmania, which is where I grew up and have spent most of my life. It was a little after three in the afternoon when I said goodbye to my lunch companions. I remember shaking hands, little knowing that this was the last right-handed handshake I would ever share. I began the journey home on the Bass Highway and about 10 minutes out of Devonport, a city half an hour from Burnie, near Parramatta Creek, I fell asleep at the wheel.

In a semi-conscious state I drifted across the road into the oncoming traffic. The driver of the truck I collided with thought I was trying to commit suicide. I wasn't. I was just exhausted from trying to keep so many balls in the air, and something had to give. What gave was the side of my Holden V8 Statesman sedan.

The first driver had successfully swerved out of the way, but the driver of the semi-trailer behind was not so lucky. Police estimated that upon impact, the truck driver and I were travelling at a combined speed of around 206 kilometres per hour. The first impact spun me around several times and ripped open the entire right side panel of the car. Within a fraction of a second another car, which had been travelling behind the truck, ploughed straight into me — and I mean straight *into* me. Without the side panel there was no protection whatsoever. I can still hear the terrible impact of that final collision.

That moment changed my life forever.

When the roaring of twisted metal finally came to a stop, there was absolute silence — at least I couldn't hear anything. I could see the damage but somehow it didn't register in my mind as being real. Smoke billowed from the carnage and I remember looking down at myself; I was a mess. I could see my bones and flesh exposed and there was blood everywhere. My right arm had been obliterated, the elbow was completely gone and my hand was attached to my arm by a thin thread, my right leg was completely shattered, and the pain was like nothing I've ever experienced!

Despite the late afternoon sun, I was very cold. 'HELP!' I yelled. 'GOD SAVE ME!' Every ounce of energy within me was trying to coordinate my breathing and my yelling. 'HELP, GOD, GOD, PLEEEASE HELP ME, DON'T LET ME DIE TODAY. PLEASE TELL MY WIFE I LOVE HER.'

When Kate was told of the accident a friend rushed her to the hospital. Unfortunately there was only one way to get there and it meant driving past the scene of the accident. One of the worst moments of her life was recognising the little L-shaped love heart on the roof of the mangled Holden, and wondering how anyone could have escaped alive.

In truth, it was initially thought I didn't escape alive. Six months after the accident I was in a wheelchair having dinner at a restaurant and I was approached by a guy who wanted to know if I was the man from the Parramatta Creek accident. It turned out he was a coroner's taxi driver. He was informed that there had been a really bad accident on the Bass Highway and he was probably going to be needed to collect a body — mine! Thankfully the paramedics successfully resuscitated me when they arrived on the scene.

My right arm was destroyed, I broke six ribs, lacerated my liver, punctured my kidney and both lungs collapsed. I dislocated my hip; my entire quad muscle was ripped from the bone on my right leg. My cruciate ligaments had torn and I shattered my femur, knee cap, fibula and ankle and lost the nail on my right big toe. I was devastated at having lost my big toenail!

Yet as far as I am concerned I was incredibly lucky. First, no-one else was badly injured. Second, I was alive. My accident certainly changed my life, but as the Greek philosopher Epictetus once said, 'It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.'

So often people talk about 'bouncing back' after disaster, crisis, tough times or difficulty, but my body was broken. There was no way I could ever bounce back to the old Sam Cawthorn. It wasn't physically possible. I began to obsess about this idea and started to research resilience and how others had overcome incredible obstacles to pull off amazing comebacks.

In countless cases individuals and businesses used great challenges to forge ahead and create a better life or create even greater success.

Nothing in life stays the same for long. Change and challenge are constant, although the speed and complexity of change now means we can expect upheaval every few years. World economies are still reeling from the global financial crisis that began in 2007–08. Business is getting tougher and tougher and yet there are still success stories everywhere you look. Clearly some people have already instinctively tapped into the power of bounce and learned how to use the inevitable difficulties of life as a springboard to something better.

No-one is immune to the challenges of life. Bad stuff happens to everyone regardless of wealth, background or education. For some their crisis will be professional — losing a major client, being made redundant or having to adapt to a changing market during an economic downturn. For others their crisis may be personal — the breakdown of a relationship, serious illness or, like me, physical injury. Pain is inevitable; it is part of being alive. But misery is optional. I knew I had a choice: I could give up, listen to the doctors who told me I'd never walk again, and wallow in misery and bitterness. Or I could accept that things had changed and use the crisis to reinvent myself and get better. I chose the latter. The challenges we face in life are not meant to be some sort of punishment; rather, they are an invitation to change — and an opportunity to create something even better than before.

Since my accident I have experienced excruciating pain but I have also become stronger, happier and more determined because of it. I have come to understand the transformational power of acceptance and have developed a process to help businesses, organisations, teams and individuals to go far beyond 'recovery' or 'bouncing back' to create revolutionary change by *bouncing forward* into greater joy and success.

Too often, when crisis knocks on our door — whether professional or personal — either we ignore it, or we use all our energy and resources to try to go back to the way things were. We scramble to fix the problem so either it goes away or life somehow goes back to the way it used to be.

I believe that the reason crisis sometimes destroys people or breaks their spirit is that they are fixated on what used to be. All their efforts are directed toward trying to recapture that experience or way of life. But sometimes there really is no going back. There is, however, *always* a way forward. I'm not promising that it's going to be easy, but this book is your road map through crisis so you can bounce forward into a better life.

Bounce consists of four crucial principles:

- » Crisis creates opportunity.
- » Proximity is power.
- » Leverage positivity to fuel success.
- » Bounce forward not back.

If you want to successfully navigate crisis and difficulty so you can use adversity to achieve even greater success, then you must understand these principles. Each of the four principles, as outlined in chapters 1–4, is facilitated by four habits. These habits may not come naturally to you, but if you focus on fostering each one in your daily life you will master crisis and learn how to consistently benefit from difficulty. Finally, once I've explained all four principles, in chapter 5 you will be invited to take the 12-day crisis turnaround challenge. This process will help get you into the right frame of mind to take action, to advance quickly through your current challenge by activating the power of the bounce principles.

Although I will focus mainly on bouncing forward in business and your career following redundancy or a career setback,



bounce is as applicable to a personal crisis as it is to a professional one. You will learn about cutting-edge science and the research that underpins the bounce forward process, and how to use it to make real, long-lasting positive change — whether the problem you face is a minor irritant or a disaster so huge it has recalibrated your life forever.

My crisis demanded full recalibration. I lost my arm and I still have several physical limitations; I can't, for example, bend my right leg. But I honestly wouldn't change a thing. Everything that has happened in my life, including my accident, has made me the person I am today. In 2008, two years after my accident, Kate and I welcomed our son, Jacob, into our family and I now live a life I couldn't even have dreamed of before my accident.

And if I can do it, so can you. Remember, pain is inevitable — misery is optional. Forget about trying to recover what used to be. Instead embrace the crisis and use it to bounce forward into a life that is bigger, better and brighter than ever before.



# About the author

In 2006 Sam Cawthorn's life changed forever when he was involved in a major car accident which left him with an amputated right arm and permanent disability in his right leg. In a blistering demonstration of the process and mindset laid out in this book, Sam *Bounced Forward*, and went on to become one of the world's most in demand professional speakers.

Today, Sam is a successful entrepreneur. He is the CEO and founder of Speakers Institute, a training company that teaches the art and craft of professional speaking so others with powerful stories to share can master communication for maximum influence. The not-for-profit Speakers Tribe initiative then connects that community of speakers so they can change the world one message at a time.

Sam is the author of seven books including two international bestsellers — *Bounce Forward* and *Storyshowing*. He has been voted Young Australian of the Year and Edupreneur of the Year. The Edupreneur Awards are all about recognising and celebrating the positive contributions Edupreneurs make to the knowledge, skills and competencies of their market.

'After my near-death experience people wanted to hear my story to feel inspired. I've now reached over 170 million people

in over 95 countries via my speaking engagements, social media and books.’ — Sam Cawthorn, Speakers Institute Founder & CEO.

Sam is married to Kate, they have three children and currently live in Sydney, Australia.

Connect with Sam:

- > Websites: [www.samcawthorn.com](http://www.samcawthorn.com) and [www.speakersinstitute.com](http://www.speakersinstitute.com)
- > Facebook, Skype & LinkedIn: Sam Cawthorn
- > Twitter: [www.twitter.com/samcawthorn](http://www.twitter.com/samcawthorn)
- > Blog: [www.samcawthorn.com/blog](http://www.samcawthorn.com/blog)

# Acknowledgements

This book was written in honour of my brother David. You inspire me every day!

I would like to thank Karen McCreadie who was the backbone in putting this book together. My awesome wife Kate and my three children, Emelia, Ebony and Jacob. Lucy Raymond and the Wiley team who believed in me. Darren Hill for the inspiration of Bouncing Forward. My speaker friends who were instrumental in the journey. My father Peter, who inspires me every day of my life. I would also like to thank God, the reason why I live a passionate life.



# Introduction:

# **The Bounce Cycle**

The ancient Greeks had two words for time: *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos*, the source of the word ‘chronological’, refers to ordered or sequential time. *Kairos* refers to an indeterminate moment within time when something special happens. It’s an interesting and fine distinction. For most of us, day-to-day life is just the passage of time, but then there are moments, days, weeks, months or even years that stand out as especially significant. This sort of time changes lives.

Change of any sort can be uncomfortable, confronting and painful. For the most part we automatically assume that change is difficult and should be avoided wherever possible. And yet who said that change was bad? Change is like the weather: it’s inevitable and in itself is neither good nor bad— it just is. Rain is good for the farmer who needs it to grow his crop. If, however, you’ve saved all year to take your family to Disney World and it rains every day, then the same condition is far from welcome. Interestingly, *kairos* also means weather in both ancient and modern Greek.

Change for me came when I was fitted with the most advanced bionic arm in the world. Learning how to control the bionics in my arm has been a difficult change, yet looking back I realise that my bionic arm can do more and is stronger than my real arm ever was.

Our attitude to change essentially comes down to who initiates the change or how it is initiated. If we initiate the change, then it can be seen as positive and exciting. If change is thrust upon us, then it is rarely welcomed and seldom viewed optimistically. My kairos moment was most definitely thrust upon me; it started when my car smashed into a truck and ended several months later when I realised that not only was it not possible for me to go back to my old life, but that I genuinely didn't want to.

I didn't realise it at the time, but I'd entered the bounce cycle.

## **Crisis**

The first stage of the bounce cycle is the kairos moment of crisis — an event or situation that either occurs in an instant or creeps up on you over time. Either way you will know when you reach the crisis point as it will be seared into your consciousness forever.

In business these moments can take a multitude of different forms. Perhaps you've lost a major client or you've been informed of legislative change that will require massive reinvestment. Perhaps you've lost a key member of staff or your market share has dropped dramatically. Perhaps your business has received negative press and this has negatively affected sales. Whatever the cause, you are in crisis.

Immediately after my accident my body went into shock, but I wasn't really sure how bad it was because I couldn't move. Also,