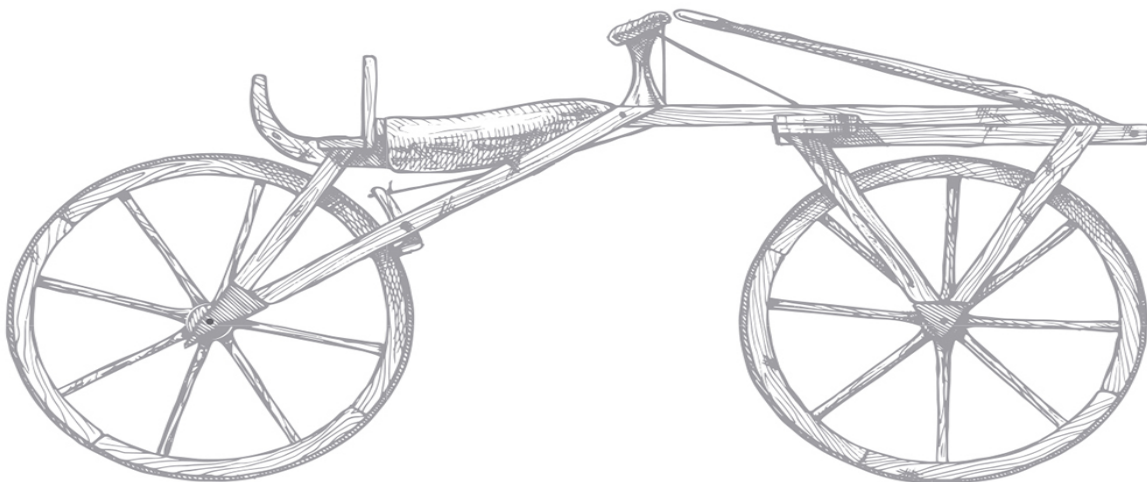


# THE INVENTION OF THE BICYCLE

RESPOND –AND **SERVE**– FROM ADVERSITY

**Jordi Nadal**



**How to drive oneself from the crises**

# **The Invention of the Bicycle**

Respond —and serve— from adversity

**Jordi Nadal**

Translated by Marius Palmer-Brown



Original title: *La invención de la bicicleta*, originally published in Spanish, in 2020, by Plataforma Editorial.

First english edition: December, 2020

© Jordi Nadal, 2020

© Translated by Marius Palmer-Brown, 2020

© Current edition: Plataforma Editorial, 2020

Plataforma Editorial

c/ Muntaner, 269, entlo. 1a - 08021 Barcelona

Tel.: (+34) 93 494 79 99

[www.plataformaeditorial.com](http://www.plataformaeditorial.com)

[info@plataformaeditorial.com](mailto:info@plataformaeditorial.com)

ISBN: 978-84-18582-21-9

Cover design and Photocomposition:

Grafime

*All rights reserved. Copying of this work or any part of it by any means or procedure, including reprography and computer processing, and distribution of copies by public lending, without the written consent of the copyright holders, is strictly prohibited and subject to penalties under the law. If you need to photocopy or otherwise reproduce any part of this work, please write to the publisher or to CEDRO ([www.cedro.org](http://www.cedro.org).)*

# Contents

## *Presentation*

1. The meaning of the authentic
2. Starting over is always possible
3. My life depends (quite a lot) on me
4. Crisis as an unavoidable setback, as part of life (there is no rose without thorns)
5. Make it useful, make it worthwhile
6. Effective leadership vs. affective leadership
7. Do we do it the easy or hard way?
8. Analyze the data and choose your path
9. Unity in adversity
10. How do we do this? With craftsmanship and innovation
11. *Coda*: Who said it was going to be easy?  
Bonus track, as a kind of cinematic postscript  
Invictus

## *Acknowledgements*

# Presentation

“Nothing in life is to be feared,  
it is only to be understood.”

MARIE CURIE

“You don’t have to suffer to learn.  
But, if you don’t learn from suffering,  
about which you have no control, your life loses meaning.”

VIKTOR FRANKL

“Getting old can be worth it  
if it gives us time to forge a soul.”

URSULA K. LE GUIN

## **Being alive is change, isn’t it?**

And, like it or not, this reality provides our lives with an inherent challenge. Only dead fish go with the flow.

Whether or not we feel like it, we have to live, and life will be better and easier (or less difficult) if we enjoy it or approach it with courage. When our personal or collective reality is tough, we have the option of complaining, but we cannot give up living; the alternative of “stepping down” from life is not good. Above all because it is a train that, once missed, cannot be reboarded.

Our lives can change suddenly, and that is an intrinsic condition of life. The Covid-19 crisis has made it clear that

we are faced with the greatest challenge we have ever experienced as a society.

In 2020 we began living through a perfect storm. A tsunami, an earthquake and a cyclone all came together. We will have to prepare ourselves over and over again when faced with each new situation that appears, without taking it too lightly but neither getting unduly afraid.

An excess of fear paralyzes, so it's worth rationing the strength of this alarm and, above all, being at the helm to get round the difficulties as best as possible.

When the unforeseen happens, and things change and life moves in an unexpected direction, then ... what do we do?

There is a key, only one. And —however easy or difficult—it is always the best: to take action. Taking action is the key to almost everything in life. Facing up to reality, always keeping in mind that success means applying resilience to every failure that arises.

Taking action is deciding to jump fences.

Taking action is the attitude of those who trust themselves to find solutions to each and every challenge we come up against.

In moments like the ones we are living through, when we are beginning to clearly notice the impact of these changes, it's time to go down to the bullring, grab the bull by its horns and lay down our cards. To defend our life and our dignity. To defend ourselves and our loved ones.

We live in an accelerated digital reality, of massive social, financial, and ecological movements; we are faced with a crisis we couldn't have foreseen and for which we have no option but to get through it —sooner or later and with

wounds of greater or lesser importance—demonstrating the capacity we have to take it on board, if not to resolve it.

Now is the moment to bring out the best in ourselves in order to stay on course, because the last thing we should do is to faint at the difficulties thrown up by this historical moment in which we find ourselves. We need to grow in the face of adversity. “Like the bull I grow with the punishment,” said Miguel Hernández, as good poets are used to intuitively having the answers.

This crisis, as a clear consequence of the pandemic brought about by Covid-19, cuts through our lives, and challenges us in the biological, in the social and in the financial sense —on all fronts.

This is the only life we have, and for this reason we should take care of it, as in this way we also take care of those around us. “We have to love life, and not only our own,” stated the great teacher and thinker, Emilio Lledó.

Living is not something remote from the reality of resolving everyday issues, and in this sense, we cannot break away from our means of earning a living —whether we are employees (in a private company or in the public sector) or the owners of a company; we should all have an income —because through our work and from our work we live.

We find ourselves amid a situation that shows us we all have to fight and defend ourselves against what surrounds us while we extract a knowledge of life, without getting unduly frightened, glimpsing the best options when confronted with the uncertain future that lies ahead.

A crisis in which, far from hiding beneath our shell, we should learn to attach a new meaning to life, with optimism, just as Albert Camus did. Though facing a life of endless adversity, he said “we have to contribute to happiness and joy, because this universe is unhappy.”

This is not the first time that a crisis has hit us hard. Neither is it the first great hardship we have had to get through in fair shape. Nevertheless, this certainly is the largest we have experienced, by far, for most of those who live in what we call the West.

At the end of 2007 I set up Plataforma Editorial, right at the start of a complex financial moment, which ran from 2008 to 2013. I decided to risk making a dream come true without knowing that a crisis was beginning (not insignificant, though incomparable to the current one).

I learned then —like many others —that we have to look ahead, towards the future, and do so without too much fear and always with optimism. We should recall Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who assured us that “bravery is not the absence of fear, but rather the conviction that there is something more important than fear.”

I think that we did it because we knew (or sensed) that it’s worth fighting for what defines and shapes us. To fight for what one loves.

With the conviction that we all wish to live, and that we should flee from all our fears (every keen reader of that masterpiece called Asterix and the Normans understands this), I decided not to belong to that group of people who, over prudently, do not dare to take the protective plastic off