

FOREWORD BY  
**SHERYL SANDBERG**

EPILOGUE BY  
**RICHARD BRANSON**

# WEconomy



You can find meaning,  
make a living, and change the world

**CRAIG KIELBURGER   HOLLY BRANSON   MARC KIELBURGER**



## PRAISE FOR *WEconomy*

“As global citizens, it is important that we all decide how we can help build a better future for everyone who inhabits this planet. A planet we must come to realize we all share. In the *WEconomy*, Holly, Marc and Craig share not only entertaining and insightful stories, but top tips on how, both personally and professionally, we can work together to achieve just that.”

—Scooter Braun, entrepreneur and founder of SB Projects

“As people continue to look for meaningful ways they can uniquely contribute personally and professionally to this world, *WEconomy* illustrates ways we can all do good and do well.”

—Pete Carroll, head coach of the Seattle Seahawks, NFL champions

“Through fun, inspiring, and revealing stories the authors not only bring the *WEconomy* to life, but bring the reader along for the ride. As the most connected generation in history, never before has there been such an incredible opportunity to make the ‘WE’ a powerful movement for positive change.”

—Ed Sheeran, Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter

Cover image and design: Tether

Copyright © 2018 by Craig Kielburger, Marc Kielburger, and Holly Branson. All rights reserved.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

Edited by Katie Hewitt and Jackie McQuillan.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 646-8600, or on the web at [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com). Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at [www.wiley.com/go/permissions](http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions).

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising herefrom.

For general information about our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com).

***Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:***

Names: Kielburger, Craig, author. | Branson, Holly, author. | Kielburger, Marc, author.

Title: WEconomy : you can find meaning, make a living and change the world / by Craig Kielburger, Holly Branson and Marc Kielburger.

Description: Hoboken, New Jersey : John Wiley & Sons, Inc., [2018] | Includes bibliographical references and index. |

Identifiers: LCCN 2017051206 (print) | LCCN 2017056888 (ebook) | ISBN 9781119447832 (pdf) | ISBN 9781119447818 (epub) | ISBN 9781119447795 (cloth)

Subjects: LCSH: Social responsibility of business. | Social entrepreneurship.

Classification: LCC HD60 (ebook) | LCC HD60 .K4845 2018 (print) | DDC 658.4/08--dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017051206>

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

# WEconomy

You can find meaning,  
make a living, and change the world

**CRAIG KIELBURGER   HOLLY BRANSON   MARC KIELBURGER**

**WILEY**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Dear Reader,*

*Did you jump out of bed this morning excited to go to work?*

*At your office, do you feel valued as a human being?*

*Is your business making money and changing the world?*

*If yes, congrats. You're at the vanguard of the WEconomy, where companies work for the greater good and individuals can give back through their daily habits, as both workers and consumers.*

*If no, don't worry. The WEconomy is just emerging. There's still time to carve out your place in the movement that is changing the face of business. You can help the WEconomy make our world better.*

# Welcome to the WEconomy

ix Foreword by Sheryl Sandberg

## Part One

### **What:**

An introduction to the WEconomy: What is it? Why now? How is it changing business for good?

### **Who:**

The authors share their personal journeys and lessons on business, charity, and social enterprise—learned the hard way.

- 1** Introduction: Welcome to the WEconomy  
*Craig Kielburger, Holly Branson, and Marc Kielburger*
- 17** Chapter 1: Growing Up Branson  
*Holly Branson*
- 31** Chapter 2: Breakfast and a Wake-Up Call  
*Craig Kielburger*
- 47** Chapter 3: From the Slaughterhouse to Social Enterprise  
*Marc Kielburger*

## Part Two

### **Why?**

Because successful businesses now work for the greater good, and purpose is profitable. The stories that follow are proof that companies are thriving by tackling social issues with business plans. It's "Business with Benefits"—for people, planet, and profit.

You may sit with the investment or marketing department and think that changing the world is the unenviable problem of the Corporate Social Responsibility team. In fact, everyone has the chance to push companies to scale social change, and to find more meaning at work.

- 63** Introduction: Purpose at Work: Why Business Should Get Involved  
*Craig Kielburger, Holly Branson, and Marc Kielburger*
- 71** Chapter 4: Purpose 101  
*Holly Branson*
- 85** Chapter 5: Inspire Brand Fanatics  
*Craig Kielburger*
- 97** Chapter 6: Build New Products  
*Marc Kielburger*
- 111** Chapter 7: Reinventing Your Work Life  
*Holly Branson*
- 123** Chapter 8: Differentiate Products  
*Craig Kielburger*
- 135** Chapter 9: Sweat the Big and Small Stuff  
*Holly Branson*
- 149** Chapter 10: Unlock New Customers  
*Marc Kielburger*
- 159** Chapter 11: The New World of Impact Investing  
*Holly Branson*
- 171** Chapter 12: Open New Markets  
*Craig Kielburger*
- 183** Chapter 13: People Are Your Purpose  
*Holly Branson*

## Part Three

### *How:*

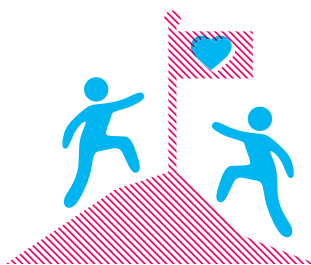
A step-by-step guide to embedding purpose right at the heart of everything you do, both as an individual and as a business. Find a cause that suits you, build a plan, perfect your pitch, and much more.

This is everything you want to know about getting involved in the WEconomy. This is your roadmap for doing good and getting paid for it.



<b>199</b>	Introduction: If You Build It, They May Not Come: How to Get Purpose Right <i>Craig Kielburger, Holly Branson, and Marc Kielburger</i>
<b>207</b>	Chapter 14: Be a Purpose-Led “Learning Organization” <i>Holly Branson</i>
<b>223</b>	Chapter 15: WEconomy Impact Engineering, Step One: Find Your Cause <i>Craig Kielburger</i>
<b>241</b>	Chapter 16: WEconomy Impact Engineering, Step Two: Build a 360 Action Plan <i>Marc Kielburger</i>
<b>257</b>	Chapter 17: WEconomy Impact Engineering, Step Three: Engage Your Networks <i>Craig Kielburger</i>
<b>271</b>	Chapter 18: It’s Time to Get Your Pitch On . . . <i>Holly Branson</i>
<b>289</b>	Chapter 19: Change without Cash <i>Marc Kielburger</i>
<b>301</b>	Chapter 20: Your WEconomy Assignment: Build a 100-Year Purpose Plan <i>Holly Branson</i>
<b>313</b>	Conclusion: The WEconomy Needs You <i>Craig Kielburger, Holly Branson, and Marc Kielburger</i>
<b>317</b>	Epilogue by Sir Richard Branson
<b>320</b>	Appendix
<b>322</b>	Acknowledgments

Endnotes for this book can be found at [wiley.com/go/weconomy](http://wiley.com/go/weconomy).



# FOREWORD

By Sheryl Sandberg

**It was my first day on the ground in India. The year was 1992 and I had graduated from college a few months before. I was working as a research assistant at the World Bank and this was my first chance to leave the air-conditioned Washington, D.C., headquarters and see what development work actually was like in the field.**

I remember the heat hitting me as my colleague Dr. Salim Habayeb and I walked out of the airport. We headed toward our cab and before we made it to the door, a small boy came up to us, grabbed my leg, lifted up his shirt to show the burn marks covering his chest, and then held out his hand to beg for money. After freezing for a minute in shock, I started to reach for my purse. Salim, who had worked in public health for many years, kindly put his hand over mine and said a firm “no.” He explained that someone had likely burned this boy to enable him to beg more effectively, and if I gave him money, they would do it again. We got into the cab and drove away, tears pouring down my face.

Over the next few weeks as Salim and our colleague Maria Donoso Clark and I traveled throughout India working on a program to treat leprosy, I had many such learning moments. I met patients who had been cast out of their homes and families due to their disease. I saw acts of despair, acts of kindness, and acts of greatness—all in an environment that nothing in my childhood in Miami could have prepared me for. Most

importantly, I saw how dedicated people could make a real difference. During the days, I worked harder than I ever had in my life trying to do my small part to help. At night, I cried myself to sleep.

In the decades since my first trip to India, a lot has improved, even though the gap between rich and poor has increased dramatically and deep poverty remains. India's economy has developed. Leprosy has gone from afflicting more than 3 million people to fewer than 100,000. Each time I visit I am amazed at the vibrancy of the Indian people and economy and the improvements to health they have achieved.

I was last in India three years ago. I was there not as a 22-year-old in her first job but on an official visit as the chief operating officer of Facebook. More importantly, I was visiting as a mother—on this trip, Craig Kielburger and my nine-year-old son and six-year-old daughter were with me. I want my children to grow up understanding what I did not learn until I was 22—that the luck of birth determines so much of our lives and that those of us with opportunity also have responsibility. And I want my children to see how even when problems might seem overwhelmingly large, individuals can make a difference.

Our time with Craig in Rajasthan showed all of this so clearly. We visited a one-room village school and helped build a wall for a new school that will provide multiple classrooms so more children will have the opportunity to learn. We helped families who had relied on polluted water sources carry clean water from their new community well to their homes. We attended a Lean In Circle meeting with women who are participating in a financial literacy program that has helped them save money and send their daughters to school for the first time. All of this is happening because WE Charity, a program started by Craig when he was just 12 years old, is working in these communities—and making a huge difference.

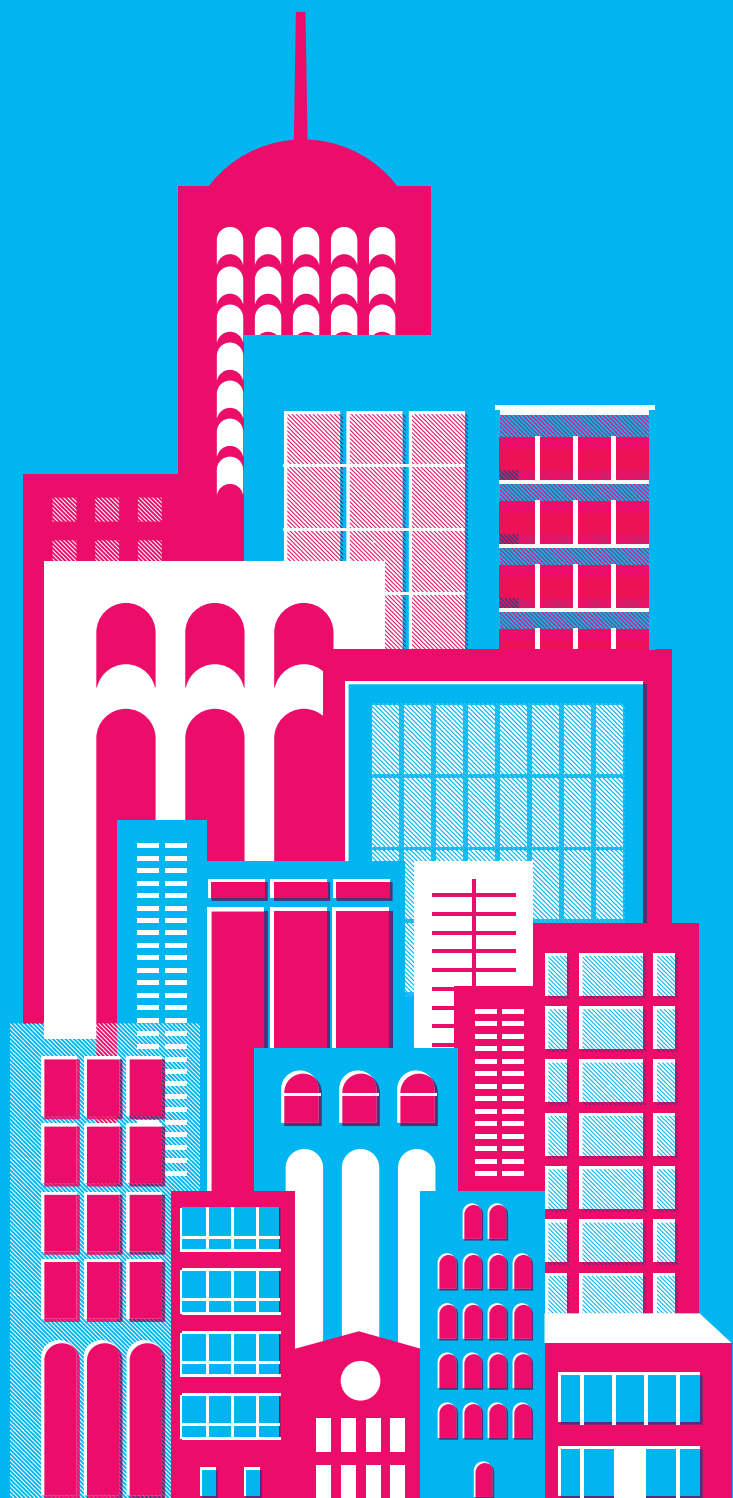
This book is about how we can all work to improve the lives of others. The problems in the world can seem overwhelming—5.6 million children under the age of five die each year of preventable or curable diseases,<sup>1</sup> more than 700 million people still lack access to clean water,<sup>2</sup> and 46 million people live in slavery.<sup>3</sup> But even a single person can make a huge difference, as each of the authors of this book shows us every day. There are no simple solutions, but there are solutions that can

be created and deployed. Companies, nonprofits, governments, and hybrid social enterprises each have their own role to play—and the authors of this book have been leaders in all these realms. As Holly Branson, Marc Kielburger, and Craig Kielburger share their stories and insights in these pages, the interwoven nature of the “WEconomy” is brought to light for all of us. As you start out on your own journey, ask yourself: What kind of world do you want to live in? Dream big—dream of a world that is just and fair, where all have equal opportunity to live healthy, happy, and productive lives. How much will you do to create that better world? Whatever your path may be—in business, in government, in a nonprofit—how will you contribute to the lives of others? What legacy will you leave for your children and for all children?

At Facebook, we have posters on the walls that inspire us, such as Fortune Favors the Bold or Done Is Better Than Perfect. I have two favorites: Nothing at Facebook Is Someone Else’s Problem and What Would You Do If You Weren’t Afraid? What would you do if you believed that all of the problems out there could be solved and that it was your responsibility to solve them? What would you do if you weren’t afraid?

Please ask yourself those questions and decide what you’d do. And then go do it.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cheryl Sandberg".



## PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

# WELCOME TO THE WECONOMY

By Craig Kielburger, Holly Branson, and Marc Kielburger

*In the WEconomy, you can make money and change the world — you can make money by changing the world. It's that simple.*

The WEconomy is an emerging economic system driven by purpose and profit. It reflects the interconnected nature of our economy, environment, and social welfare so that business works in the interest of the greater good.

We live in turbulent times. As antiglobalization forces have so visibly impacted the world, so many are understandably afraid that humanity is moving backwards when it comes to helping the planet's most impoverished and disadvantaged. Problems that should unite us, like climate change and a growing wealth gap, are abandoned to partisan politics. World leaders promise to build walls, exit political unions, and retreat from economic alliances, withdrawing inward. So many of us are divided along racial, religious, and political lines that the rise of the individual and a “me first” mentality seems inevitable. It's enough to make even the most optimistic idealists furrow their brows.

But progress happens in fits and starts; this too shall pass. We're firm believers that the “building walls” sentiment is a blip fostered by fear and

*WHEN PURPOSE  
AND PROFIT  
UNITE — AND  
WE WILL SHOW  
YOU THAT  
THEY DO — THE  
ECONOMY, THE  
INDIVIDUAL,  
AND THE  
COMMUNITY  
THRIVE.*



misunderstanding, and that humankind is generally on a march toward a more open, interconnected world. Our global village is smaller than at any other time in human history. Individuals are connected and empowered by more knowledge, more information, and more tools, and can more easily mobilize around a cause. Across the globe, millions of individual volunteers and people in business, government, and nonprofits are committed to making the world a better place.

***“I truly believe that if every company in the world adopted this philosophy, all of the world’s problems could be solved.”***

—Richard Branson

So, despite what may seem like doomsday headlines, it’s not the end of the world as we know it. Why? Because many of us are focused on moving the world forward, on fostering progress, not just by engaging politically or reaching out to our neighbors, but also by turning business into a force for good. It’s now possible to build companies and social enterprises that tackle the planet’s most dire problems. Workers can now bring their personal values to the office, giving back on company time.

Most people are driven in varying degrees by the need to do good, balanced against the need to be financially successful. We came together to write this book because we all learned, despite our different paths, that choosing profit or purpose at the expense of the other is a false dichotomy. You can do both. You should do both.

When purpose and profit unite—and we will show you that they do—the economy, the individual, and the community thrive.

Changing the world shouldn’t be a task saved for extreme altruists working without pay. The best and brightest from all economic and social sectors can survive and thrive while tackling our planet’s biggest challenges.

As three thirty-somethings on the cusp of this new movement, we are in a unique position, each bringing a different voice from the big three players in the WEconomy: business (Holly Branson), charity (Craig Kielburger), and social enterprise (Marc Kielburger). Over the past

couple of years, we've pored over countless business books, but never found one that brought together voices from all three sectors. We each have our own experiences to draw from (you will hear a lot about Virgin, WE Charity, and ME to WE). We write about what we know—drawing from our mistakes and learnings. We'll, of course, introduce ourselves properly, but first, we would like to introduce you to our mentors—those who helped us recognize the power of purpose and profit combined.

## Our Big Three Inspirations: Oprah, Richard, and Jeff

We are lucky to have picked the brains and learned from three prominent innovators in the worlds of business and social enterprise. These titans were the forerunners of the WEconomy, and as such, we tip our hats to our favorite teachers.

Not many of us would mind being Oprah Winfrey, Richard Branson, or Jeff Skoll—at least for a few days anyway.

### Lady O

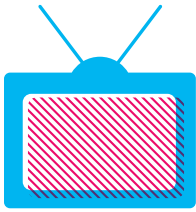
It's not that you want to read more Nora Roberts novels or make celebrities cry in front of a live studio audience, but you want to *be* Oprah.

While everyone wants to be Oprah to some degree, it might not be for the reasons you expect. It's not about the money, fame, or power. Frankly, there are other influential billionaires who don't provoke the same affection and envy. The Oprahness we all aspire to isn't just about wealth or status—it's about making a successful career out of a purposeful life.

People want to be Oprah because she fosters her passions while giving back—and she gets paid to do so. *The Oprah Winfrey Show* was devoted to health and fitness, relationships, and literacy because Oprah commiserates with our family issues and wants to be part of our book club. Like us, Oprah is on the treadmill the first month of the year, fighting the five pounds of chocolate she ate over the holidays. She is a self-made business magnate whose brand is, when you break it down, devoted to living one's best life. She wants to help people be

# Oprah Winfrey

## Some things you might not know



The Oprah Winfrey Show was the highest-rated television talk show in U.S. history. It drew in 48 million viewers per week.<sup>1</sup>



*O, The Oprah Magazine*, has the highest women's magazine circulation in North America with 2.4 million copies sold per year.<sup>2</sup>



Oprah invested \$40 million to create the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls. The school in South Africa for disadvantaged girls was lauded by Nelson Mandela.



Oprah's Book Club leads to 55 million books sold after promotion on the show.



*Fortune* magazine named her the world's most charitable celebrity.

better—mentally, emotionally, physically—by sharing her personal struggles. Not only did Oprah make money and do good, she made money by doing good. Then, through donations and her own foundations, Oprah funded other causes. She has built schools, helped abandoned or abused children, worked to combat HIV/AIDS and climate change,

committing almost \$1 billion to philanthropic causes in her lifetime. Now worth an estimated \$3 billion,<sup>3</sup> Oprah is regularly named one of the world's most powerful women, sharing the list with the likes of Melinda Gates and former First Lady Michelle Obama.<sup>4</sup>

Oprah feeds that craving in all of us that tells us we can make a difference in the world *and* make a living. It doesn't have to be Oprah-scale wages either—most of us simply want enough to support our families and occasionally take a vacation. Most of us also want a purpose, a reason to get up in the morning, a way to make a contribution. But we also need the sense of security that comes with a steady paycheck. Oprah built a corporate empire on this fusion of purpose and profit that the whole working world is after. And we're not just saying all of this because she is one of our greatest mentors.

When Marc and Craig met Oprah for the first time, they were teenagers at the helm of a brand new charity they'd launched with . . . well, a bunch of other teenagers. The organization had a naïve mission to help kids get an education by building schools, but had no formal game plan. The novelty of kids helping kids earned Craig a spot on the show, which parlayed into a partnership. Oprah would go on to build over 50 schools and dozens more projects with them, lending her business acumen and guidance. Craig and Marc would sit on her famous couch four more times.

Oprah helped mentor the brothers to transform the fledgling charity into a sustainable development organization, now with over \$50 million in annual donations.

## Dr. Yes

If jumping off buildings in a tux is more your speed, you probably want to be Sir Richard Branson (or James Bond). Richard built an empire with gut instinct, guerilla marketing, and good intentions. He launched his first venture, *Student* magazine, in 1968 with £300 borrowed from his mother, driven by the belief that young people had something important to say and a desire to take a stand on important issues, like opposing the Vietnam War. He's since formed a global mega-brand. The Virgin Group employs 70,000 people in more than 35 countries. But Virgin had humble

# Richard Branson

## Some under-the-radar initiatives



In the 1980s he donated £5 million to establish Mates condoms as a competitor to Durex during the AIDS epidemic. All profits went to charity. Because of that, the BBC ran Mates ads for free and helped educate millions of people about the importance of using condoms.



In 1985 Richard took a gamble on a 23-year-old Jane Tewson by agreeing to cover the full overhead of a new charity: the now famous Comic Relief/Red Nose Day. Because of Richard's backing, 100 percent of money raised could be directed to good causes. By 2015 Comic Relief had raised over £1 billion for charity and has helped over 50 million people in the UK and overseas.



In the same way that Richard is a serial entrepreneur in business, he is also a serial philanthropist. He has established dozens of not-for-profit organizations that seek to tackle a range of social and environmental issues:

- The Elders (independent global leaders working for peace and human rights)
- Ocean Unite and the Ocean Elders (ocean conservation)
- the B Team (to rally business leaders to change business for good) and the Carbon War Room (to combat climate change)
- the Help Advisory Centre (counseling for troubled youth, started when he was a student himself)

beginnings in Richard's battle to defend customers from price gouging and robotic sounding customer service reps. This purpose, to protect consumers from untrustworthy and exploitative businesses by offering a fair, friendly alternative, is what Virgin is all about. In fact, the Virgin Group has a policy: don't start a new venture unless it will improve the customer experience. The business plan puts people first.

Richard anticipated viral marketing before the advent of social media. He dressed in drag, drove an army tank through New York's Times Square, and raced in hot air balloons to steal attention away from corporate goliaths. All to build a global brand without forking out for traditional advertising. His mantra was, and remains, "screw business as usual." This also extends

to corporate social responsibility (CSR). Rather than tack on a CSR plan with no real resources or support, Virgin uses its core business for social good, in some cases starting companies purely to solve a social problem, and not worrying about the profit potential until much later on. Richard's brilliant feat of launching and growing companies, with purpose at their heart, is transforming business and changing the world.

***“Aid is just a stop-gap.  
Commerce,  
entrepreneurial  
capitalism takes  
more people out of  
poverty than aid.”***

—Bono, activist and lead singer for U2

Part of a company's core mission today should involve social purpose, and Richard knew this long before nearly everyone else. Richard's motivation for launching a business has always been driven by two questions: By shaking up this market, are we introducing competition that will benefit the customer? Will we bring customers a more rewarding and fair experience? He's been very successful—because building social impact into business isn't just the right thing to do, it's also profitable.

After Holly had embarked on a career in medicine, the realization of her childhood dream, her father suggested she take a year out to learn about business. It was Richard who helped Holly realize she might help more people in a boardroom than she could in a hospital room. Her dad taught her that business can be the biggest force for social change.

## The Protagonist

You may not know that you want to be Jeff Skoll because he's not a first-name-only celebrity. But trust us, you do. Who wouldn't want to be a Hollywood magnate with a conscience? Jeff is a Canadian-born, Stanford-educated tech entrepreneur, the first president of eBay and the founder of Participant Media, a production company that promotes awareness for some of the biggest problems facing the world today. He's also a self-proclaimed sci-fi geek and a bit of a bookworm, hobbies that prepared him to take strange and daunting subject matter and make it accessible.

One of Participant's early films evolved from a slideshow about climate change presented by Al Gore, former Vice President of the United

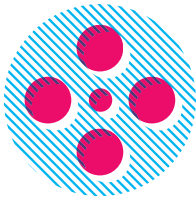
**Jeff Skoll:**

## The Canadian entrepreneur with a conscience

**\$1**

**Billion**

Skoll is one of only a few dozen people to donate \$1 billion.



His films don't just raise consciousness, they win awards and attract big audiences. *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Spotlight*, *The Help*, *Syriana*, *Lincoln*, and *Deepwater Horizon* are among the films he's produced. He's worked with top talent in Hollywood: Matt Damon, George Clooney, and Emma Stone, among other stars.



His foundation's initiatives include an investment firm dedicated to ethical money management, as well as TakePart.com, an offshoot of Participant Media that works to convert people's concerns about issues into individual and collective action.



The Skoll Global Threats Fund looks for strategies to prevent or cope with disasters, including nuclear meltdowns, pandemics, water shortages, climate change, and conflict in the Middle East.

States. It's hard to imagine anything less entertaining or marketable. But *An Inconvenient Truth* went on to win an Oscar and become one of the top-grossing documentaries of all time. Jeff uses the money-making machine that is the film industry to raise awareness of social issues. Participant Media brings production value, heavyweight actors, and mainstream publicity to films that would otherwise be seen only by a niche audience of activists.

Jeff leveraged that public interest with action campaigns that complement the movie's themes, giving people a tangible way to respond to their feelings postviewing. To enhance *Lincoln*, a drama about the 16th U.S. president, the film was distributed to middle schools and high schools in the

United States. The educational outreach package came with lesson plans to help teachers introduce students to this iconic figure in American history.

Not all of Participant's films make money, but Jeff finances his passion projects with smart (mostly eco-oriented) investments. He's since made money on everything from renewable energy to his personal favorite investment at the moment—flush-free urinals. Jeff also happens to be one of our greatest mentors (we hope you're picking up on the theme here).

When Marc decided to forgo a handsome salary and a corner office to increase the scale of a charity, he struggled with whether he could start a family on a nonprofit salary. He wondered how a charity could stay sustainable without all the trappings of a business. Jeff's advice?

**Don't choose between purpose and profit;  
it's not an either-or proposition.**

Jeff taught Marc that the future of social change lies with social enterprise.

## **Pioneers of Purpose and Profit**

So what do a media mogul from Chicago, a British serial entrepreneur, and a Canadian sci-fi fan have in common? All hit on the combination of purpose and profit early on, achieved massive success, and continued to use the power and resources of corporate engines to create positive change. This combination of purpose and profit is the bedrock of the WEconomy, and it is achievable for everyone, regardless of your sector or the stage of your career. You don't have to be a business owner to reap benefits in the WEconomy.

We look to Oprah, Richard, and Jeff, not because they founded companies, but because they were part of the first cohort to get it right—to achieve both financial success and social impact on a massive scale. Ironically, we also know that each would quibble with being called pioneers of a trend they hadn't predicted. They just wanted to do good. We learned some of our greatest business lessons from these three innovators, which we'll talk about more when we introduce ourselves properly.



# From the recent graduate to the CEO, everyone will learn something from this book



**CEOs** will learn how to embed purpose into the DNA of their business to inspire their employees and boost the bottom line.



**Marketers** will learn how to connect more deeply with customers and engage previously untapped demographics.



**Entrepreneurs** will use purpose as a launch pad to develop “the next big thing.”



**Team members** will learn to write purpose into their job descriptions for a more meaningful career, a move that also benefits their employers.



**HR leaders** will learn to inspire their teams, recruit new talent, and build loyalty.



**New starters** will get a crash course on purpose that will help them climb the corporate ladder.

Before launching a career as a social entrepreneur, Marc served water in the Canadian House of Commons, worked with AIDS patients in Bangkok, and collected degrees from Harvard and Oxford. Now he counts himself among those who do good and still make a living. Before arriving at Virgin, Holly volunteered at an African orphanage, worked with various charities, completed medical and physiology degrees, and practiced medicine at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in London. Holly then joined the ranks of a company involved in

everything from financial services to spaceships. Craig didn't do much before he launched a children's charity. Of course, he was 12 at the time. But since then, his two decades of work as a social activist have taken him everywhere from urban slums to Mother Teresa's home to the mountains at Davos to Oprah's famous couch. After all this, he discovered that his degree in peace and conflict studies could use a shot in the arm—sheer earnestness is not enough to change the world—and so he

earned an MBA to bring more business rigor to the nonprofit world. Now a leader in the nonprofit sector, he dreams of starting his own social accelerator to help others scale.

***80 percent of global consumers say business must play a role in addressing societal issues.***

—Edelman Trust Barometer

## Why Read This Book?

This book will show you how to become Oprah Winfrey.

Okay, not really, but it will show you how to find meaning and self-fulfillment at work, and to live your values while making a living. The WEconomy is about helping you unlock and harness the potential of purpose and profit.

Companies will learn how to find a social mission that fits the business, and then execute it well.

Charities will learn to develop partnerships and use business strategies to achieve greater scale of impact and sustainable growth.

Individuals will learn that tackling the biggest issues of our time shouldn't mean sacrificing a comfortable life.

We'll help you find this tricky pairing of purpose and profit that—we promise you—is going to be one hell of a sea change.

Social purpose is the biggest thing to happen to business since the assembly line. All evidence points to the fact that workers and consumers respond to businesses that do good. Corporate surveys, behavioral economists, and the authors' own experiences prove that

WEconomy companies are rewarded with more talent and better business, making an enticing argument for social purpose, even for profit-making machines. Profit is not only possible for companies that give back, it can be a driving force to solve the world's most intractable problems. Businesses need an incentive to find solutions, putting the power and resources of large companies on our side. Profit becomes growth, which becomes investment in more solutions. Companies can be one of the greatest forces for social good because they have the resources to scale and make change on a massive level. Still, most companies mistake purpose for a passing trend, forfeiting the chance to solve both social issues and business challenges. We can help you do purpose right, and cash in on this new normal.

No matter who you are or where you are on your career path, you can find a place in the WEconomy. We'll take you through our personal journeys to do well and do good. Each of us falls on a different point of the business-charity spectrum, but we share a belief in channeling the power of capitalism to create social impact. We're sharing our stories because we know we're not alone.

### **Part One will:**

- *Follow the authors on their personal journeys through the WEconomy*
- *Introduce the power of companies to drive social change (Virgin)*
- *Follow the evolution of a charity through failure and innovation (WE Charity)*
- *Discover social enterprise as a means to scale impact and help consumers do good (ME to WE)*
- *Inspire you to forge your own path to purpose and profit*

In Part Two, we'll help you make the business case. First, we'll explore the WEconomy's effect on the workforce, a shift in attitude that has young workers and mid-career professionals alike demanding more than just a paycheck. Then, we'll convince you that purpose is like Miracle-Gro for your company: there are few aspects of the business

that won't be better off with an injection of smart social responsibility. Core fundamentals still need to be strong—even a cause won't cure a bad business plan. But if you have the building blocks right, purpose will give you an edge.

**In Part Two, we'll show you how to use purpose as a catalyst to:**

- *Build new products and create “the next big thing”*
- *Differentiate established products to stand out in an age of parity*
- *Inspire brand fanatics, loyal to your social mission and company*
- *Enter new markets at home and abroad*
- *Increase employee engagement, loyalty, and retention*
- *Boost your bottom line*
- *Invest in social change for monetary returns*
- *Move up the ranks in your company*

It's not enough to know that purpose is important; you have to know how to execute it. In Part Three, we'll show you, step by step, how to find, implement, and amplify a cause that aligns with your core business or individual interests. The bad news is that most companies do this poorly. We'll share what we've learned, what to avoid, and the keys to pulling off a successful corporate–charity partnership.

What follows is our recipe for increased earnings, scalability, self-sufficiency, and, ultimately, positive social change.

This book will help you profit from the next big wave in the world of business, whether you're the one calling the shots or a junior employee looking to advance your career.

Get paid to change the world—who wouldn't want to be the person doing that?

### Here's What's Inside Part Three:

- *A step-by-step guide to finding a social cause that fits you or your core business*
- *Tangible tips to achieve both charitable and career or corporate goals*
- *A how-to guide to define success, measure outcomes, and maximize the efficiency of your cause, program, or personal donation*
- *A team engagement plan to amplify your social mission internally*
- *Creative, cost-effective tips to help charities without writing checks*
- *Tips to refine your pitch for a social mission and present the best business case to your boss*

### You're already changing the world . . .

#### WE Give Opportunity



The book you're holding comes with a Track Your Impact code and a charitable donation. Proceeds from every book sold will provide women in developing communities with access to small business training, empowering them to earn a sustainable income close to home. This program is proof that enterprise can facilitate social change. Visit [WE.org/trackyourimpact](http://WE.org/trackyourimpact) and enter your Track Your Impact code to find out more about your donation and see photos of families and maps of the regions you have helped by buying this book.



**“I wanted to write this book, in part, to show from my experiences at Virgin that business can facilitate unlikely partnerships between governments, commerce, and the social sector, using the market as a lever for social change.”**

## PART ONE: CHAPTER 1

# GROWING UP BRANSON

By Holly Branson

*Dear Holly and Sam,*

*Life can seem rather unreal at times. Alive and well and loving one day. No longer there the next.*

*As you both know I always had an urge to live life to the full . . . I loved every minute of it and I especially loved every second of my time with both of you and mum.*

*I know that many people thought us foolish for embarking on this latest adventure. I was convinced they were wrong . . . I thought that the risks were acceptable. Obviously I've been proved wrong.*

*However, I regret nothing about my life except not being with Joan to finally help you grow up. By the ages of twelve and fifteen your characters have already*

*developed. We're both so proud of you. Joan and I couldn't have two more delightful kids.*

*You are both kind, considerate, full of life (even witty!). What more could we both want?*

*Be strong. I know it won't be easy. But we've had a wonderful life together and you'll never forget all the good times we've had.*

*Live life to its full yourselves. Enjoy every minute of it. Love and look after Mum as if she's both of us.*

*I love you,  
Dad*

I attempted to read this for the first time on the day my dad's autobiography *Losing My Virginity* was published—but tears prevented me reading beyond the first paragraph. My dad is known for many things, from businessman to philanthropist and in this case adventurer and he'd written this letter in case he didn't survive his latest round-the-world attempt in a hot-air balloon. He survived. Characteristically, Dad forgot to give me and my brother Sam the heads-up that he would open his first book with what might have been his last written words to us. So it came as a bit of a shock, especially as we hadn't seen it before! Richard Branson may well be a world-famous name, but to me he's just Dad.

It is bizarre writing about yourself, like talking in the third person. You have to ask difficult questions and to some extent bare your soul. In the first of many writing sessions for this book, Craig had already hit a nerve. We'd discussed my childhood, medical school, my experiences at Virgin—then Craig turned to me: “Holly, the most important question of all now. What do you want your legacy to the world to be?”



I looked at him stricken, knowing full well that if I asked him the same thing he'd say something off the top of his head that was succinct and annoyingly brilliant.

My mind was spinning with the things I should be saying, like driving Virgin forward in changing business for good, embedding purpose into the heart of the company, making an impact in the world through our foundations. But all I wanted to say was: I want to be a mum. That my dream is to raise a healthy, happy, kind, well-grounded family with my husband, Freddie.

Craig couldn't have known that Freddie and I had spent more than two difficult and distressing years trying to conceive. After two miscarriages and two failed rounds of IVF, we were starting to wonder if we would ever get to be parents.

I decided to be honest, not about my fertility struggles, but about the fact that I wanted my legacy to be having a family that cares about the world at large. That more than anything, coming from families as close as ours, I wanted Freddie and me to have the opportunity to instill the same value systems and love of life, of people and planet, that our parents had instilled in us. Kids who believe they can make a real difference in the world. We wanted to mentor our kids in the same way we were mentored by our parents.

## **Mom, Dad, Sam . . . and Dreams of Being a Doctor**

I am called Holly because I was supposed to come into the world at Christmas. Family legend has it that my arrival six weeks early found my dad sleeping off the previous night's party. My mum, Joan, by then in contractions, had to manhandle him out of bed and into the car. Luckily, they made it to the hospital in time!

My mum, born Joan Templeman, was raised in the center of Glasgow, Scotland, worked in a pawnbroker's shop, and, later, at a London bric-a-brac store on the Portobello Road. It was there that my dad first fell in love with her and, without putting too fine a point on it, essentially stalked her. He turned up at the shop every day for months, buying stuff he didn't want or need. The rest, as they say, is history.

Sam and I had a normal, loving childhood—thanks in the largest part to our wonderful mum. She was the one who took my younger brother and me to the playground and walked us to and from school every day. A stay-at-home mum who was (and still is) always there with a hug, inspiring words of wisdom, and a beautiful, welcoming smile. She is our anchor, the calm voice that acts as a complementary balance to our very energetic father.

Dad was also ever present, camped out on a sofa at one end of the sitting room, first on the houseboat, then in our Holland Park home, orchestrating the growth of Virgin while we tore about under his feet. I called my parents Joan and Richard until I was 11—as that’s what everyone who worked for Virgin called them.

Virgin and home life were never separate for Sam and me. We were used to people coming and going, constant phone calls, the beeps of fax machines, paper everywhere. We ran riot in the offices of the wonderful Virgin staff. They never seemed to mind—which was not really surprising given that my old nursery ended up being the Virgin Press Office. We had no idea that the people coming and going to meetings were the likes of the Rolling Stones, Janet Jackson, the boss of Boeing, or a distraught bank manager (on more than one occasion). It was fun and relaxed and—to us—totally normal.

Dad was (and still is) open, honest, and unafraid to ask questions or seek advice—even from his children. We saw him listen much more than he talked. In a nutshell, he taught us to be independent, which I know at times, like many a parent, he regretted—especially when there were four of us involved in making decisions, rather than just one! Later in the book we look at putting your people first and building your trust bank—much of which I learned from my mum and dad at our kitchen table.

Even growing up in the buzz of the family business, I’d always wanted to be a doctor. Childhood dreams of extensive learning and saving lives seemed best indulged within the medical profession. Mum remembers asking me about my ambitions when I was three. I answered unequivocally: “I’d like to be a doctor.” Our next-door neighbor and dear friend Peter Emerson was a doctor and I was struck by his fantastic calm in any crisis, like the time I stuck my finger in a blender as an