

INTRODUCTION

There was a man on stage, in a spotlight, in front of 9,000 people. He was in a slick suit and tie, and he was making those people jiggle in their seats with laughter. He'd make stuff up in the moment, and keep those laughs going. And then he'd do something none of them had ever seen before – a trick, or a stunt – something unexpected. They would **gasp**, and **WHOOOP**, and *clap*.

And then he was offstage, out of the spotlight, sweaty and grinning. Making all those strangers happy made him happy too, and he wondered what he'd be if he wasn't doing this. And he thought about what a fun life he has, and how he got there.

That's me, and after a big show like that, I often think those things. The day before I knew what I wanted to do with my life, I thought I wanted to do something completely different.

When I was younger, I was very shy. I was always happiest



in my own company, in my room, door closed, safely far away from the scary outside world of other people. Maybe you sometimes feel like that too. Computers let me make things from all the ideas in my head, while not actually leaving the house. I liked that idea very much.

But then, one summer, while I was on holiday with my parents, I saw a street performer. A busker. A juggler.

He was so great. He was funny and cool, and didn't seem scared of anything. He could do amazing tricks, and made them feel more amazing with the things he said. Anything could happen in his shows – it was almost like he wanted the unexpected to happen, because he could make it fun. He wasn't scared of it.

I went to every show he did.

Got there early.

Sat in the front row.

Became his biggest fan.

But then, as time passed, I realised some things.



I realised that as I'd been watching his shows, he'd put a dream in my head. I didn't just want to be his biggest fan. I wanted to be *him*. But of course, that was impossible – he was cool and I was shy. He had a crowd of people watching him, and after each show I'd scurry away to be on my own.

But the more I watched him, the more I started to figure it out.

Everything that made him great – his juggling, sure, but also his jokes, his charisma, his confidence, his ability to do silly things in front of strangers, his coolness, his fearlessness – these weren't magic spells, or mysterious talents he was born with. No. They were all simple, learnable skills. Just like riding a bike. He wasn't always like this – he'd learned to be.

If I wanted to, and if I practiced hard enough, there was no reason why I couldn't learn all of these things and more.

And I did want to.

And I did practice hard.

And I did learn all of those things and more.



As soon as I got home from that holiday I went to the pet shop at the end of our street and bought three hard rubber dog balls. I got a book about juggling from the library and I started practising. By the next summer, I could do a few tricks with three balls. By the winter I could just about keep four in the air. By the summer after that, we went on holiday to the same place again. One evening, without telling my mum and dad, I stepped out on to the same piece of street that I'd seen him on and I did a little show. In front of people. I mean, not many, but a few. It was super-scary, but also super-fun. It was a fun kind of scary.

Years went by. I kept looking for new things to learn, and kept practising, and I still do. I ended up being able to do tricks that nobody else on the planet could do. A few people watching me do a show on the street turned into packed theatres, appearances on television shows, trips all over the world.

A street performer put a dream in my head, and I worked out how to make it come true. And now I'm not shy any more.



I'm not shy because, slowly, I began to realise that if I could learn seemingly impossible tricks, or amazing feats, I could probably learn a bunch of other things that would make my life better. Tricks made me confident, and confidence made me happier.

Now, juggling might not be your thing, but *something* probably is, and whatever it is, there's probably no reason at all you can't learn it – and who knows, it might take you on some wild adventures for the rest of your life, like it did for me! But at the very least, it'll teach you that you're capable of more than you thought. Capable of pretty much anything, maybe.

All you need is a little know-how, and some hard work.

And, sure, sometimes there are lots of voices telling you that you can't do something. And sometimes one of those voices is your own, right? But I'm here to show you that if you know how, you can sometimes do things that seem impossible. And even if you can't do the impossible, you can, for sure, do the incredible.

'Incredible like what', you say? So glad you asked. How about

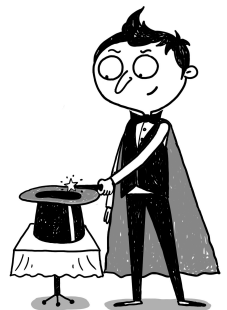


learning to float into the air, in any situation, just by deciding to? What about being able to pick a lock, for real? Perhaps you'd like to become an expert juggler, or hula hooper? Or maybe learning how to spot a liar, or winning a fight, or making someone laugh is more your thing? What about having the skills to conquer your fears and be more confident out there in that scary world? The secrets to all these things, and much, much, very much more, are inside the book you're holding right now.

So I present to you this encyclopedia of incredible things.

INCREDIBLE THINGS YOU CAN LEARN TO DO.

Incredible things that
might help you find the
incredible person
you can be.



Incredible things that
might let you see
all the different kinds
of magic in you.

