

**TAKE
MY
ADVICE,
I'M NOT
USING IT**

**MY LIFE LESSONS
AND THE MISTAKES
I'VE MADE**

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My Life Lessons and the Mistakes I've Made

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A FREE SAMPLE · THE INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTERS 1 AND 2

ABOUT THIS SAMPLE

This free sample contains the Introduction and the first two chapters of *Take My Advice, I'm Not Using It: My Life Lessons and the Mistakes I've Made*, by Rob Lancit, as printed in the book.

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The whole book: roblancit.com/books/take-my-advice-im-not-using-it

IN THIS SAMPLE

In **THIS SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME**

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2 **AN ENTREPRENEUR AT 13**

The book continues with The Tripper Life, The \$30,000 Lesson, My First Heartbreak, Five Goodbyes I'll Never Forget, If Fists Could Talk, Starting Over, Jail Was Not on My Bucket List, The Proposal, and the chapters that follow.

INTRODUCTION

THIS SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME

I didn't sit down to write this book because I've got life figured out. At 58 years old, I'm still trying to figure it out. If life were a classroom, I was the kid in the back who did just enough to pass. Teachers loved me! I had a way of charming my way through, even when I didn't deserve it. Sure, I got distracted by music and girls, and yes, I even paid people to take tests for me. I wasn't the star student, maybe a bit of a rebel, but I was just good enough at working the angles to make it through.

This isn't a "how-to" manual.....it's more like a scrapbook of lessons I learned the hard way.

So why write it?

The truth is, I was in Florida, and I wasn't sure if I was happy. I loved the weather, I loved the lifestyle, and I loved the idea of living in shorts and flip-flops year-round, but something still felt missing. There were days when I questioned whether Florida was really home or just another stop along the way. I felt restless, a little lonely at times, and uncertain about what came next.

The quiet moments were the hardest. Without the usual distractions, I found myself asking questions I had spent years avoiding. Was I just existing, or was I actually living? Was I building a future, or simply filling my days? If I kept going down the same path, what would I really leave behind?

That's when it hit me. What I was missing wasn't a place. It wasn't a relationship. It was a purpose. I needed a why. I needed something bigger than myself. Something meaningful. Something that would outlast me. Something my kids could look back on one day and say, "Yep, that sounds like my Dad."

That's where this book came in.

At first, I thought it would be just for my kids so they would know the real stories, the mistakes, the lessons, and maybe even get a laugh or two at their old man's expense. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized this isn't just for them. It's for anyone trying to figure life out. It's for adults who are still carrying the scars of growing up. It's for fathers who are walking the same tightrope I've been on trying to raise strong kids while also learning how to be vulnerable. It's for families who've broken apart but still find ways to stay connected.

And let's be clear: this isn't going to be some heavy-handed, preachy book. It's going to be funny, sarcastic, and very Gen-X. There will be plenty of eye-rolls, plenty of "can you believe he actually did that?" stories, and more than a few moments where I poke fun at myself just to get the point across. But underneath the humor, I want there to be impact.

Here's what I hope happens when you finish this book:

- You laugh.
- You find value in what I've had to say.
- And you think: "I wish someone had told me some of this sooner."

This is my way of leaving a legacy. Being a dad and living my life the way I have that might be legacy enough. But this book? This is something that can be passed down, shared, and maybe even stick with someone long after I'm gone. And it's not just for my family. It's for anyone willing to listen to a Gen-Xer's stories, sarcasm, and the occasional hard truth.

If I'm honest, there's a little bit of fear behind this, too. Not just fear that my generation won't always be around to pass down its grit and humor, but fear of putting myself out there. Being vulnerable and not always looking good in the process.

For most of my life, I've preferred being seen as the strong, stoic male rather than admitting when I was hurt, struggling, or unsure. But I think it's important to be clear about this: taking that stoic stance all the time, hiding behind the brick wall, doesn't always serve you. In fact, sometimes it keeps you from connecting with the people who matter most. This book is my way of tearing down that wall a little, showing the cracks as well as the foundation, so maybe others will feel they can do the same.

The title, *Take My Advice, I'm Not Using It*, says it all. Half the lessons in here I learned by ignoring advice. Some I learned by failing spectacularly. Some I learned by getting back up. And some . . . well, some I'm still figuring out. But I want anyone who picks up this book: whether you're a kid, a parent, or just a human trying to make sense of it all to know you're not alone in screwing up, stumbling forward, and still managing to carve out a life worth living.

The stories you'll read are mine: the fistfights I probably shouldn't have started, the breakups I definitely could've handled better, the times I fell in love, blew it, and had to figure out how to pick up the pieces. Along the way, I learned (the hard way) what family really means. Some of these stories will make you laugh, some will sting a little, and some will make you shake your head and think, "I've been there." They're not polished, they're not pretty, but they're real and if I've done my job, they'll feel real to you, too.

I wrote this book because one day, I won't be here to tell these stories to my kids or grand children in person. But maybe, when someone picks it up years from now, they'll hear my voice in the words: the sarcasm, the honesty, and, if I did this right, the truth underneath it all.

So take my advice . . . or don't. Either way, you'll get the laugh, the lesson, and maybe a shortcut I wish someone had given me.

CHAPTER

1

THE FAMILY BUSINESS THAT WASN'T MEANT TO BE

The family legacy, at least the one I grew up believing I would inherit, started long before I was born. My grandfather, simply known as Zadie Max, built an honest living out of barrels—the kind that once held moonshine, whiskey, pickles, and just about anything else you could seal tight and roll down a dock. He made them by hand, out of wood, before progress came knocking. Eventually, those wooden barrels turned to steel drums, and the business evolved into something bigger, louder, and smellier.

The company was called D & B Barrels, named after my uncle Donald and my grandmother Bertha, though we all called her Bubby Granny. My uncle had left school at thirteen to work beside his father, and years later, when my dad married my mom, they brought him into the fold too. It was my grandfather, my uncle, and my dad working side by side. Looking back, I realize I was watching three men who did whatever it took to get the job done. At the time, I thought I was spending afternoons in a barrel shop. In reality, I was getting an education in work ethic.

They were successful, not rich by any stretch, but comfortable. We had a home, cars, food on the table—and the sense that the business would always be there. I'd tag along on days off, convinced that one day, the torch would pass to me.

Those mornings were magic in their own greasy way. I'd wake before sunrise, crawl half asleep into the backseat, and count streetlights as my dad drove through the dark toward **De La Ferme Street**. When we stopped for breakfast at this little cantina-style joint, everyone knew him. "Hey, Harvey!" they'd shout as we walked in. He was kind of a local celebrity as everybody knew him. I'd sip my first "coffee"—which was really a cup of sugar with a splash of caffeine—and feel like one of the men.

At the yard, I'd roll drums, climb on the trucks, and tag along on deliveries. Most of the workers were Polish—tough guys, good hearts—and they treated me like I belonged. I didn't know it then, but I was falling in love with the feeling of *being part of something bigger than me*.

For years, that was the plan. The business was my destiny. College? Maybe. But D & B Barrels — that was my future. Until it wasn't.

One morning, I woke up, turned on the news, and heard about a five-alarm fire on **De La Ferme Street**. The address hit me like a gut punch. That was *our* building. I bolted upright, heart racing. My dad was already gone—probably halfway there. I remember pacing the kitchen, trying to catch every update. When I finally saw the footage—flames lighting up the sky, smoke pouring out of the roof—I knew.

By the time it was over, the place was gone. Just ash, twisted metal, and memories. My grandfather had already passed by then, so it was my dad and my uncle left to decide what to do. They took the insurance payout, sold the land, and walked away.

And just like that, the future I'd been dreaming of since I was ten disappeared overnight.

I was sixteen. Too young to understand the weight of their decision, old enough to feel the loss. I remember this hollow, empty pit in my stomach—not just sadness, but something closer to betrayal. It wasn't their fault, but I couldn't shake the resentment. Why didn't they rebuild? Why didn't they fight to keep it alive?

Looking back now, I realize that fire might have burned down more than a building—it torched the illusion that life follows a straight path. I thought I was destined to run the family business. Turns out, I was destined to build my own.

Losing D & B Barrels was the first time I really tasted disappointment. It hurt. It changed how I looked at work, family, and what it means to build something that lasts. But in its own twisted way, it also gave me the push I needed. Years later, when I started carving my own path in business, then franchising and eventually in leadership, I think I was still chasing that feeling of being part of something bigger than myself. The difference is, this time, I got to build it my way.

MY ADVICE

When the future you had in your head disappears, don't sit there trying to rebuild it exactly as it was.

Feel it, then move.

Most people get stuck replaying what should have happened. That's a dead end.

Do this instead:

- Accept it's over and stop waiting for it to come back
- Separate who you are from what you thought you'd inherit
- Figure out what you actually loved about it and chase that
- Build your own version where you control the outcome
- You didn't lose your path. You lost one option.

THE LESSON

Your future isn't guaranteed, even if it feels like it's been set in stone your whole life.

Things change. Sometimes fast. Sometimes without warning. And when they do, the plan you were counting on can disappear overnight.

That's where most people get stuck. They keep looking back, trying to hold onto something that's already gone.

The ones who move forward make a different decision. They stop chasing what was lost and start building what's next.

And here's the part most people get wrong about legacy. It's not something you're handed and told to protect. It's something you create when the original plan falls apart.

What you inherit is the starting point. What you build after that is what people remember.

CHAPTER

2

AN ENTREPRENEUR AT 13

At thirteen, while most kids were hanging around the “depanneur” (a 7-Eleven for all you non-Quebecers) trying to look old enough to buy smokes, my best friend Jay and I decided to start a DJ business. No plan, no roadmap—we just woke up one day and declared ourselves entrepreneurs. We called it **Paradice Sound**. That’s “Paradice” with a “c”. Not because it was clever, but because we thought it looked cooler. Spoiler: it didn’t.

We had white jumpsuits—yes, *jumpsuits*—with our name ironed onto the back in crooked letters. We looked less like DJs and more like rejects from a Devo video. And since we were only thirteen, our parents had to drive us to gigs and sit in the parking lot waiting for us to finish spinning records at bar mitzvahs and birthday parties. Nothing screams “successful entrepreneur” like Mom honking the horn because it’s past curfew.

We scraped together what little money we had for some basic gear, but most of it we just rented. That was the beauty of it—we didn’t need much. Show up with a few *milk crates* of records, plug into rented equipment, and suddenly we were “professionals.” By the time the night was done, the only real profit left was enough for a pack of smokes.

But what really set us apart was the light show. Not borrowed. Not found. Stolen. Jay and I ripped red and blue spinners off actual police cars, rigged them to a car battery, and blasted them through basements like we were hosting a raid. It was reckless, illegal, and dangerous. Which, at thirteen, made it perfect.

And here’s the thing: we didn’t care. We weren’t faking confidence—we actually believed we belonged there, even though we had no idea what the hell we were doing. And maybe that was the magic: we just did it.

The real highlight, though, was our finale. The first time it happened by accident. We finished Chris de Burgh's *Spanish Train*, the crowd got rowdy, and I grabbed the record and smashed it against the wall. Pieces flew, kids dove for them like souvenirs, and suddenly we had our signature move. From then on, *Spanish Train* was our ritual, and smashing that record became the thing people waited for—right before the only acceptable closing track in the '80s: *Stairway to Heaven*.

Looking back, Paradise Sound wasn't really about music or money. It was about creating something out of nothing. About learning that sometimes you don't need permission, you just need to go for it. We weren't DJs, but in our heads we were legends. And if I'm honest, that little adventure is what sparked a dream I never chased—becoming a sound engineer. My parents shot that idea down, and life pulled me in other directions. Probably for the best, but part of me still wonders.

What I do know is music shaped me. Growing up in the '80s was a gift—the best music ever recorded, hands down. My kids might not know every artist on their Top 40 playlists, but put on AC/DC, Guns N' Roses, Springsteen, Bon Jovi, or The Eagles, and they can name them in two seconds flat. Somehow, they inherited that part of me. That's legacy enough.

MY ADVICE

If you're waiting until you know what you're doing, you're going to be waiting a long time.

We were thirteen, wearing jumpsuits, renting gear, and running a light show that could've landed us in jail. And somehow, we still got booked.

Why? Because we showed up like we belonged.

Do this:

- Start before you feel ready. Nobody checks your credentials at the door
- Use what you've got. Half the people you think have it all figured out are duct-taping it together
- Don't worry about looking stupid. You will. Then you won't
- Get in the game. You can't learn this from the sidelines
- Confidence doesn't come first. It shows up after you've already started.

THE LESSON

Your first shot at anything is going to be messy, a little embarrassing, and not built to last.

Good. That's the point.

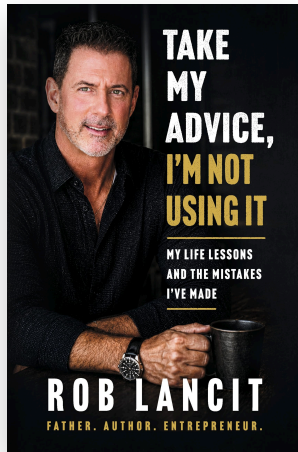
Paradise Sound didn't turn into a business empire. It turned into something more useful. It taught me to take a swing before I felt ready, to trust my instincts, and to stop waiting for permission.

Most people skip this part. They sit on the sidelines, overthinking, while someone less prepared goes out and figures it out in real time.

And here's what they miss. Those early, scrappy attempts wire you differently. They make you more willing to act later when it counts.

You don't remember the plan. You remember the moment you went for it.

That's what sticks.



END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

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The book keeps going: life as a backwoods tripper, a \$30,000 lesson, a first heartbreak, five goodbyes, four fights, four fresh starts and a proposal. Each chapter ends with Rob's advice and the lesson.

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