

Foreword by H.E. Ilyas M. Dawaleh

# KNOW GO & GROW

*The Entrepreneur Within You*

**BEN KUBASSEK**

CANADIAN BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *SUCCEED WITHOUT BURNOUT*

KNOW  
GO & GROW  
BEN KUBASSEK



# **KNOW GO & GROW:** *The Entrepreneur Within You*

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Foreword by: Ilyas M. Dawaleh

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“Thanks for your wise words and thoughts on burnout. Everyone needs to read good material. Input to the brain is very important...Thank you again for your book. I have about a dozen copies in the office for my patients.”

*Ian A. Judge, D.C., FCCRS(C), London, Ontario*

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## **Foreword**

By H.E. ILYAS MOUSSA DAWALEH,  
Government of the Republic of Djibouti  
Minister of Finance and Economy and In Charge of Industry

My relationship with Ben Kubassek became very intimate after his visit to speak to the young generation of Djibouti on the Know Go Grow principle. Thereafter I became one of the aficionados of Know Go Grow.

The book that you are reading Know Go & Grow is a book which I found useful in the preparation process of the Entrepreneurship-Leaders of today and the next generation.

One of the problems we are facing today in the developing countries is unemployment of the young generation. And most of the stakeholders, who are busy in alleviating the problem, are assuming they are in the solution business, but they are with unreliable models. It is a sad indictment that for many leaders growth is associated with numbers, statistics, and resources rather than with the core mindset developments of those unemployed youths.

As a result, many stakeholders today spend their time and resources trying to meet the felt needs of the youths by addressing the immediate needs they have and thereby attracting more people. This is inevitably frustrating because these felt needs constantly change and it will end up in the vicious cycle of poverty. The more we focus on the felt needs of unemployed youths, the more they will expect the same support for the next ailments they will face in life.

But there is a more excellent way which I found in the book of Mr. Ben Kubassek, which keeps the main thing the main thing. It is a call to be a shepherd, not a rancher, an overseer not a manager, a leader not a celebrity.

Ben Kubassek is calling us by saying *back to the basics*. I have benefited from his blog, his Twitter pages, from the seminars and also from his bestselling books, *Succeed Without Burnout* and *Five F-Words That Will Energize Your Life*.

The principles of Know Go Grow are so acceptable because they are more like natural laws, and that is why it is bringing such a big impact, particularly in the life of the young generation. Ben has spent more than three decades from the age of 21 as a tested entrepreneur. His life and livelihood are primarily shaped by the principle of Know Go Grow. And he is not only celebrating his own success but rather he is making himself busy in teaching the principle to multiply the effect he harnessed in life which is deeply reflected in this book Know Go & Grow to the next generation.

In my observation, from the principle of Know Go Grow, growth is not possible for most startups because growth is not a direct output of a mere go, rather it is a knowledge-based go product. No company can achieve or sustain growth, in the face of an ever-changing world, without supporting itself with this natural principle of Know Go Grow.

As a rule of thumb, in this world, one generation will come and pass and the second generation will follow, nobody is immortal. However, Ben's ideas and principles can endure through his books.

When you engage with this book and with these principles of Know Go Grow, you will be engaging with the natural principles of success as it is coined and synthesized by Mr. Ben Kubassek and which will help you practically to pass your legacy to the next generation.

Now let me end with this, *"Ben, I have found a principle which I should always first Know before I Go and then to go strong to reach a successful growth in life. Well done, my friend."*

ILYAS MOUSSA DAWALEH

## Introduction to KNOW GO & GROW

Once upon a long lost time ago people sincerely believed that they were all divinely gifted. However, at one point, they began to take their gifts for granted and no longer treasured them. So, to teach them a lesson, their leader decided to hide their talents somewhere where they would be difficult to find.

The wise men of the day were summoned and they gathered together to debate the best place to stash humans most precious possessions – their own blessed nature. "Where should we hide people's talents?" That was the gathering's challenge.

"Let's bury them deep in the ocean", one of the elders said.

"People are curious. They'll dive as deep as possible and beyond. It's too obvious. We need a better hiding place", the leader replied.

"What about on top of the highest mountain? What if we hid their talents there?"

"People are resilient. They'll eventually climb every mountain and find their blessedness. That won't do either."

"Your Excellency", another counselor timidly took the floor, "maybe the answer is not on Earth. I say we hide it among the stars. It will take them an eternity before they even think to look there."

"Humans are the utmost dreamers. They'll look up for hope and help and they'll explore outer space and the unknown. It won't work."

The elders then gave up saying "If there's no place on Earth, no place in outer space, what good is it to hide it, anyway? Humans will eventually find it. We don't know, mighty leader. We have failed you."

The counselors then left the leader alone, still restless and challenged. He thought it over and over, thinking about the matter from all angles until one day, he found the answer.

"The elders were right! There's no mountain high enough; nor is there a valley low enough to keep humans from finding their divinity. Not on Earth, nor in outer space. So, the only place left is – WITHIN. That is it! They always look for answers outside of themselves. Therefore, I will hide my people's gifts within themselves. They'll never think to look within their own essence."

The deed was done.

The leader, then hid the people's talents deep down into the core of their beings. Ever since, humans have been looking for them – digging and diving and dreaming, climbing and crunching and questing – searching for a treasure... already within themselves.

The talents and gifts you seek, are already within you. Hopefully, *KNOW GO & GROW - The Entrepreneur Within You* will guide you to them.

From my own experience, you've just embarked on an extraordinary adventure. I salute and congratulate you for showing the courage, heart and determination to do the Greater Good you were sent here to do.

The book you currently hold is your own road-map to unleashing the entrepreneur within you and building better lives for both yourself and your community. We ask the difficult questions, guide you to searching deep into who you are and give you proven prescriptions to problems we all encounter along the way.

It's a beacon of hope, so, take heart! Venture beyond the familiar, beyond what you've known until now. I dare you, read on. Get all the knowledge you need and let's begin this exciting journey.

### **Knowledge – Information – Wisdom**

Most people fear the unknown. Knowledge makes the unknown a non-

issue.

When we're not experiencing the results we expect in our personal lives or businesses, it's most probably because of something we don't know. When we're starting out, this fear of the unknown is what often keeps us paralyzed. We don't KNOW so we don't GO.

I'm not just talking about information. You can find all the data you need online. The difference between knowledge and information stands in the fact that knowledge is information that we understand well enough to share with others. When it can easily be applied to our everyday life it becomes wisdom. However, unused information simply remains captive in our minds, as theory.

Transforming information into knowledge begins with access to facts and news and everything else. Either on our own, or with the help of a mentor, we learn from them and apply the lessons to improve our relationships, our businesses, our health or whatever needs improving. Our first hint that improvement is needed is always knowledge. However, knowledge does not guarantee action, but it can give us the courage we need in order to GO.

With knowledge comes the courage to face challenges and take risks, but the ultimate goal of acquiring knowledge is to gain wisdom. Wisdom is when we put the knowledge to use, help others and make the world a better place.

Learning is a process; a three-phased process. Take this book, for instance - if you forget it on a shelf it will simply remain information. As you read it and unfold your learning process, you will acquire some knowledge. Then, as you apply the principles here, you gain wisdom to share with the rest of the world and help others just like you.

### **Know Go & Grow**

As the story above points out, all journeys begin within. Positive changes

or transformations start at the core, with renewing our minds. In other words, wisdom begins when knowledge becomes action; when our KNOW becomes our GO.

I have met many people who KNOW, but just don't GO. They are the procrastinators, waiting for "the perfect moment" to start living their true purpose. Year after year they stay in a dead-end job and make plans to someday follow their dreams, to someday start living intentionally, to someday follow their passions. The catch is, though, that someday never comes!

Also, I have met people who KNOW and actually do GO, but they don't ever manage to GROW. They achieve success in their careers or businesses, but coast along with the dream of retirement. Unfortunately, these people take their talents to their graves and never get to serve the world. Therefore, to grow, we need to nurture and share our talents, not bury them. It's the difference between investing and spending - if we're not growing we're dying.

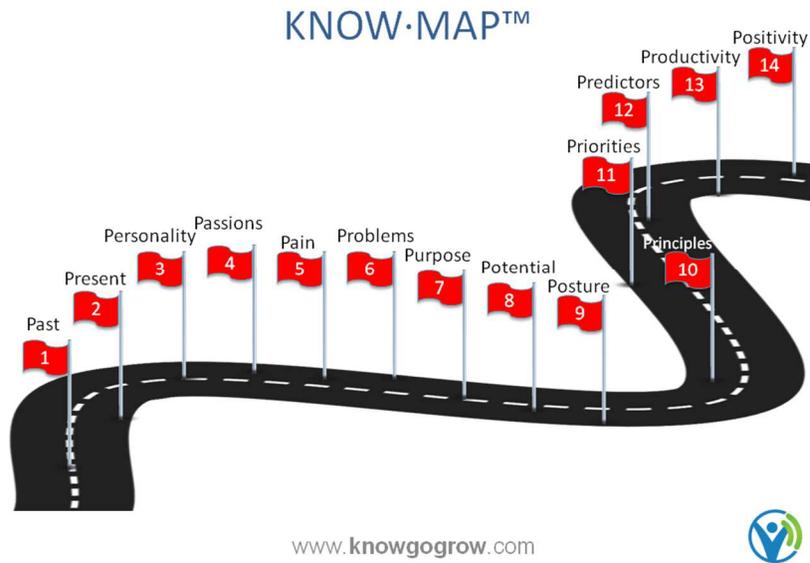
I believe in inner journeys as much as I believe in adventures. Therefore, this book will take you through a proven and personal process to achieve success and balance in all areas of your life.

I hope you are ready for the adventure of your life.

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. - James 1:5*

*My Lord, Increase me in knowledge. - Quran / Taha / 20:114*

# Section 1: KNOW



*"To GO before you KNOW is risky and the reason most entrepreneurs fail or fail to GROW their enterprises" - Ben Kubassek*

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## Chapter 1: Your PAST was Your Preparation

I believe that past experiences were not random happenings, but rather they hold a key to unlocking our life purpose and mission.

In my own case, I was born into a religious commune started by my late grandfather. I lived on a farm with 15 other families sharing everything from the same kitchen to the same automobile.

Formal education in the Community Farm of the Brethren was regarded as unnecessary beyond the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and so at the age of 14, upon graduating from the community school, I began my work career.

I was considered a responsible employee and therefore was quickly promoted to manage the 7000 laying chicken operation. Because of my ability and willingness to learn new skills, I was also assigned the role of community shoemaker.

In its entirety, though, it was a very sheltered life. All my needs for security were provided for. But, it didn't satisfy my need for adventure and I knew deep down inside this was not where I wanted to spend the rest of my life.

Becoming quickly bored with chickens and shoe repairs, I secretly began taking an electrician home-study course and dreamed that, one day, I would become an entrepreneur and start my own business.

However, I knew that before I could take any action, I needed to get some knowledge. I knew there were some things I needed to KNOW before I decided to GO in order to improve my chances for success as an entrepreneur. For that reason, I would repeatedly sneak out to the library in a nearby town and borrow books about business and success. Since televisions, radios or newspapers were not allowed in the community,

those library books were my only connection to the outside world - my beacon of hope; faith that, one day, that the world would be mine as well.

After working for 7 years on the farm, I eventually left the community at the age of 21 and started my business with only \$2000 to my name. My parents were heartbroken since they knew I would be shunned by the rest of the group for my decision to leave. They also knew that they would be reprimanded if they had any contact with me in the future. I was literally on my own. Friends, family, and financial security, I had forsaken all to pursue my dream of becoming an entrepreneur.

### **A Beacon of Hope**

In the beginning, some experiences or circumstances in our past or present may appear as hindrances, failures, or seem to put us at disadvantage. But, as we discover our mission here on Earth, we quickly notice they actually serve as our greatest assets.

When we allow "negative" happenings to teach us positive lessons, the future becomes an even better way to serve others who are going through similar situations. Better ways that otherwise would not have been possible. For instance, there may be a group of people that you are uniquely equipped to reach especially because of your background or history.

This reminds me of Nehemiah in the Bible, my favorite entrepreneur of all time. One can learn many entrepreneurship lessons from reading his story.

Nehemiah gave up a respected position in the palace and returned to the land of his ancestors to reconstruct the walls of Jerusalem, the home of his exiled people who had returned to a city destroyed by their enemies. The project was a huge challenge but he had a **passion** to relieve the **pain** of his **people**. That passion became his **purpose**.

His vision of a rebuilt wall attracted the provision (money, materials, and

people) he needed to accomplish the task. Pitching his vision to the king got him the investment and contacts he needed to complete the project.

Using half of his people for building and the other half for defense, he successfully rebuilt the wall surrounding the entire city in just 52 days. He achieved his goal despite all the opposition. Though he had countless occasions to quit, Nehemiah kept going and refused to accept negative happenings as roadblocks. He also refused to give in to distractions that arose along the way. He was focused, determined, and committed to his mission.

Accomplishing his goal made for a renewed, hopeful people, but his "reward" laid in looking back and connecting the dots. Thanks to his past, he realized that the people he was called to serve in an amazing way were, in fact, his own.

### **Reinterpreting the Past**

Now, being born into a religious community was not my idea. I did not like being told what to wear, what to eat, what to read, and etc. We even needed special permission to leave the farm to go the doctor.

However, just like Nehemiah, the experience with a dictator-like existence helps me now as I work with young entrepreneurs in ex-communist countries and in developing countries such as Romania and Africa, where most people still seem to be trapped in their own minds.

My lack of formal education didn't stop me, either. Reading gave me access to the minds of the most brilliant and successful people from both present and past. As a result, I became self-educated and eventually entered university, only not as a student, but rather as an occasional lecturer.

In fact, it's my lack of formal education that now endorses me to work with young people with as little as grade 3 education. It's my own

adventure of transitioning from an uneducated farm boy to a serial entrepreneur that enables me to mentor others. It's having founded dozens of companies over the past 30 plus years that allows me to speak from real-life experience.

At present, my mission is to help young people in developing countries become entrepreneurs so that they can create jobs and abolish poverty in their own communities.

### **The Tough Question**

It's time for a tough question.

What pain or problem that you endured in the past or overcame would enable you to say "I know where you are coming from"?

Or, perhaps there's a certain group of people you were connected to. Being part of it, understanding all depths, might have given you a special ability to serve this exact niche and perhaps fulfill your purpose here on Earth.

When heading somewhere, knowing how your past helps your future plan is vital. In fact, it's your first step in the KNOW GO GROW process and launching yourself into the adventure of entrepreneurship that'll impact your community.

*"You can't say 'I know where you are coming from' unless you've actually been there."*

- Ben Kubassek

## **Chapter 2: Your PRESENT is Your Gift**

Learn from the past, focus on the present, but plan for the future.

Today is a gift. That's why we call it the present.

To some people, their present seems to be more of a curse than a blessing. Especially those living in least developed countries. Poverty, hunger and homelessness often make the current moment seem more like wrongful life imprisonment rather than a gift. Yet, for the majority of them, nothing ever changes. They agree to the same terms day after day. Have you ever wondered why?

### **The Story of King Solomon's Ring**

When the present feels like a trap, we tend to think that our future will be a reflection of the past. Nothing could be further than the truth.

*Your future does not reflect your past.*

For instance, long ago, when Solomon was King of Israel, he had Benaiah as a trusted minister. One day, he decided to teach Benaiah the lesson of humility by giving him an impossible task.

"My dear Benaiah", King Solomon began, "there's a ring which I have heard about that I want to wear for our upcoming celebration. It's a special one, for it has magical powers. They say it will make the happy man sad and turn a sad person happy again. You have six months to find and bring it to me. That should be more than enough time." said the King, knowing for sure that no such ring existed.

"If it's anywhere on Earth, Your Majesty, I'll find it and bring it to you,"

the minister replied and went on his quest with great determination.

For the following two seasons Benaiah searched everywhere and asked every jeweler and salesman he encountered, but the ring was nowhere to be found. Whomever he'd approach would either laugh in his face, push him away, or simply ignore him. The minister was running out of time.

The night before the celebration, though, hopeless Benaiah chose to go for a walk in the poorest neighborhood. There, he passed by a merchant just picking up his tools. Timidly, Benaiah approached him.

"Sir, excuse my imposition. Is it possible that you know of a Magical Ring which turns a happy man sad and the other way around? Do you, by any chance, have such a rarity?"

The old man stared deep into his eyes, took a golden ring from his carpet and engraved it with 4 words. Upon seeing them, Benaiah smiled and ran to King Solomon, as fast as he could.

"We were starting to miss you around here, dear Benaiah; thought you have perished with the wind. Did you find what I sent you for?" the King happily greeted him.

"Here it is, your Majesty", the faithful minister handed the ring with his head bowed. As the mighty king studied the ring, his smile disappeared for he realized that everything is impermanent.

The jeweler's engraving wrote "This, too, shall pass". King Solomon had just figured out that there will come a time when he would no longer have the riches and wealth he had now.

King Solomon's story is a reiteration of the fact that nothing lasts forever. Not even winters. What is present this second, is past the next. Everything comes and goes, rises and decays, appears and is gone. Nothing escapes time. Anything you can think of is impermanent. Even life itself passes.

*The catch with the present is that it doesn't last.*

Therefore, when you feel your current reality imprisons you, think of King Solomon and his ring and remember that "This, too, shall pass." Or, as my mother would say:

*"This didn't come to stay, it came to pass!" - Theresa Kubassek*

### **The Present's Problem**

That's the situation with all present moments – they pass. Yet, why is there still suffering in the world? Why do we stay trapped in dead-end jobs and contexts we end up despising?

The problem with focusing on the present is that no matter how bad or good it is it comes with some sort of security. This apparent comfort prevents us from risking and daring for a better future.

The future is but a place we have not yet been to.

The present is where we are now, not where we are going.

The past is where we're coming from.

### **Exchanging Presents**

The key to living every day to the fullest is knowing that today is a gift we'll soon exchange.

In my own case, remaining in the religious commune for the rest of my life would have been the most secure choice.

At the same time, think about it – don't they spend a great deal of money to make sure prisons are very secure and that prisoners don't escape? This comfort zone is precisely why most people get stuck in dead-end jobs for their entire working lives.

Advancing, going from one level to the next, implies movement, agitation,

being dynamic.

As a customer, another example of trading presents is when you're being rewarded for your loyalty.

Honestly, who doesn't love a free upgrade? I know, I do.

When traveling by air I have been upgraded to business class so many times, simply because I shared a book I have written with the person checking me in. Each time, I needed to exchange my original boarding pass for the new one. I had to give up the good one for the better, and then the better for the best.

It's the same with life. To start a new venture or enterprise, we must give up something in our PRESENT in order to move to the future we want for ourselves, our families and our communities. Taking people from good to their best is far more challenging than helping someone move from miserable to awesome. Don't let your present stop you. Rather, briefly look at your past to remind yourself where you have come from. Then, turn around and stop looking at your past as if it was a reflection of your future.

### **From Solopreneur to Social Entrepreneur**

Becoming an entrepreneur was a dream I had long before I knew how to spell the word. There was nothing I wanted more than to succeed at it. Therefore, I was willing to trade whatever it took for the freedom to choose my own path - even the familiar present I saw as a true gift.

At 21 years of age, with the grade 8 education I had received on the farm and \$2000 in my pocket as payment for my 7 years of serving there, the chances of me succeeding in business were minimal at best. Also, the timing could not have been worse - the country was in the midst of a recession.

However, to gain freedom, I had to leave security and comfort behind.

Letting go of the "finances – family – friends" safety net, I became a stranger in a world I believed would give me freedom of choice and movement.

Being my own boss was exciting enough. I had soon realized that I traded security for freedom of choice. I could do anything, have anything, and become anything IF and WHEN I wanted it bad enough.

Going from worker to solopreneur is just Phase 1 of the process of becoming a social entrepreneur and bringing a positive change in the world.

Starting my own business, I was willing to trade my current security for a future freedom of choice. I took the risk, and for me it paid off.

At this point, I thought I was trading security for freedom, but I was actually trading security for risk. Fear of taking risks is the reason that holds most young people back from starting their own business.

However, as soon as I left the commune where I enjoyed free food, free housing and the support of my family, I realized that my new freedom of choice came with a serious dose of insecurity – insecurity that I either needed to turn to safety or get used to.

Hiring more people and building a company and a team makes the shift from solopreneur to entrepreneur. That's Phase 2 of the process.

I soon realized I had naturally traded my freedom of choice and movement for responsibility. My new present was no longer about security, but about being responsible for all my employees and their families. I was no longer free to come and go as I pleased. I now had to show up first every morning to lead my team.

Phase 3, transitioning from entrepreneur to social entrepreneur wasn't a conscious decision, either. I felt as if the security I once had returned in my new present. That's what happens when you discover a system, implement it, and start perfecting it through repetition. You get used to it.

Cash flow is dynamic, everybody had a rhythm, knows their role within the mechanism, and is synchronized with the rest of the team. Only, once again, the safety lacked a sense of fulfillment.

On the other side of certainty there was my desire to make an impact in the world. Having learned my lessons from the first two phases and realizing my purpose was greater than my fear to lose the newly gained financial security, I did it again!

I traded away present steadiness for the possibility to travel to and live in developing countries, and so I currently live a life of daily mentoring young people to start businesses and create employment in their own communities. I inspire them to build their own dreams, create new jobs, and transform their communities instead of looking for employment.

If you look close enough, everything in life is a process. The challenge is to make the best of the present moment; to manage the transitions from one phase to another.

Our PRESENT is a gift for today or until we trade it for a better one. The exchange isn't free, and can be quite costly. It always means giving up something good to get something better.

*"Stop looking back, you're not headed in that direction." - Ben Kubassek*