



# HE CHANGES MINDS TO SAVE LIVES

He is the author of three motivational books. **EDMOND NG** meets Han Kok Kwang, the man who helps people see beyond economic gloom.

**P**eople who know him or who have read his books will agree that Han Kok Kwang changes lives and minds.

In fact, he not only changes people's lives, but had also saved a girl's life through his book, and many more lives through his philanthropy.

The girl who was down and trodden and at the verge of terminating her life, changed her mind after she read Han's book, *So What If You Don't Have a Degree?*. Faced with multiple problems and the frustration of job search, she was deliberating how she would end her life. While roaming the streets aimlessly, she stumbled upon Han's book in a bookshop, and decided to purchase it. Reading it through a sleepless night till the early morn, she realises the foolishness of suicide, and the insignificance of her problems in comparison with the many unfortunate people out there. With a new perception and perspective of life, she is today a more cheerful person who can face disappointments with challenge. This is how Han saves lives – by changing lives through changing minds.



Changing and saving lives are what Han does constantly when he writes, coaches, train, counsel, and help the unfortunate and the deprived. Three years ago, Han raised S\$10,088 for the Singapore Spastic Children's Association through the sale of his first book, *So What If You Don't Have a Degree?*. Last year, he donated 2 000 copies of his second book, *Beyond Buzzwords* to help raise more than S\$50,000 with North East Community Development Council and partners for the disadvantaged in the community.

There are many ways to help people, and what Han does best is helping people perceive things in a different way. What is intriguing is his way of changing people's minds to see things positively even in the worst situations. Give him a difficult situation and he will show you the opportunities in the crisis. Call him a magician or a motivational joker if you like, and you will not be too far from the truth. Han does possess the magic and ability to change the way you think things and make you see things that you usually do not see. He can change your perception and your minds and help you see sunshine even in the rain. He is after all, the Director and Founder of Personal Master Resources, a business that enables individuals and organisations to achieve superior performance and leadership through client ownership, collaboration and effective processes.

Han is a highly sought after trainer by corporations, schools, communities, government and public sectors for motivational coaching, result-focused programs, and personal mastery. His success does not come easy, and is not without struggles. As a youth, he faced tremendous pressure from his parents and teachers to achieve academic success, but failed miserably in his first few attempts. He was branded a 'disgraced' to his school, and despite studying hard to gain entry to University while he was serving national service in the army, he was unable to clear his nemesis. When he left the army, he took an alternate route to education through the Polytechnic and received his diploma. For six years after that, he had to work without a degree and be deemed 'second class'.

"For six years, I was competing against graduate executives. But I focused on what was important and I was promoted within a year upon joining, in two different companies", Han says.

"When you don't have a degree, you work doubly hard, you make do, you improvise, and you innovate. You fall and pick up the pieces and emerge stronger as a result. There is no other way."



Today, Han possesses a MBA (Distinction) from the University of Hull (UK), and holds many professional qualifications and certifications, including Accredited Consultant for Harrison InnerView Job Suitability Profiling System (USA), Credentialed Career Master for Career Masters Institute (USA), Certified Worklife Coach for Worklife Counselling (Australia), Certified Trainer for Master Trainer Institute of New York (USA) and Accelerated Learning Institute (USA), and Certified Behavioral Consultant, DiSC (USA).

“Kok Kwang is an avid learner who has chalked up more than twenty certificates, titles and diplomas and is also the author of two books on motivation”, says a profile article on Han by MediaCorp Radio for the Lifelong Learner Award last year.

“Han is a living example of how everyone can succeed in life, if he or she is determined enough and willing to work hard”, says Singapore-Best.com.



Han is a strong advocate of lifelong learning. He is among the top seven per cent of nominees to win the Inaugural National Lifelong Learner Awards last year. Two years ago, he was presented the Times No.1 Bestseller award within the first week from the day his first book was launched. In 1997, he was awarded the National Human Resource Professional of the Year by the Singapore

Human Resource Institute for his contributions to the field of human resource management. Now, at the age of 41, his primary roles and objective are to provide training, teaching, coaching, and to make a difference in other people’s lives in any way he can.

“Han is one of the top trainers in problem solving and creative thinking”, says Cynthia Chin, the Human Resource Manager of NTUC Income.

“He is a humble, approachable, and a very good counsellor who is always ready to help people, especially those who are seeking for career advices”, says G K Yeo, an attendee of a corporate training class taught by Han.

In some of his most recent trainings, Han has taught on the subject, *No Job? No Problem!*, which title is the same as his third book published in August this year. In this book, Han shares about how he started a business even when he has very little money for investment.

“I had no capital, but I leverage on my riches of 5Es – *experience, education, expertise, extensions* (network), and my *extreme* positive drive to succeed. I got appointed as Partner in an international consulting firm with a monthly allowance thrown in”, Han says.

“The bottom line is, you must be willing to work for free in order to learn the ropes. You will be surprised at how far you can go. The keyword is ‘willing to work for free’, but most of the time you will be paid much more than you expected.”

Han’s lifestyle is often staggered with changes in schedules. On a busy day, he can be providing training, teaching, coaching, and meeting clients from morning to night. On a free day, he likes to take long nature walks to reflect on ideas and get inspiration, or to visit the beach with his wife, son and daughter.

When asked what advice he would give for someone who has been retrenched in his mid-life from a sunset industry, Han says, “There are no sunset industries; only sunset mindsets”.

“An unemployed, who’s been an employee his whole life would not be able to see opportunities even if they were right in front of him. He needs to expand his mindset and think beyond a job. He needs to think like a business person, by providing solutions to problems, or creating products or services to make life easier and more enjoyable”.

“Focus on things you can control, such as upgrading your skills and meeting new people”, Han says. “Use your riches (5Es) and carve a niche for yourself. Take stock and package your *skills, passion, experience, network*, and *drive* (SPEND) into something the market wants”.

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