Script for Leaving Microsoft to Change the World

I think all of us have always had this fantasy: When we sit at our desk and we've had a really long day or a long week of work and we think, "What if our life just changed radically"? "What if we did something different and followed our passion rather than following the money?" I was a marketing director at Microsoft. Loved the job but was burned out. And one day I saw a picture of these mountains in Nepal and I said, "I've got to **exit stage left** in this office and get out to the mountains."

My idea of going to Nepal was all about escaping. **Escaping the daily grind** at Microsoft; the conference calls, the emails, and just getting away. I went trekking looking for nothing but snowcapped Himalayan peaks, but what I found instead was a school that had 450 students and a library, that was a library in name only. It was completely devoid of books. The headmaster at the school noticed my concern and he spoke a sentence that would forever change my entire life. He said, "Perhaps, sir, you will someday come back with books." And in my own mind, I got this goofy grin on my face as I though about returning with thousands of books on the back of a yak to give these kids access to a proper library.

My father and I did a book drive and a year later we went back to that rural village in Nepal with thousands of book and their reaction to the books just touched my heart. They had never seen brightly colored childrens' books before. And as they looked at the stories of African wildlife and sharks and the solar system, in my own mind, I thought, I'm not going back to my desk to sell software. I'm quitting my job and dedicating the rest of my life to building hundreds, if not thousands, of these rural libraries. My book is entitled "Leaving Microsoft to Change the World". And it is about my own journey from doing what society told me I should be doing, and instead following my heart and my passion. What started in one village in Nepal, has now grown beyond my wildest dreams I wrote this book because I wanted people to know that you don't have to be Bill Gates or Warren Buffet to go out and change the world. I mean I'm just some ordinary guy who started an organization that now has set up over 3 thousand libraries throughout the developing world and put 2 million books in the hands of kids. It doesn't take anything more than passion and drive to go do that.

The book is also about taking the lessons that I'd learned in the business world and applying them to the non-profit sector. When I started my organization, room to read, I thought I'd be starting over completely from scratch. But what I found instead was that I could take a lot of the principles I'd learned at Microsoft about thinking big, about being very focused on results, about keeping our overhead low, and apply them to scaling rapidly. I've challenged my team and said, "Why can't we open new libraries throughout the developing world at the same rate the Starbucks is opening up new outlets?" I hope my book inspires other people to think about what might be possible in their own life, if they follow their passion, if they dare to dream big dreams, and think maybe there is a **second act** possible during our adult lives.