



Fully Alive: Using the Lessons of the Amazon to Live Your Mission in Business and Life

Tyler Gage

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Fully Alive: Using the Lessons of the Amazon to Live Your Mission in Business and Life Tyler Gage Building a startup is like being thrust into the middle of the Amazonian rainforest. Living every day on the edge of your comfort zone, vulnerable to the unexpected challenges constantly being thrown your way, and constantly shifting to meet daily demands and do everything and anything you can to survive, let alone thrive.

Vulnerable, raw and deeply transparent, Fully Alive reveals powerful tools and lessons that can teach all of us how to grow toward and beyond our personal edges, no matter our circumstances.

Tyler Gage shares his spiritual adventures and the business savvy that helped him create RUNA, a pioneering organization that weaves together the seemingly divergent worlds of Amazonian traditions and modern business, demonstrating how we can dig deeper to bring greater meaning and purpose to our personal and professional pursuits.

From suburban youth to immersion in the Amazon to entrepreneurial success, Tyler's journey clearly shows that passion and opportunity can be found in the most unexpected places. Captivated by a rare Amazonian tea leaf called guayusa that had never been commercially produced, Tyler started RUNA to partner with the indigenous people of Ecuador to share its energy and its message with the world.

Using the spiritual teachings, lessons and healing traditions of the Amazon as his guide and "playbook", Tyler built RUNA from a scrappy start-up into a thriving, multi-million-dollar company that has become one of the fastest growing beverage companies in the United States. With the help of investors like Channing Tatum, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Olivia Wilde, RUNA has created a sustainable source of income for more than 3,000 farming families in Ecuador who sustainably grow guayusa in the rainforest. Simultaneously, RUNA has built a rapidly scaling non-profit organization that is working to create a new future for trade in the Amazon based on respectful exchange and healing, not exploitation and greed.

Practical tools and lessons are woven throughout the page turning story of Gage's successes and failures, offering guidance on how to relate to obstacles as teachers and accomplish our personal and professional goals in the often uncertain circumstances we find ourselves in.

Fully Alive: Using the Lessons of the Amazon to Live Your Mission in Business and Life Details

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From Reader Review Fully Alive: Using the Lessons of the Amazon to Live Your Mission in Business and Life for online ebook

Rick Gravensten says

I read an advanced copy of Fully Alive and absolutely loved it. Tyler is an incredible writer and the story of his adventures in the Amazon and heartwarming work to support the indigenous communities are powerful. I highly recommend this for not just entrepreneurs, but any one who wants an uplifting tale from a guy who is both impressive and very honest at the same time.

Nanette Phillips says

Remarkable story that bridges two seemingly unreconcilable realities - between what is economic and ecologic, ancient and modern, sacred and profane. From downtown Manhattan to deep in the Amazon, Gage shows us that it is not only possible but necessary, if we are to build truly life-giving societies, that we access our deepest sense of purpose and meaning, allowing the wisdom found there to inform and guide the work we do in the world.

Mary Beth says

I really liked this due to the blending of content that seems like it shouldn't mesh: shamanism & business. What Tyler Gage found in the rain forest and the subsequent development of his business truly encompasses both these topics. Not something I would venture is easily approached as a communication piece let alone an easy business model undertaking. Different, feels honest, interesting.

Renaë says

This book is excellent, the author provided personal insights on his quest to bring this Amazonian tea to the USA. He shared his personal struggles with depression and anxiety, and the pros and cons of going into business without a background or degree in business. With the help of the right people, a great product and a lot of bumps along the way, Tyler learned a great lesson which he is willing to share with you. I don't want you to think this is a "Cinderella" story because along the way he had to learn to get out of his own way to find success, and just maybe peace too.

Bobbi says

Really enjoyed this book. I like tea and I learned so much about tea. It was also fun to learn some of the Amazonian cultures. Tyler did a great job of capturing the ins and outs of being a successful entrepreneur. Read the book; you will enjoy the part about Channing Tatum.

Seth Turner says

Wow!! What a journey. Learning from the shamanic world and then blending those practices to create a path unique like this. As someone who has worked with shamans, I can say the core of the learning is similar for many. It's what you do with it that makes the path you choose along with the work you do on yourself. Knowing yourself deeply is best way to heal yourself. Plant medicine is one of those paths. Thank you for telling your story Tyler. Now I must try Guayusa.

Michelle Deslandes says

Tyler tells a very full journey that seamlessly brings together the practical and the mystical. Valuing traditional cultures and finding ways to bring their knowledge forward is critical for our world today, and Tyler's work contributes to this goal.

John says

Gage recounts the story of the development and marketing of Runa, an energizing tea drink based on the guayusa leaf found in the Amazon forest. It's an amazing story of going beyond being a do-gooder, of honoring sacred traditions of indigenous people, of social enterprise and entrepreneurship. Gage came upon guayusa while visiting Ecuador and soon speculated how he could unite a rain-forest product with a growing U.S. demand for energy drinks. He recounts his stresses and coping with export-import bureaucracy, how he and close associates built up sales and manufacturing capabilities, of the dangers of slipping from the visceral to the theoretical, etc. All in all, his story is a stimulating adventure into the world of start-ups. I'm prompted to look for Runa on a store shelf.

Shahnaz Radjy says

Loved this book! Tyler Gage, co-founder of RUNA healthy energy drink, takes us through his experience of starting a company (technically, two companies and two foundations) built to be for profit and benefit indigenous farmers in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

This isn't a book about tea. It's about following your gut and complementing your intuition with research to make the best life and business decisions possible at any given time. It's about tradition, history, nature, and doing better.

Aside from the mission speaking to me personally, I thought the style was both professional and informal enough to make the narrative gripping as well as informative - about entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and shamanism. The fact that Gage mentions specific books he read and that inspired him was a definite bonus, and quite a few have made it onto my reading list.

It's true that I picked this up at a particularly auspicious time as my husband and I are diving into our own entrepreneurial project, so many of the lessons and advice from this book felt bang on - but I recommend it

to anyone who is questioning whether s/he is doing what he wants or should be doing in life, in transition, or merely interested in entrepreneurship.

Melissa Valder says

Fully Alive was a brilliantly captivating read. Filled with heartfelt experiences, funny challenges, life lessons, and insightful business teachings, Gage clearly put his heart behind making this book transparent, raw, and relatable while keeping it light and entertaining. Filled with nuggets of wisdom, my copy is full of bookmarks and post-its where Gage artfully tells a story that leads to a profound lesson. This book hits major points in business, management, entrepreneurship, self-development, and spirituality while maintaining the flow of a natural-born storyteller. Highly recommended!

JB says

The cover of this book got me interested in reading it, but I was very disappointed. It's sorely lacking lessons of the Amazon to live your mission in business and life (as titled). Instead, the book is really just Tyler's story of bringing guayusa to market. It's quite a bore. Plus, until I picked up this book I had never heard of guayusa or Runa. I wondered why he kept calling it a tea, then I get to page 110 and see he admits it's not a tea, but pokes fun of what tea really is. As an avid tea drinker I didn't find it humorous. Him wanting guayusa to be tea doesn't make it so. The only lesson I got out of this is that book titles and descriptions can be very misleading to try to generate more interest. Unless you care about guayusa you won't get much out of this book.

Juanita Kay McKellar says

Awesome!

I loved following Tyler's journey to success. I appreciated him sharing the lessons he learned along the way. I saw him do a TV interview one day and his story inspired me to not only read this book but find the closest grocery near Entiat, WA. to purchase some Runa. I was blessed with some good advice by Tyler and some great tea. Thank you.

Mel says

I received an ARC of this book in the mail yesterday for free in exchange for an honest review. I was originally skeptical when entering the giveaway for a few reasons: In my field (international relations/development), I am all too familiar with the Rich Westerner Exploits Resources/People of the Global South for Personal Gain and Touts Personal Savvy and Merit story. The revolting idea that by the sweat of your brow and innate skill, you (usually a white male) have brought success onto yourself. Somehow, the community on which your entire model relies remains [systematically] impoverished, or even worse, economically dependent on you, creating a situation of questionable political and social ethics. I was

preparing for the “fucking pompous child”, as he is called by somebody on his board of directors. I had to check myself to not automatically throw Fully Alive into that box just because it’s what I am used to seeing. For one thing, this story seems to be more about challenging yourself in your life goals and helping you glide along it, and less about the successful startup frenzy (Runa) started by two young overconfident Western men going to an Exotic Place (the Amazon) and mining it for proverbs and other such sellable faraway marketing tools. As a Brazilian, this critical eye was almost an obligatory role. However, something made me believe that this story would not be about the cynical typecast I just described. I was skeptical but willing. Maybe it was the positive reviews, or the description, or perhaps just wishful thinking— but I had a sliver of receptivity to Tyler Gage’s story. I wanted it to be good. Gage never adopts exploitative language, nor does he try to clear his name “just for the record” with a description of the locals that overcompensates and reveals hubris and insecurity instead (we all know this person- “I went to Thailand/Costa Rica/Kenya/Ecuador and the locals were SO kind, gracious, and welcoming. I love them. The most selfless people I have ever met- it was life changing. They have so little yet life so fully! The kids were cute and I was welcomed into their home- we became like family, me doing them favors and them sharing meals with me.”). Happily, this book had none of that. I had to check myself to put away my critical eye and enjoy the book for what it was. Once I did that (after the Introduction when I had a better sense of the book), it was smooth sailing.

Gage is a good writer. He immediately creates a character for himself (personality, temperament, and purpose), and by page 7, the narrator is no longer a mystery. He is identifiable and in touch with the reader. From doing a quick background search before starting Chapter 1, it is evident that he is educated, talented, and has clearly earned a spot of respect for his business accomplishments. Gage doesn’t just create a social enterprise, but he makes something real out of it- something sustainable, innovative, curious, and ambitious. These are all qualities I believe make for an excellent social enterprise project, and are essential in an admirable human being as well.

I appreciate how Tyler Gage centralizes this book’s purpose on “pulling lessons to live your mission in business and in life.” Unfortunately, due to a lot of transatlantic moving around, I had to pick up and put down this book several times, which fractured the smooth reading of the book. I will have to go back and read it cover to cover to appreciate it fully. If you’re looking for a social enterprise read that is in touch, is not exploitative, is not gratuitously self-congratulatory, and focuses less on the project and more on the lessons, read this book.

Roland McGill says

Fully Alive shows that with hard work and dedication two realities polar to one another can be used to make an awesome product and help a large community to gain financial stability. I was amazed by how truthful and dedicated Tyler is to helping the indigenous communities in South America.

Danny says

As I indicated when I first read Tyler's beautifully-written book, through both his actions and his words, Tyler is an ongoing inspiration to entrepreneurship students and practitioners. He has a rare talent for communicating and motivating authentically - simply by telling his story. Tyler is a model that I hope my students emulate for Runa's double bottom line approach to entrepreneurial success. I am proud of him for walking his talk with such high integrity and for sharing his approach with the next generations of entrepreneurship students eager to follow in his path.

