

# Focus Today

## Celebrity life coach brings



Robin Sharma turned his back on his law career to become an author. He has since written 10 books and is helping people around the world balance their lives, writes **Adrian Murphy**

■ Lifestyle guru Robin Sharma has been in Dubai to pass on his tips to local businessmen  
ALIA AL SHAMSI

**THE**  
INTERVIEW

## » SHARMA'S BOOKS

Robin Sharma's career as an author began with *MegaLiving: Powerful Wisdom For Self-Leadership* in 1994. It contains 200 lessons of success and a coaching programme to integrate the lessons into daily life.

Sharma's second and most famous title, *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari: A Spiritual Fable About Fulfilling Your Dreams and Reaching Your Destiny*, was published in 1997. It tells the story of a superstar lawyer whose

lifestyle leads him to an almost fatal heart attack in a packed courtroom. In 1998, he released *Leadership Wisdom From The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari: The 8 Rituals of Visionary Leaders*, focusing on businesspeople.

In 1999 he published *Who Will Cry When You Die? Life Lessons From The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*, and *Family Wisdom From The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari: Nurturing the Leader Within Your Child*, in 2001.

TALK  
BACK

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# monk's wise words to UAE

Despite inspiring millions of people around the world with his books and speeches, lifestyle guru Robin Sharma remains a humble man.

Upon learning his own role model, Sir Richard Branson, has just walked out of the hotel, the author looks stunned and speaks highly of the Virgin Atlantic chairman, who was in town to launch his London to Dubai flights this week.

"He is one of the people I would most like to meet and is someone I have always admired," he says of the British tycoon. "He is fearless, and this is something I try to advise people to be – to run towards their problems rather than run away from them."

Sharma, a one-time unhappy lawyer, is now the bestselling author of titles including *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari: A Spiritual Fable About Fulfilling Your Dreams and Reaching Your Destiny*, and has coached executives from some of the world's top companies.

He is also booked for speeches across Europe, the Americas and Asia way into the middle of 2007.

On Sunday and Monday, Sharma held Elite Performers Workshops at the Godolphin

## "Dubai is a great example of thinking outside the box – look at The Palm"

Ballroom, in Emirates Towers, attended by hundreds of business leaders from across the Gulf.

Dr Udaya Indrarathna, a senior manager for the Dubai Government's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, who having read the books had been itching to meet Sharma for months, says the sage's words have changed his life.

"Before the workshops my diary would be full of work appointments and I used to postpone things," he says. "Now my diary has appointments with my family, massages and exercise – as well as work."

"Robin has completely changed my way of thinking and made things clearer. Not only me but all my family and colleagues. He is very close to our hearts."

### CHANGING LIVES

Dr Indrarathna, plans meetings with his family in which they spend quality time together and go on outings – something he said was unthinkable before Sharma's workshops.

Sharma says this is this kind of reaction that makes his job worthwhile – and more rewarding than his previous profession.

"I was unhappy as a lawyer. I had chosen a profession for all the wrong reasons – to be success-



■ The author says he quit his career as a lawyer because he felt he was working for all the wrong reasons and therefore decided to put his new ideas down on paper

ful and to please other people," says the 41-year-old. "I betrayed myself in that respect, so I went on a search to find some ideas."

During his quest, Sharma took a step back and started looking at the world differently. A keen reader, he decided to put his thoughts on paper and his books are a way of improving his life.

"I wrote *Monk* nine years ago and it was very philosophical and answered the questions I had at the time," he says. "I am outrageously curious."

Sharma is publishing his 10th book, *The Greatness Guide*, which is about how humans can reach personal greatness and leadership by better time management.

"A lot of people sacrifice health for wealth. Many businessmen may have millions of dollars, but they take their health and family for granted," he says. "You don't want to be the richest person in the graveyard."

As an author and a leadership consultant, Sharma says he helps individuals and organisations become world-class at what they do and to achieve their goals.

"There are too many books that are philosophical and theoretical and don't create answers," he says. "I am result-driven and work on personal and organisational levels to achieve this."

Sharma says that people need to take risks in their lives to achieve their goals, but they also need to take time to assess their lives and find out what it is that they want to achieve.

"The greatest risk in life is not taking risks. We never regret the risks we took on our deathbeds – but the opportunities we didn't seize," he says. "I am constantly revisiting my goals and I try to institutionalise reflection – most people do not think about their goals until they get old."

Sharma also says that people can often be chasing too many dreams and quotes the Chinese philosopher Confucius who said: "The man who chases two rabbits catches none."

Sharma says: "World-class business leaders are acutely aware of their priorities, which gives them the power to say 'no' to what is not important. Once you know the vital few priorities, you can build and schedule around these things."

The father-of-two is acutely aware of how important family and relationships are and he says these are two of the things that are more difficult to obtain than a huge bank balance.

"If you want to create a world-

class life you have to be disciplined and work hard," says the Canadian. "The best things in life require the greatest sacrifice and are the greatest challenges."

In the past, Sharma has worked with two billionaires, numerous CEOs and companies ranging from FedEx, IBM and Microsoft to Nike and Panasonic. He says Dubai is the perfect place for his work because it is home to many successful businessmen who want to learn how to become all-round successes.

your health a priority. Thirdly, you must have daily goals to give you focus and last, but not least, is to exercise.

"The next thing would then be to evaluate each day and keep reassessing goals and objectives," he says.

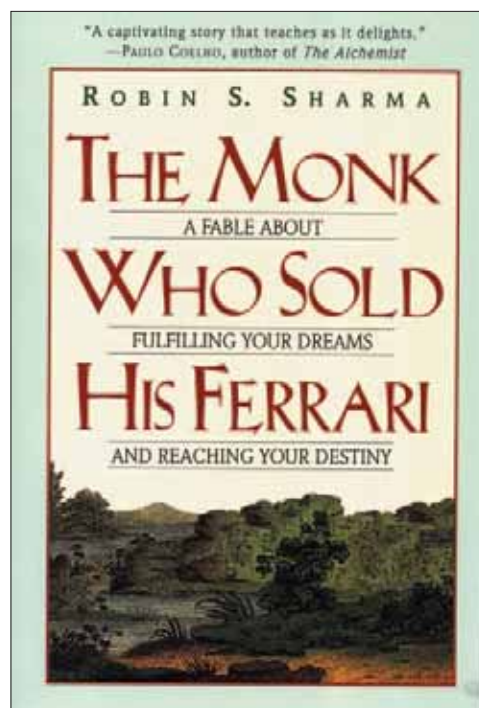
Sharma says there are certain things which keep him alert, including his ritual morning coffee, where he just sits and does nothing for about 30 minutes.

"This allows me to reflect and relax," he says. "There are also things you can do long term, such as having a massage, I have one every seven days, which energises my body and mind."

Sharma also works out four times a week to beat stress, which he says also gives him more energy and encourages clear thinking. He says that some of his advice is simple and obvious, but some has more insight.

"For instance, if you are attempting to do something difficult, I try to get people to take steps over 30 days, as it then becomes a habit," he says. "I advise them to go one per cent each day and move up to 30 per cent and I call it 'the one per cent wins over time'."

Sharma's next stop is Mexico and he is scheduled for visits to Turkey in September, India in October and South Africa in November. He hopes to make more people reach their potential over the coming years because, as he says: "A life is a terrible thing to waste."



■ Sharma has written 10 books, the most famous of which is *The Monk*, which tells the story of a superstar lawyer who has a near-fatal heart attack due to his hectic lifestyle

### INNOVATIVE IDEAS

"Dubai is a great example of thinking outside the box," he says. "Look at the ski dome and The Palm – most places say we have run out of land, but in Dubai they just add to it and it is an innovative place to be."

"The interest here in Dubai is amazing. There are so many people who want to take their success to the next level, but struggle to enjoy life and to find happiness while creating their successes."

He says his time is very strategic and as well as being a success himself, he always makes time for his children, which he says you only get one chance to do.

"Some people will have \$100 million, but no time to spend with their kids, so you have to balance business, health and family issues," he says, adding that there are four key factors to staying focussed.

The first is to get up early each morning. The second is to make