

Sometimes all you need to turn hope into action is to write your promises down and say them out loud—to make a promise to no one but yourself. This book is about many things—faith, courage, creativity, determination—but above all it's about the promises we make to ourselves about the future. These stories will inspire you to believe in yourself and to believe in the power that each and every one of us has to shape our lives through the power of “I Will.”



Photograph by Chris Orwig

SHAUN TOMSON is a businessman and inspirational speaker living in Santa Barbara, California, with his wife, Carla, and son, Luke. He is a former World Surfing Champion, and has been listed as one of the 25 most influential surfers of the century (*Surfer*, 1999) and one of the 16 greatest surfers of all time (*Surfing*, 2004). He is a business finance graduate from the University of Natal and has created two popular apparel brands: Instinct in the 1980s and Solitude in the '90s. He is the author of *Surfer's Code*

(2006), producer of the documentary film *Bustin' Down the Door* (2006), and a board member of Surfrider Foundation and the Santa Barbara Boys & Girls Club.

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SHAUN TOMSON WITH PATRICK MOSER

THE CODE



THE POWER OF “I WILL”



THE CODE

BY

WORLD-CHAMPION SURFER
SHAUN TOMSON

WITH PATRICK MOSER

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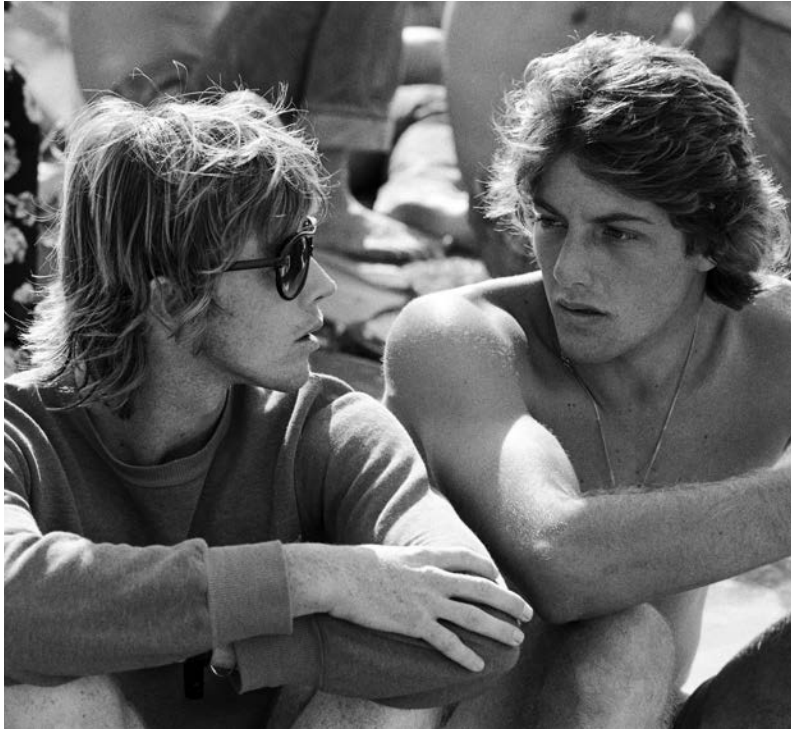
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I WILL DREAM

No professional world tour existed for surfers in 1975. We had contests here and there with a small amount of prize money, but no one made a living traveling the world as a surfer. And because no one did it, no one really thought it could be done.

Except a few dreamers.

We were young. It was late February on the North Shore of O‘ahu—the end of the winter surf season—and Rabbit Bartholomew (an Australian) and I were standing at Ehukai Beach Park watching twelve-foot swells peaking over Pipeline’s empty second reef. We’d both had fantastic seasons in the Hawaiian contests. In three months we’d gone from nobodies to being recognized as two of the hottest surfers in the world. I won the world championship two years later, in 1977; Rabbit won it the year after me. By that time the pro tour was in full swing, and our dream of turning a lifestyle into a living was coming true.



Discussing the future with my great rival and friend Wayne “Rabbit” Bartholomew on the beach at the Banzai Pipeline in Hawai‘i, 1975. Photograph by Dan Merkel.

But on the beach that day at Ehukai the pro tour was pure imagination. We watched this last big swell of the season roll in and talked about whether to paddle out. We also talked about our futures. I was headed back to South Africa to take a law degree at the University of Natal in Durban. I asked Rabbit about his plans.

“I’m going to be a pro surfer, mate. I’m taking this dream and running with it.”

Pro surfer. Sometimes you only need to hear someone say it out loud. Sometimes you only need to say it to yourself to make a dream come true.



Where do dreams begin? For Rabbit it began in hardship on the Gold Coast of Australia: parents’ divorce, poverty, and eviction. The silver lining was that he ended up living by the beach and surfing a lot to stay out of trouble. By the time he was finishing Miami High School, he’d already decided he wanted to be the best surfer in the world. The only problem was, the last contest to decide a world champion took place in 1972 in San Diego, California. It was nearing the end of the Vietnam War at that time, and many young people—surfers included—had turned away from competition and organized sports. Rabbit’s dream was like this beautiful painting with nowhere to hang it and no one around to admire it.

Of course, Rabbit wasn’t going to let that stop him. The North Shore of O‘ahu was the center of the surf world in those days, especially Sunset Beach and Pipeline. All the best photographers hung out at those beaches, and getting your picture in the magazines—on the cover, best of all—was a way to make a name for yourself and get invited to the all-important Hawaiian contests. The surfers who won those contests also won the respect of their peers and were considered the best in the world. Here’s how Rabbit tells the story of chasing his dream in his book *Bustin’ Down the Door*:

I remember in early ’73 I decided to do something about it, so I put on my best pair of board shorts, and my only clean shirt and I strode confidently into the Commonwealth Bank at Coolangatta . . . to have my five minutes with the manager of the bank. And basically, I said, “Sir, I’m a professional surfer and I need \$500 because I’ve got to be in Hawaii because that’s where my future lies.” Well he looked down the end of his glasses at me and said, “You’ve got