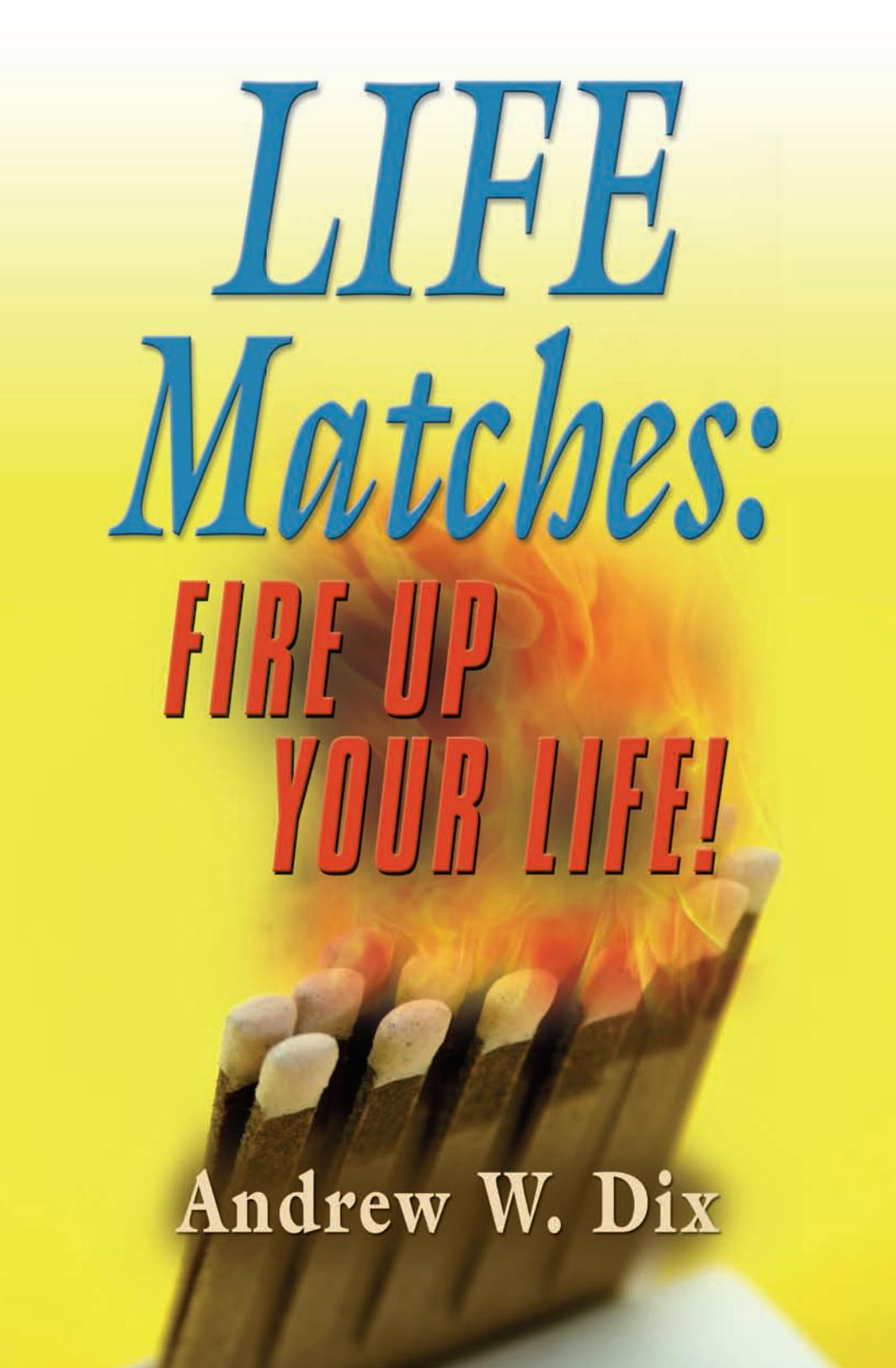


Tim Davis is a fizzled out director of sales for a leading advertising sales company. A possible heart attack forces him to confront his life's priorities. Tim discovers how to "Fire Up!" his life by learning how to use his God-given strengths and talents more effectively. A simple book of matches sparks Tim to live a satisfying life. This business fiction book will show you how Life Matches: Fire Up Your Life!

**Life Matches: Fire Up Your Life!**

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*LIFE*  
*Matches:*

***FIRE UP  
YOUR LIFE!***

**Andrew W. Dix**

**Life Matches: Fire Up Your Life!**

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## Chapter 3: A Gift You Can Use



Paul was pleased to see that Tim not only had arrived, but was on time and seemed to be in a reasonable mood for their Monday lunch meeting. Shaking Tim's hand, Paul said, "I won't ask you how it's going. Instead, I'll simply say thanks for coming! I'm glad to see you and can't wait to get your take on my session for the managers' summit meeting."

"I'll need to make this quick, because I have a conference call at one o'clock."

Paul nodded. "Not a problem. This shouldn't take long as it's really more of a story or maybe even a parable than a presentation."

Tim and Paul ordered their food and drinks and after their server left their table, Paul said to Tim, "I have a free gift for you. It's a gift you can use, if you choose to accept it."

Tim looked somewhat apprehensively across the table at Paul and said a long, cautious, "Okay..."

Paul reached into his shirt pocket and tossed across the table to Tim a white book of cardboard matches with red words printed on it.

Somewhat surprised, Tim looked at the book of matches and with a touch of sarcasm said, "Ah, thanks Paul, this is just what I needed. I've been considering some life changes lately. Maybe taking up smoking is the answer or better yet, perhaps a little arson could put an end to my overflowing inbasket and to-do list."

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Paul smiled, “You’ve just discovered two of the main points of my gift. As you can see, printed on the spine of the matchbook are the words, ‘A Gift You Can Use.’ So, my first point is that this book of matches is a gift you can use however you choose. You can even choose to throw them away or to never use them. The choice is totally yours.”

“Profound,” Tim said with an even larger hint of sarcasm than before as he glanced around the room for the server.

Undaunted by Tim’s sarcasm, Paul continued, “Point number two is that you have done nothing to deserve or earn this gift. It was freely given to you. But as with any gift, you must choose to accept it.” Paul paused for dramatic effect and then looked Tim squarely in the eyes and asked him, “Do you accept this free gift?”

Tim made a short, outward sniff of his nose that turned into a slight smile, “Of course Paul, how could I ever refuse such a wonderful and useful gift?”

*Andrew Dix*

“You’d be surprised at how many people refuse the gifts they’ve been given, or even worse yet, accept the gift and then fail to ever use it. So let me begin at the beginning. I call the gift you’ve just received, ‘Life Matches.’ It’s a physical reminder of the material I’ve been preparing for the managers’ summit meeting on strengths-based leadership.

“The concept was formed from the research of a worldwide survey of peoples’ areas of personal strengths and weaknesses, conducted by the Gallup Organization and written about in a book called *StrengthsFinder 2.0* by Tom Rath. Gallup’s scientists, led by Dr. Donald O. Clifton in 1998, developed an assessment tool to allow a person to analyze 34 different areas of his or her life and discover what gifts and talents he or she might have. Once we know what our areas of strength and talents are, then the question becomes how do we put our strengths to use?”

The server, upon seeing the book of matches in Tim’s hands as he served lunch, cautioned that it was a smoke-free restaurant. To which Tim replied, “I think the only smoke is coming from the guy across the table from me and is directed up my dress!” Politely smiling, the server left having issued his warning.

Paul began again, “This Gallup study has been conducted over the past 40 years and I can assure you that it is quite comprehensive, valid and reliable. Let me go over some of the highlights from the study that I was hoping to touch on during the managers’ summit meeting.

“First, out of 10 million people Gallup surveyed, only about 30 percent think they have the opportunity to do what they do best

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every day at their jobs. That means around 70 percent of people don't have the opportunity to do what they do best every day on their jobs."

Tim nodded empathetically.

"Secondly, a survey showed that of the people who said they don't get to do what they do best or exercise their strengths on the job, every one of those people were not 'emotionally engaged' in their work.

"And thirdly, people who do get to work daily using their strengths report 600 percent more on-the-job engagement and 300 percent agreement with having an excellent quality of life in general."

"So basically," Tim interrupted Paul, "what you're telling me is that if you get to do what you like to do, and what you're good at doing daily on your job, you will like your job and life more? What a news flash!" exclaimed Tim with a fresh dose of sarcasm. "So, where and how, do your little matches come into play?"

"My Life Matches," Paul countered, "come into play to reinforce the point of remembering to focus on your natural, God-given strengths, gifts and talents instead of wasting energy, time and efforts in a losing battle to improve your weaknesses. Let me demonstrate my point with the help of your new 'Life Matches' matchbook."

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