

Talking truth to teenagers

Determined not to let life get him down, 20-year-old Sacha Krjatian has published a book designed to encourage other teenagers to live their dreams based on his own experiences. He shares his story with Mitchell Jordan.

Completing Year 12 is hard enough for most teenagers, but Sacha Krjatian faced another hurdle when, at 17 years old, he found himself facing the prospect of being homeless.

Forced to live with family friends, Sacha moved four times. He's hardly a stranger to transience - born in the Republic of Georgia, Sacha lived in Germany and New Zealand before settling in Sydney, Australia, but the constant interruptions to his home life meant that concentrating on school and studies was not an easy task.

"I was faced with family circumstances that were outside my control," he says. "It was a very difficult time for me."

When faced with adversity, many buckle under the pressure. Sacha, however, chose to do the opposite.

"I realised that there were certain things in life that I couldn't change and the only thing I could do was change the way I react to the circumstances that life put in front of me," he recalls.

"I decided that I would no longer be the victim of my life circumstances and instead I would take the positive action that I needed in order to get my life back on track."

He went on to finish high school with a final mark of 94.15 and was granted admission to uni-

versity, where he studied a business degree.

Turning a new page

The experiences of that transient time have never left Sacha, particularly as he met others who had been in or were currently going through similar situations.

"I also met some people who were at a crossroads in life and after I would listen to their story and share my

“ Find your passion and follow your dream, no matter how big or small it is. ”

- Sacha Krjatian

own, we'd usually come up with ways for them to move forward. After such conversations, people started to come back to thank me for inspiring them," he says.

"One day, an idea came to me - what if I write a book to inspire people who I might not meet?"

Writing a book, or undertaking any kind of

major project, takes time and dedication. Between 2008 and 2010, *Teens Big Dreams* went through many changes and was professionally edited by Sacha's sister, Anna, along with input from Avril Henry, an expert on Generation Y and leadership.

"The process of writing, editing, designing and publishing *Teens Big Dreams* was extremely challenging," Sacha says. "It was like putting together 1000 jigsaw puzzle pieces and I can say now with confidence that it was the most rewarding experience of my life."

A combination of self-help, motivation and stories from other youth, *Teens Big Dreams* is a sound piece of work that demonstrates, among other things, Sacha's willingness to open his heart and help others get their lives on track. Since it was published in 2010, the book has found a home on the shelves of readers of all ages around Australia. Sacha even found himself spruiking it on the weather section of the nightly news.

"I have been honoured and humbled by a very positive response to my book," he says. "*Teens Big Dreams* has been read by people of all ages - from 10-year-olds through to grandparents. The book has inspired readers and in many occasions, had a positive life-changing



Forced to leave Georgia, his country of birth, Sacha Krjatian endured difficult times before he decided that he would not be a victim of adversity, but would change the way he reacted to it.

impact."

Not only did Sacha decide to self-publish, but he also created his own company, Sachas. "I decided to start a brand name, called Sachas, with a Sachas 50/50 business model - where 50 per cent of profits from every sale would go to Sachas Foundation - a foundation which would give back to the world and provide resources and opportunities to people to help them follow their passions and dreams," he says.

There are also plans to

publish books by other authors through Sachas in the future.

Always on the go and bursting with enthusiasm, Sacha could not be drawn on what he is working on next; except that he is working on something that will be unveiled in early 2011.

Sacha's advice to other teenagers is to focus on what will make them happy, regardless of the scale. "Find your passion and follow your dream, no matter how big or small it is," he says.

Tomorrow series joins *Great Gatsby* in NSW

Two beloved books, *The Great Gatsby* and *Tomorrow When the War Began*, now have one major thing in common - NSW.

Premier Kristina Keneally said the sequel of *Tomorrow When the War Began* will join a long list of high-profile films, including Baz Luhrmann's 3D version of *The Great Gatsby*, which are set to be produced in NSW.

Ms Keneally said the "coup" will see NSW remain Australia's film and television capital.

"It'll be a wonderful boost to the economy, it'll ensure that people in the jobs of producing the film are employed here in NSW, keeping those skills, keeping those talents in our state and ensuring that our film industry has a very viable next year." *Tomorrow 2* - the working title of the sequel - is expected to generate more than 450 jobs and inject about \$40 million into the NSW economy.

It is set to commence filming in September, the majority of which will be done in the Hunter Valley and the Blue Mountains.

The star of the movie, Caitlin Stasey, won the 2010 Australian Inside Film best actress award for her performance.

Ms Keneally said films including *Walking With Dinosaurs 3D*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, Ridley Scott's *Prometheus*, *Thor* and *Captain America: The First Avenger* all have production work taking place in NSW.

Ms Keneally said the story of *Tomorrow When the War Began* was one familiar to her as the March 26 election draws near.

"I quite like this film. It's about an insurgent force being led by a gutsy young woman fighting against an invading army," Ms Keneally joked.

The original *Tomorrow When the War Began*, written and directed by Australian Stuart Beattie, was the highest grossing Australian film of 2010.

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