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The sovereign of self-help recalls his favorite songs—and his least favorite hairstyle—from the eighties.

# Q:

"ONE NIGHT EARLY ON, MY WIFE ORDERED A BANANA SPLIT. I SAID, 'WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU?' SHE SAID, 'NOTHING, YOU ANAL BASTARD.'"

**Q:** You've said that in your early twenties, you were poor and living in Venice Beach, wondering what to do with yourself, when you went for a long run, and things just changed. Was it really that simple?

**A:** No, but it was that emotional. I was in a 400-square-foot bachelor apartment and couldn't even pay my rent, and I decided to go for a run—I was about 30 pounds heavier than I am now. I took a Walkman and played Heart's "Barracuda," and I ran on the beach as hard as I could. Today, I understand that I was making a radical change in my physiology, which affects your biochemistry, which then changes your mindset.

**Q:** On the cover of *Inner Strength*, your new book on what you call the six primal needs, you're not smiling as wide as usual. You're scruffier, a little darker.

**A:** That's who I am today. I don't think I'm dark. There was a photo of me on the hardcover of *Awaken the Giant Within*, and I had glued hair and I was pointing with my finger. It was so eighties. I think most people look back at those days with some trauma—I know I do. When I turned 39 or 40, I grew a beard. And it hasn't really changed

in eight or nine years.

**Q:** You're a very intense guy. What do you do to come down?

**A:** I've played polo for about 10 years. I divide my time between four homes—when I'm in Fiji, I scuba dive, and I snowboard at my place in Sun Valley.

**Q:** Does your wife ever say, "Tony, for God's sake, will you get out of self-help mode"?

**A:** I used to be so rigid. I hadn't had chocolate in 20 years, I didn't touch ice cream. When I first went out with her, she talked about wheatgrass—and then one night, after dinner, she orders this banana split. I said,

"What the hell is the matter with you?" And she said, "Nothing, you anal bastard." She loosened me up completely.

**Q:** Do you ever read self-help books?

**A:** I'm more of a biography guy. I like to read something real, and the reason self-help has such a bad reputation is because most of it is a pump-up—and most of it, frankly, I don't have a lot of respect for.

**Q:** Are there prominent people who don't want to say publicly that you're coaching them?

**A:** Well, of course. I have a financial trader who's a very private guy—he calls me when he's lost \$50 million and he's going to get his guts checked. The people I get are incredibly diverse: Anthony Hopkins, Quincy Jones, Andre Agassi, Serena Williams, Green Day.

**Q:** So Billie Joe Armstrong calls you to ask questions about music?

**A:** He doesn't call me for musical decisions. Before their American Idiot Tour, a lot of people thought they were just making the same stuff, and that they weren't very strong. But he got my tapes, and they transformed his psychology. When they were at the Grammys, he was listening to my tapes backstage, before he went on. I listen to U2 and him; he listens to U2 and me.

**Q:** I'm sure everybody assumes you wake up in the morning and listen to Van Halen's "Jump."

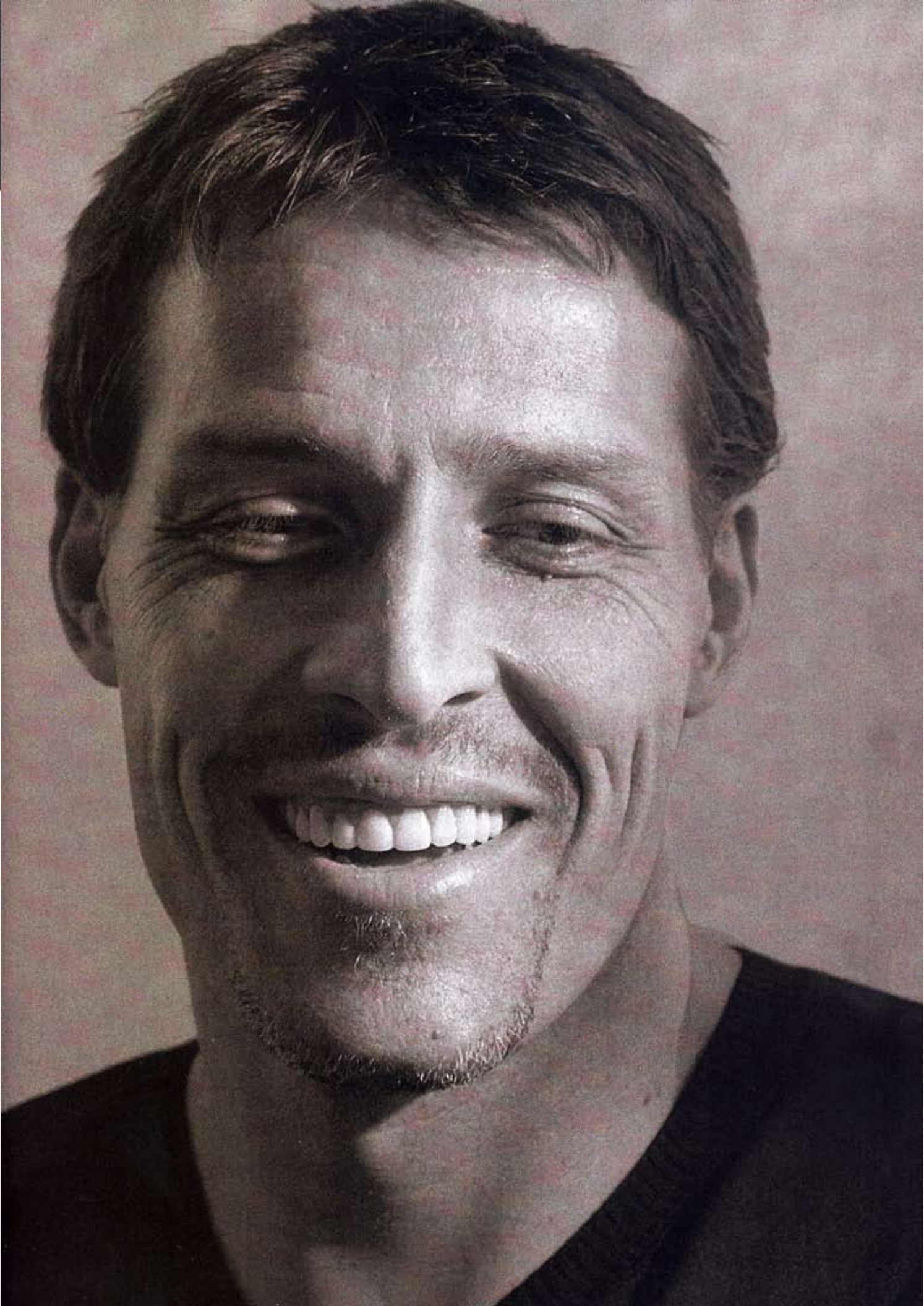
**A:** And that my hair is still glued together. I'll hear something like that from the eighties at the right time, and I'll love it still. Music is one of the ultimate triggers of memory.

**Q:** Where were you when you first heard Lionel Richie's "All Night Long"?

**A:** Man, I remember the girl I was with...

**Q:** No kidding? Tell me about that.

**A:** No, no. That'll stay private. ■



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