

How Is That Working?

A Roadmap from Rat Race to Freedom

Robert Hollis

Success Coach to 44 Millionaires

with Max J. Miller

Author, How Do You Know That?

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*To all the dreamers
and doers who have “ears to hear”
and by faith and determination
become the “good soil.”*

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PREFACE:

Ordinary to Extraordinary

If you asked me for one word to describe Robert Hollis, it would have to be *extraordinary*. If you met him in a restaurant, at a church coffee hour, or at a NASCAR race, you could easily imagine him working in a cubicle for a living or driving a truck. Robert *seems* like that friendly guy next door who always has a joke to tell, loves cars and sports, and takes his family on vacations to Disney World. He *seems* very likable—but *ordinary*. But spend just a bit of time talking with Robert, and you'll be quite clear he's not just some guy in a diner. Before you know it, Robert would have you thinking and feeling things you haven't thought before (or not for a long time). It sneaks up on you because Robert doesn't strike you as someone trained in psychology. Nor does he sound like some eloquent motivational speaker.

Nevertheless, I am confident that after just one conversation with Robert, you would have a fresh perspective that leaves you somehow empowered and liberated. I've experienced this firsthand and witnessed Robert's impact on the lives of so many others. Something about his down-home style encourages people to open up to Robert with a vulnerability that allows for a remarkably authentic conversation.

He has an uncanny knack for getting inside your head and pinpointing the issues that derail your success. Though he has painstakingly acquired wisdom that transcends one lifetime by learning from many mentors and studying the great texts of success, Robert has an amazing ability to distill complex ideas down to pithy expressions and vivid, memorable stories.

Robert is on a mission. He's determined to inspire people everywhere to reach for their dreams. As an *entrepreneurial evangelist* he seizes every opportunity to encourage all who will listen to take ownership of their economic future. "If an injured, broke auto mechanic from North Dakota can build a business empire that spans across nine countries and touches hundreds of thousands of lives," Robert says, "You can achieve your dreams, too."

For years, people have asked Robert to write a book or develop public seminars. "I'm not a writer," Robert says. "I don't even think I'm a great speaker. I'm just an ordinary guy who was blessed to learn some important lessons from some very successful people, and I've been doubly blessed to be able to share these lessons with others who have applied them to have a better life." Understatement adds to Robert's charm.

I was writing a book about contemporary paths of personal development and transformation, and I asked Robert if I could borrow parts of his story to illustrate some ideas in the book. He generously supported my dream with many stories and ideas, and he even allowed me to use one of his famous, mind-tweaking questions as its title: *How Do You Know That?* We soon realized Robert's ideas and stories could be expanded into a separate book, which has taken the form you are about to enjoy.

I have been blessed to enjoy Robert's friendship for two decades. In addition watching and listening to Robert from a seat in his audience for numerous presentations, I've had the opportunity to share many days with Robert in each of our homes and also traveling together. Since we decided to create this book, I have transcribed dozens of hours of his audio and video presentations and extensive, recorded conversations. Though the narrator throughout this book is Robert, I struggled at times to convey into print his charisma, wit, and effervescent style. To the extent that I have failed in that effort,

thank God for YouTube! You can get a feel for his inimitable style by watching any of his videos online. I am honored and humbled to have a part in bringing to you Robert's encouraging message of hope and possibility.

I have one warning about reading this book, listening to Robert speak, or meeting him in person—he's like a locksmith for your mind and heart. He will break in and take from you something you hold dear: Robert will steal all your excuses for not having the life of your dreams! After spending time with Robert, you will never be able to blame your circumstances, upbringing, personal weaknesses, family, friends or the government. You will no longer be able to complain, "I never had the opportunity to achieve my dreams." You've been warned.

We look forward to hearing from you as you apply Robert's wisdom and insights to your own journey. Happy travels as you pursue your dreams!

Max J Miller
Washington, DC

INTRODUCTION:

What Happened to the American Dream?

*“If what you know isn’t so,
when would you want to know that?”*

—Robert Hollis

A news anchor recently reported that many people now believe that the American Dream has broken down. It makes me wonder what people think of as the American Dream. On a recent Sunday afternoon, as I was driving down Pacific Coast Highway with my wife, Teri, I looked over at her and said, “This is *my* American Dream right here.” I’m living it and loving it each and every day.

But it wasn’t always that way. I’ll tell you my whole story later, but the movie trailer version goes something like this: After a traumatic accident, I almost lost everything. Then I met a mentor who empowered me to achieve success at levels I never imagined possible.

It’s been twenty-five years since I met Mr. Bill Gould, my original mentor, and had my first taste of success in business. Today I have so many streams of residual income it’s challenging to keep track of it all. I have the freedom to enjoy my family and do the things I love. I have friends all over the world. Teri and I have an amazing view of the Pacific Ocean out our bedroom window, and we enjoy several exotic vacations every year. Most important to me, I’ve been blessed be able to provide mentorship for many other people as Bill did for me. Helping others achieve their dreams is truly my life work and passion.

TWO PATHS TO THE TOP

We've heard a great deal of debate in the political arena on the subject of "one percenters" and "ninety-nine percenters." I don't engage in this war of words. The way this discussion has been framed can never lead to anything productive. It's based on a snapshot—at a moment in time, one percent of the population possesses ninety-nine percent of the world's wealth. But this snapshot fails to tell the story that really matters to those among the "ninety-nine percenters" who desire to migrate toward the land of the one percenters. They want to hear the story of how the ninety-nine percenters made the journey up the economic ladder.

That's *my* story. Though I don't participate in the political squabble, I don't shy away from telling my "Horatio Alger" story. In fact, when people ask how I went from rags to riches, I love to get in their heads a bit.

"Have you ever heard of those pyramid-shaped marketing companies that promote products through everyday people?"

They nod.

I ask, "Have you heard that the guy at the top makes all the money?"

They nod, sometimes with a look of concern.

Then I say with a big grin, "I'm *that* guy!"

Not too long ago, rags to riches stories like mine played an integral part in the character of the American Dream. But over the past century, this theme of our collective vision has taken quite a beating. Hollywood has repeatedly featured business leaders as inherently corrupt and evil in films like *Citizen Kane*, *Wall Street*, *Broadcast News*, *The Firm*, *Greed*, *Silkwood*, and *Erin Brockovich*. These are great films and important stories, but when is the last time you saw a film portray an entrepreneur or business leader positively?

News reports of business tend to follow the same pattern, focusing on scandals and stories of shameless corruption. From the “robber barons” of the industrial age to Bernie Madoff to the leaders of Enron, Exxon (Valdez oil spill), and BP (Gulf oil spill), and the financial services companies of this decade that almost drove us into a new Great Depression, many rich and powerful persons have earned the distrust of the ninety-nine percenters.

Yet while the general public maintains a cynical view of the corporate establishment, we still have tremendous admiration for that rare individual—such as Steve Jobs, Warren Buffet, Bill Gates, or Richard Branson—who builds an empire from scratch by virtue of creativity, vision, and tenacity. The stories of these extraordinary entrepreneurs inspire us and spark our imagination.

While most of us may fantasize about winding up atop a huge business empire, relatively few of us ever venture onto the entrepreneurial path. Often when I suggest that individuals consider going into their own business, they cite dramatic statistics of how many entrepreneurs fail (usually between 85 and 96 percent). For some reason, the same logic doesn’t stop the masses from buying lottery tickets (which are almost guaranteed not to yield a return). Nevertheless, the price of a lottery ticket seems to be the maximum most folks are willing to risk toward the dream of becoming a one-percenter.

A CLEAR CHOICE

Let me ask you a question: What is your American Dream? What is your idea of success? When I was growing up in North Dakota, I was told the path to success would begin by getting the best education I could. Then, if I found a good job, worked very hard and kept my nose clean (I was told), I could climb the corporate ladder and achieve all my heart’s desires.

Is *your* American Dream some variation on that program? How long have you been pursuing that path? *How is that working for you?* If you *are* satisfied and that path *is* working for you, I am truly happy for you. Keep up the good work, and may God continue to bless you.

On the other hand, if you are no longer confident that this path will pay off as you once believed, please stop and consider a new path! Some wise person once said, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.”

Though our economy owes a great deal of credit for its strength and resilience to the spirit of entrepreneurship, the masses have bought into an *imposter* of the American Dream that (in my opinion) has more in common with the lottery. This substitute for the American Dream proposes an alternative path to the top of the proverbial heap. Instead of the risk-filled path of the entrepreneur who creates a business—and sometimes an industry—from scratch, the “safer, saner” path, according to this *imitation* American Dream, entails climbing to the top of an existing corporate ladder. If you choose the right industry and the right company, you might, with hard work, loyalty, and a bit of luck, make it to the top of that corporate pyramid. You might win the lottery, too, but the odds are not in your favor.

As you read this book, you will be confronted with a clear choice between two distinct paths. One path promises security, stability, and a shot at a country-club lifestyle for the few who climb the ever-narrowing ladder of corporate success.

Because you *are* reading this book, I’m willing to bet that if you search your heart, being a cog in someone else’s dream machine can never fulfill *your* American Dream. If you are more like me, that path offers an *illusion* of security and stability in the form of golden handcuffs. I believe the heart of the American Dream has to do with *freedom*. It’s about that “Life, Liberty and the *pursuit* of Happiness” that our Declaration of Independence calls “unalienable Rights” and affirms as having been “endowed by (our) Creator.”

So we choose a different path—one that promises *risk-filled adventure and challenges* in place of security and stability. It offers the possibility of carving out our own destiny. And today, the entrepreneurial path offers *better* odds of improving your lifestyle than can be expected from the competitive corporate environment. Millions of entrepreneurs make above-average incomes while millions of corporate workers are retiring every month on incomes near or below the poverty level. Those of us who have tasted the joys of entrepreneurship think the term *job* stands for *Just Over Broke*. Whether or not you achieve your goals, this path offers the experience of really being alive you could never find on that other path.

HOW DID YOU DO IT?

I'm an "entrepreneurial evangelist." I look for every opportunity to encourage people to dare to build their own empire rather than try to claw their way to the top of somebody else's. But I'm also an "entrepreneurial educator," and that responsibility entails painting an honest picture of the challenges and risks. If you listen to the stories of entrepreneurs who failed in their effort to build a business (a huge percent of *successful* entrepreneurs have failed in at least one previous enterprise) you will hear two recurring themes: 1) insufficient capital or cash flow and 2) lack of knowledge and experience in running a business.

It's strange that in spite of well-publicized statistics on business failures, people still imagine they can succeed without any entrepreneurial experience or know-how. Maybe people think that, because they have worked *in* a business, they understand the critical factors involved in a successful enterprise. It may also have something to do with the independent temperament of those who are attracted to entrepreneurship.

You look around at any other profession and you find people get trained before they start performing their duties. As a mechanic, I couldn't even smog-test a car without training and certification. But would-be entrepreneurs frequently jump right in without understanding how business works and—within a short time—they find themselves overwhelmed.

They often know little about marketing so they try to sell their products or services to friends, colleagues, and family members (with awkward results). If things go well, they often try to expand by hiring friends and family—adding unnecessary tensions to the operation. Then, when they run out of cash and customers, they quit and blame the economy, their chosen industry, or some other external circumstance. So the general public's view of entrepreneurship comes from the blind leading the blind in the dark. They don't have a clue.

When people ask me for my secret to building a successful enterprise, I can offer several answers. First, I focused on the singular goal that really matters in creating a flourishing business: *build a large, satisfied customer base*. That's the brass ring. And that is exactly what I achieved in the seven successful businesses I have created. In each case I accomplished this by developing real relationships with potential customers and focusing on providing value for them. Happy customers mean repeat business. Without a doubt, my method works: I earn a seven-figure residual income from a base of over one million satisfied customers in nine countries.

Often when I speak about starting an online business, people say they don't have a product or service to sell. They are usually surprised when I tell them the biggest earners online are individuals and companies that promote products and services produced by others.

These big earners help companies connect with people who find their product or service valuable. Those companies are more than happy to pay to acquire new customers. The amount of money that

gets paid every day to acquire new customers would boggle your mind. But I'm amazed at how many people have become experts at promoting other companies' products—without ever earning a dime.

Today people promote their favorite movies, shoes, jeans, music, videos, articles, pictures, and all sorts of brands and designer labels. They do this through “likes,” “pins,” and other links on their social media sites. While the producers of those products and the social media outlets (Facebook, Pinterest, etc.) profit enormously from the promotional activity of millions, the vast majority of those doing the promoting have no clue how to profit from their efforts.

If the brass ring in business is building a large, satisfied customer base, then many of us have been providing a very valuable service by our promotional efforts. Why not learn to get paid for that?

My second secret involves *finding a mentor* and *committing the time and effort to master the fundamentals* of marketing and business development. I devoted myself for several years to learn from one successful mentor. That experience laid the foundation for me to build several wildly successful businesses. In addition to finding a mentor who has built a successful business, I recommend you find one who has documented his or her effectiveness in mentoring others to achieve success. To date I have documented 44 millionaires who acknowledge me as their business mentor. Most of these came to me with the same question: “How did you do it?” (How did you build such a massive customer base?)

NEW WAYS OF THINKING AND BEING

The third secret to success involves humbling yourself and opening your mind to new ways of thinking and operating. For most would-be entrepreneurs, this presents the biggest challenge. Most people over

the age of twelve think they have the world figured out. They believe that the way the world *seems to them* is the way that the world *really is*. But it is this very way of thinking that has most people *stuck* where they are.

To make matters worse, most people are convinced they are already open-minded. This just adds another deadbolt to their already locked minds. When things don't work as planned (and a business never grows exactly as planned), people tend to blame their circumstances rather than view the situation as a learning opportunity. If I have learned anything from life it is this:

Change your ways of thinking and acting and being in the world and your life and circumstances will inevitably change as well. But you will *never* really change your life by focusing on your *circumstances*.

Being a true entrepreneur is as much about developing *yourself* as it is about developing a business.

Perhaps it goes without saying, but you certainly don't have to be *American* to pursue this dream of freedom. People around the world have put us to shame with their courageous spirit of entrepreneurship and their fierce dedication to live free, self-determined lives. What I refer to as the American Dream represents a universal human yearning—to carve out one's own destiny and to make a unique contribution to the well-being and happiness of others.

I invite you to open your mind and try on some fresh ways of looking at things. You may be surprised at what you discover about yourself, about your beliefs, and about how you have come to the life you now have. I hope you will discover—as I have—that the American Dream—the *freedom* and *power* to pursue *your* dream—is still very much alive!



Questions for Reflection, Discussion, and Action:

1. What is your idea of the American Dream or your vision of success?
2. How is that working so far?
3. What blocks, stops, or delays your dream?
4. What might be missing that could make a difference in reaching your goals and dreams?
5. What one action could you take to move you closer to fulfilling your dream?



PART ONE:

REDISCOVERING YOUR DREAM

CHAPTER ONE:

Auto Mechanic to Life Mechanic

“Mind like parachute—only function when open.”

—Charlie Chan, from Charlie Chan at the Circus

When people hear that I’m “that guy” (the one at the top of a huge marketing organization that has acquired more than a million customers), they often tell me, “You’re not at all what I expected.” They picture some slick super-salesman (the kind stereotypically hawking used-cars, furniture, or appliances) who tries to cajole someone into buying something they don’t need or want.

That’s definitely not me. Here’s one of the greatest keys to my success: I operate much more as an *educator* than as anything you might perceive as a *salesperson*. And one of the first principles people learn from me if they want to duplicate my success is this:

Talk only to people who are already *interested* in what you offer. Or, put in the negative: Never talk to people about what they are not truly interested in.

In the perception of the masses, the instant you start talking about anything that’s not already of interest to them, you are marked as a “salesperson.” Generally people have such a strong negative reaction to “sales” that at the slightest hint of this, they run away.

People love to buy, but most don't like to be sold. Nevertheless, a common complaint of new entrepreneurs occurs when they can't seem to find anyone who is interested in their amazing new product or service. This happens because they are talking instead of listening.

"But I'm excited," they tell me.

I advise them, "Show it—but don't say it!" Unfortunately, most don't listen.

GIVING IT FORWARD

As you will see, in this book many of the principles I teach may seem strange at first. But I hope you will try on these ideas before rejecting them.

The major distinction between what I do and what most people think of as sales and marketing is expressed in my slogan, "giving it forward." I attract customers like a magnet by finding ways to be of service and create value for people. For me, being of service is much more than an ideal to strive toward. It is truly the mainspring of my success. Zig Ziglar put it this way: "You can get whatever you want in life simply by finding ways to help other people get what *they* want and need."

Many years ago, I began to offer my training and mentorship to anyone who wanted to learn what I was doing—to people who were not in my marketing organization and even those who might be considered competitors. At that time, I had no idea that I was pioneering a trend that would become known as *content marketing*.

Today, experts, consultants, and mentors in all fields have discovered that by offering value and content to their potential clients, they can build rapport and good will. In this way, potential customers or partners begin to know, like, and trust you as an expert—and this creates opportunities for future business relationships.

Often people are skeptical about this service approach: “How do you get the word out if you aren’t always talking about your products and services?”

I teach people to listen more and talk less—to ask questions and listen carefully to the answers. This is not a sales technique—it’s not just a big windup to the final pitch. I teach listening, rather, as a *sorting* technique.

The master skill in my profession is not persuading or closing, but effective *sorting*. Remember, the key is to speak *only* to those who are interested. For example, a guy has just started working with a new business, and someone close to him asks what kind of service he offers. He may think the person is *interested*. But more likely, the person is merely *curious*. Most people *are* curious. But at any given moment, most people are *not* interested. Those who are not interested *now* could become interested *in the future* when their circumstances are different.

How you respond to their friendly, *curious* question today determines whether they will consider what you’re offering at any time in the future. If you talk about your product or program today when they are *not* interested, in most cases you slam the door shut on that person permanently. Your effectiveness in sorting the truly interested from the merely curious will be among a handful of factors that determine your success.

In spite of this harsh reality, I have successfully built massive customer bases for several companies. And I’ve taught many others to do the same. Fortunately, some twenty-five years ago when someone approached me about an emerging business opportunity, I *was* truly interested. The guy who approached me violated all the principles I teach, but it didn’t matter because I was actively searching for a way to make money—and you can’t say the wrong thing to the right prospect. But I’m getting way ahead of myself.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

In the mid-1980s, after a rough start, my life was finally moving in the direction of my dreams. I've always loved cars, and I had landed a great job as a mechanic at a Toyota dealership in El Monte, California. People with my best interests in mind had told me the road to success meant getting a good education, finding a good job, and working hard. I went to a technical school to get my Associates Degree and my ASE certification. Now I had the great job, and I was working harder than I ever had.

I was living in Southern California, so everything cost more than it did in Williston, North Dakota, where I grew up. So I put in extra hours, got to work early, took shorter lunches, and stayed later than other mechanics. My hard work and dedication *did* get noticed, and I was invited to participate in Roger Penske's racing organization, where I got to apply and develop my particular brand of gear-geek skills.

In terms of my career as a mechanic, I didn't believe life could get any better. But soon I started to wonder how working so long and hard was ever going to lead to a better lifestyle. I was always taking time away from my wife and son and the personal things I love to do. But I was working on cars and my bills were getting paid, so I kept working and believing I was on the path to success.

One day in the shop, a van slipped off a hoist and I panicked—I tried to stop it from falling. It didn't stop. *Take note: my success has nothing to do with intelligence.* The van landed on my leg, hyper-extended my knee, and tore all my ligaments. All I can remember is that I went to the hospital in an ambulance, and when the doctor looked at me and saw there was a tourniquet around my leg, he said, "Oh my God, you're in trouble." Who wants to hear that from a doctor? I was in shock and a little bit of panic, but they did surgery and I survived. The doctor said I would not be able to work for quite a while and that I might not regain the full use of my leg.

Sometimes, if you're lucky, when you're in bad situations (financial, health, relational, etc.) you become open minded. It shreds the ego. I had to go on workman's comp. My income of nearly \$5,000 per month fell to \$900 per month. I was okay for thirty days and even sixty days. Then at ninety days the bill collectors start calling.

Funny how banks don't care how well you did before; it only matters what you did *last month*. I hope it never happens to you, but many who are reading this know what I'm talking about.

So the bill collectors were asking, "When do you expect to get us some money?" And I'd reply, "As soon as I get some."

I got to the point when they called me I would say, "Is there any way you could call me back tomorrow morning at 7:30?"

They'd ask why and I'd say, "I got my electricity cut off, and if you call me, it will wake me up so I can go to a job interview."

This went on for six months. Then they did an MRI and found out they didn't get my leg totally fixed, and I had to go through another surgery. By then I had started losing everything. I even pawned my toolbox!

You often hear people say, "Money can't buy happiness." That's true, but often the *lack* of money is the root of all kinds of misery. I pray to God you never wait to make a decision until it gets that bad, because this was my breaking point: I was driving home after picking up my son. A few blocks from our home I pulled over and stopped. My six-year-old son looked at me and said, "Dad, if you just go up a couple more blocks and hang a left, our apartment is right there." I didn't know how to tell my son that I was hiding the car from the repo man.

A DAY THAT TURNS YOUR LIFE AROUND

I pray that something snaps *before* you get to such a desperate place. In that moment as I sat in the car with my son, I drew a line in the

sand and said, “No more... I am not going to settle for this. I am going to find some way to provide for my family.”

I stopped doing the things that many people do: I was blaming the world. I was a victim saying, “Why does this have to happen to me? My life is so bad!”

The day that I finally said, “No more!” my cousin’s boyfriend, Shawn, called me up. “Robert, you need to take a look at this,” he said. “I’m really excited about a new way to make some money.”

I said, “Tell me about it.”

He said, “I met this guy who’s making \$60,000 a month. Come with me and meet him.”

I said, “*I’ll come pick you up.*”

Something extraordinary happened that day. As soon as I declared that I would find a way to make my life better, something shifted and opportunity came knocking. Do you know what I’m talking about? When it’s the right time in your life, everything starts to click.

At seven o’clock sharp I picked up Shawn. To my surprise he was wearing a sport coat and tie. Here’s a guy I’d seen wear a tie only to weddings and funerals. I was wearing a biker jacket, and I had a slit down one leg of my jeans so they would fit over my full-leg cast.

Shawn said we were meeting this guy at a hotel, and I started to get uncomfortable. I thought we were going to have coffee with this rich guy, and instead I found myself sitting in a presentation at a hotel with about fifty other people—many of them were dressed in their Sunday clothes.

I found seats in the back of the room so I could use an extra chair to prop up my leg. All sorts of questions went through my mind: *If this guy has all these ideas and secrets about making money, why is he telling other people about it?* Though my circumstances had opened my mind a bit, I was still skeptical—even suspicious. I was so intrigued by the idea of a guy making \$60,000 a month that I stayed, but I sat there with my arms crossed, listening for the catch.

Most of what Mr. Gould had to say conflicted with everything I was taught about being successful. I had always been told that my ability to climb the corporate ladder depended one hundred percent on my own efforts.

Mr. Gould drew a simple diagram to illustrate how the typical company resembles a pyramid, with one president sitting on top of a handful of vice-presidents and directors. These in turn sit upon a layer of managers over another layer of supervisors. At the bottom is the largest group—the worker bees.

Having lost my ability to work as a mechanic, I realized my only hope of survival in the corporate structure was to move up that narrowing ladder. Then Mr. Gould said a couple of things that really got in my head. He pointed out that all the positions in the corporate pyramid are currently filled. For me to move up would require someone else to quit, get fired, or die! Clearly *other* factors beyond my personal efforts played a part in my opportunity to climb this ladder.

Mr. Gould made an interesting observation about how we imagine our path to success up the corporate ladder can lead toward *unlimited* income and opportunity. He called this idea a fantasy, like finding gold at the end of a rainbow.

Mr. Gould explained that employees at all levels of a corporation exchange their time for a paycheck. They can improve their skills and value to the company and earn a higher hourly wage, but the amount they can earn *will always be limited* by the amount of time they are able to work in a week. Even professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, are subject to the limitations of the number of hours they can bill to clients.

Mr. Gould pointed out that—unlike employees—a *business owner's* earnings are not limited by the number of hours he can work. He held up a small book by the world's first billionaire, J. Paul Getty, and said the secret to making a fortune, according to Getty, was in

employing other people. Mr. Goulddd quoted from Getty: “I’d rather earn one percent from the efforts of 100 people than 100 percent of my own.” Mr. Goulddd added his own insight: “Your own job is proof that at some point someone took the risk to start a business. They created your job so they could hire you at wholesale and sell you at retail to make a profit.”

When I heard that I was angry, but I knew he was right. My service center billed labor to its customers at a rate of \$35 per hour and paid me \$12.50.

Then Mr. Goulddd let the other shoe drop. He asked, “When finally you have climbed the ladder all the way to the top, do you think the person who owns that business—the person who took the risks and created your job—will just say, ‘Congratulations for climbing the ladder. Now I’m going to make *you* the owner, so you can profit from the efforts of all these people whose jobs I created’? That would be nonsense, wouldn’t it?” Even the greatest job—so long as you’re working for somebody else—can never offer *unlimited* opportunity.

Then Mr. Goulddd asked a question that changed my life: “Instead of starting at the bottom of the ladder and clawing your way to the top,” he asked, “Why not *start at the top* and build a huge workforce of your own?” That idea was at once inspiring and outrageous. My head was reeling, but Mr. Gould didn’t let up.

Next, he made an assertion that the options for making money in business are quite limited: either invent or manufacture a new product or service (requiring a considerable investment of capital) or find a more efficient way to deliver goods and services.

He drew another diagram consisting of six boxes strung together in a line like boxcars on a train. The first box, he said, represents the manufacturer and the last box represents the consumers. The four boxes in between represent all the middlemen of the traditional distribution system.

“If you don’t have an idea for a new mousetrap or you don’t have the capital to get into manufacturing,” Mr. Gould said, “you better find a more efficient and cost-effective way to get products into the hands of customers. Look at the fortunes made in recent years by stores like Walmart and Price Club [now Costco]. What have they done? They’ve cut out the middlemen. That’s what we do, too. We look for products that people want and need—products that solve problems and make a difference in people’s lives. Then we take those products straight from the manufacturer to the customers—cutting out the middlemen and pocketing the middlemen’s profits. We invite other people to help us with this, and we reward them according to their results.”

Many of his insights made sense, but they also left me angry. *Why didn’t I learn this in school or from my parents?* I wondered, *Where are we supposed to get this knowledge?* Almost like he heard my thoughts, Mr. Gould asked the group, “How many of you were born with an owner’s manual? I certainly wasn’t. My dad had a job, so when I was old enough, I got a job too. What nobody told me was that you don’t *own* a job—a job *owns* you. You can own a business, but when all you have ever known is a job, you have a very limited understanding about how businesses actually work.”

He went on to suggest that most business owners don’t have any interest in employees learning how to be business owners. Owners want employees to be contented *as employees*. Mr. Gould held up a couple other books and said something amazing: “The best-kept secrets of the richest people are not secrets at all. You can have them for a few dollars by reading their books! This book taught me the secret to wealth lies in the power of compound interest—how small investments over time become great assets. This book urges me to find a way to generate *residual income*—getting paid over and over (like a royalty) for work I do once. That’s amazing stuff! These are the true owner’s manuals. If you want to be an owner instead of a worker all your life, you have to learn from owners.”

That evening something popped in me, and I determined to learn to be a business owner. I became a dedicated student of business. I started to read business books and learn everything I could about success. (You'll find some of the greatest treasures of my research in the appendix in the back of this book.)

Mr. Gould's presentation was funny and interesting. Though I was seated in the last row, when the presentation ended I made a beeline to the front of the room. I may not have looked like the most likely person to succeed, yet to my surprise Mr. Gould patiently answered all my questions.

Though he had opened my eyes to new paths of success, I still found it hard to believe that I could make money from other people's efforts, using his business model. Mr. Gould could tell I was skeptical, so he reached in his pocket and pulled out his paycheck from the previous month. It was still attached to the stub! That really opened my eyes. This guy was making so much money, he could afford to go a month without depositing his check!

It's funny how our egos can mess with us. I was thinking, *I'm just a car mechanic, and this guy must be better educated and more talented than me.* So I asked what he did before he got started in this business. When he replied, "I installed car stereos," it was all over. I was an ASE-certified auto mechanic. I had an associates degree. That's when the magic happened: I said to myself, *If this guy can do it, I can do it.* I asked Mr. Gould in all earnestness, "Could I make \$10,000 in my first month?"

"It's not likely," he said, "but it's possible if you are coachable and do exactly what I tell you to do."

I was utterly hooked. I'll leave the details for a later chapter, but let me tell you I achieved that first, unlikely goal.

It's been said there are two great motivators in life: *inspiration* and *desperation*. Fortunately my desperation overcame my ego, and I humbled myself and did exactly as Mr. Gould told me to do—and

it worked. I've been blessed to achieve several amazing goals over the past twenty-five years and though we've since parted ways, I will always acknowledge my first mentor for making it all possible. Thank you, Mr. Gould!

I've been able to bring along a few friends and family members on this amazing journey (not all chose the same path). I've also gained many wonderful new friendships along the way. But now when I go out for meals with friends, we no longer take out our calculators to figure out who owes what. Now I have to put up quite a fight to pay for a meal. So when folks ask me if my business is all about making more and more money, I say, "No, it's about surrounding myself with financially successful friends and family so they can pay for everything."



Questions for Reflection, Discussion, and Action:

1. Would you describe yourself as being either curious or interested when it comes to seeking new sources of income?
2. When has a bad situation left you with an open mind?
3. Have you had what Jim Rohn called "a day that turns your life around?" What happened, and what changed?
4. Have you ever suspected you've somehow lost touch with your dreams and deepest desires? What might it take to bring them back to life?
5. What will it take for you to draw that line in the sand that moves you in a new direction? Will you do it now?



CHAPTER TWO:

A Formula for Driving Far and Fast

“Success leaves clues.”

—Jim Rohn

I'm one of those individuals who knew early in life that if you learn from successful people and if you do what they did, you'd get what they got. Even as a mechanic, I realized there were other mechanics earning more than me because they could do the work better and faster. I also knew I could *learn from them* and improve my skills and wages. But as adults, we can be so competitive and proud, it really takes something to humble ourselves and learn from someone else. For me, that something was massive career and financial failure resulting from my accident.

The remarkable thing is this: once you humble yourself and seek help, there are so many people—successful people—willing to help and guide you. While I was recovering from surgery after my accident, one of Roger Penske's employees, Jerry Miller, called to ask how I was doing. Shortly after that conversation he came to visit and brought me a book. He said it was a gift from Roger Penske and that Mr. Penske wanted me to know it could change my life.

It was the same book that Mr. Gould held up in his presentation and declared it contained the best-kept secrets of the rich. The book was *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill. Besides my accident and

subsequent financial woes, this book did more than anything else to prepare me to be open to opportunity.

It's a simple book, and yet from the first chapter of *Think and Grow Rich* I found the insights and inspiration to achieve my first goal in business (earning \$10,000 in one month). Please understand that the insights I share here are only the tip of the iceberg of the wisdom contained in Napoleon Hill's masterpiece. If reading my book could inspire you to study and apply the principles in *Think and Grow Rich*, I would consider it a tremendous success.

CRISIS TO INCREASES

The first thing I learned from *Think And Grow Rich* was that adversity—even failure—could open the doors to greater success. As I began my career as an auto mechanic, I had certain pictures in my imagination of how it would look to achieve my goals. I imagined that the corporate leaders would recognize my hard work, and I would start receiving promotions and raises. After my accident those pictures seemed unattainable. Like many, I believed my education, talents, upbringing, and connections defined and limited my career choices. I never imagined the possibility of being a successful entrepreneur. It didn't match the pictures in my mind about how my career would develop.

As I started reading *Think And Grow Rich*, I began to realize those pictures were only *a means to an end*. They were one possible path to achieving my real dreams, which included providing a lifestyle for my family and enjoying some expensive hobbies such as car racing with my sons.

Napoleon Hill really caught my attention when he pointed out that many successful people got started after facing some crisis:

The turning point in the lives of those who succeed usually comes in the moment of some crisis, through which they are introduced to their other selves (p. 36). *Note: Page numbers in parentheses correspond to the ebook edition of Think and Grow Rich, available from our website, listed in the resources appendix.)*

I had no idea what he meant by “other selves,” but I began to see that other paths could lead me to my dreams. Paths such as owning my own business would enable me to achieve my dreams faster and with greater satisfaction. In time I would meet my “other self” and realize the greatest rewards of this journey would be found not in the wealth I acquired, but in the person I discovered myself to be in the process.

The idea for *Think and Grow Rich* came from industrialist turned philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. While most people seem to believe that success depends on luck and circumstances, Carnegie believed there was a pattern to the qualities and behaviors of those who succeed in business and in life. He believed that these keys to success could be studied and learned, so he challenged Napoleon Hill to interview and observe successful people and write a book based on his research. It took Hill two decades and thousands of interviews with 500 of the most successful people of his day to produce *Think And Grow Rich*.

The central insight that Napoleon Hill discovered was deceptively simple: A person’s thoughts determine the results they experience (p. 248). The most famous quote from Napoleon Hill summarizes this philosophy: “Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve.”

ALL THE RIGHT PARTS

As I began to read Hill's book, I looked at it from the perspective of a car mechanic. Like a repair manual, *Think And Grow Rich* seemed to offer clear instructions and diagrams for putting together the vehicle that would enable me to reach my desired destination. Within the first few chapters I had discovered a parts list for Hill's formula for success.

Hill described the first necessary part as "a definite purpose." It seemed to me that I had a definite purpose: I wanted to provide a comfortable lifestyle for my family and never have to worry about money again. As I continued to read *Think And Grow Rich*, it became obvious that my purpose needed some clarification, but I had made a good start.

Hill emphasized that a clear purpose was not enough to achieve success. It required a second part: a burning desire to achieve that purpose. Hill wrote, "stand by that purpose until it (has) become an all-consuming obsession" (p. 17). My desire became an obsession the day my son asked why I parked the car blocks from our home. It burned white hot within me.

Next, Hill advised that one's purpose and desire must become translated into specific plans for their fulfillment. I was at a loss. I had no other plans beyond working hard at my chosen trade as an auto mechanic. I never had a Plan B. Almost like Napoleon Hill knew my situation, *Think And Grow Rich* offered encouraging advice and clear steps to develop viable plans to achieve my dreams. Hill suggested borrowing ideas and plans from other people who have already achieved success. That was reassuring, because I wasn't sure how I would ever devise a personal success plan. He further encouraged me with the thought that someone with a definite purpose and burning desire will attract viable plans, as well as helpful people and resources. This would prove true in my case.

Once plans were established to achieve one's purpose, Hill's formula called for "determination to stand by that desire until (one) realized it" (p. 18). This fourth essential part, which appears outwardly as *persistence* or *determination*, expresses an inner *faith* or *belief*. Hill declared that if one is "willing to stake his entire future on a single turn of the wheel in order to get it, he is sure to win" (p. 16).

At the core of the *Think And Grow Rich* success formula was a part I knew I didn't have. Hill wrote, "The object of this book is to help all who seek it to learn the art of changing their minds from failure consciousness to success consciousness" (p. 24). Quoting the famous poem *Invictus* by William Earnest Henley, Hill summed up the essence of his philosophy: "We are the masters of our fate, the captains of our souls, *because we have the power to control our thoughts*" (p. 25). Though I still had lots of doubts, fears, and insecurities, somehow I had faith that I could develop that success consciousness with help from this book. Maybe my faith was strengthened because of how well Hill's research was documented. (The names of many of the famous and successful individuals who were interviewed by Hill are listed in the front of the book.) Maybe the strong recommendation for the book by billionaire Roger Penske gave me the faith I needed to study and follow through with determination. Something gave me faith that Hill's ideas could change my thinking and my life, so I studied it like it was the manual for my favorite car.

As I read, my faith grew and my success consciousness developed. Eventually I knew that Hill was writing about *me*—I could see myself following his formula and achieving my dreams:

Every human being who reaches the age of understanding of the purpose of money wishes for it. *Wishing* will not bring riches. But *desiring* riches with a state of mind that becomes an obsession, then planning definite ways and means to acquire riches, and backing those plans with persistence which *does not recognize failure*, will bring riches. (p. 31)

When I got to this point in reading *Think and Grow Rich*, I had Hill's formula in my notes like a checklist of necessary parts. I knew I had three of the five essential parts, and I was on the hunt for the two parts I still lacked. My "parts list" looked like this:

- Definite PURPOSE
- DESIRE as an all-consuming obsession.
- Clear PLANS to fulfill one's definite purpose.
- DETERMINATION, PERSISTENCE that doesn't recognize failure (a.k.a. FAITH, BELIEF)
- SUCCESS CONSCIOUSNESS

You can think of these parts of the formula as answering different questions about your dream. The aspect of *purpose* answers the question "What?" What is your dream? What will it look like and feel like when it is fulfilled?

The aspect of *desire* answers the question "Why?" Why do you want to accomplish this? What (or who) provides your motivation?

The aspect of *clear plans* answers the question "How?" How will you get from here to there? How will you fund your dream? How will you staff it? How will you learn all you'll need to know to accomplish your dream?

The *how* question had me stumped, but not stopped. *Think and Grow Rich* expanded my vision so I began to explore paths and options I hadn't previously considered. I bought some business magazines and looked into franchises and other opportunities. The price tags for most of these opportunities frightened me. Nevertheless, one of Napoleon Hill's key insights about successful people was that they found ways to build their dreams using other people's resources (other people's money, ideas, and efforts). I also didn't think I had the skills or education to succeed at business.

Again Hill gave reassurance that all the skills and education could be acquired through other people.

As I read *Think and Grow Rich*, I became convinced that I had the critical parts of the formula to draw the other parts to me: I had a clear purpose and a burning desire. That fateful drive home with my son gave me the determination to give it my all—and never quit until I achieved my desired success. Almost immediately I was presented with an achievable plan and a mentor to help me execute my plan and develop my success consciousness. The critical pieces were falling into place.

BUCKLE UP—THIS COULD BE A BUMPY RIDE

Though I quickly had a taste of success, please don't get the idea that it was all smooth sailing. Hill took pains to make it clear that every one of the successful people he interviewed faced their share of trials along the way. The same was true for me, and I guarantee it will be the same for you. If you thought of your life as a roller-coaster ride before you started a new venture, don't expect this to change. If anything, it will get worse. What you want now are some new approaches for dealing powerfully with all those bumps and turns.

Fortunately for us, success leaves clues—and *so does failure*. Entrepreneur and motivational speaker Jim Rohn used to say, "Don't ask that things will get *easier*! Ask that you will get *better*!"

Learn from every experience. When you face turbulent winds, let them lift you up. As Napoleon Hill wrote, "Every adversity brings with it the seed of equivalent advantage." Seen this way, it *all* serves to fulfill your desired purpose.



Questions for Reflection, Discussion, and Action:

1. Who have you learned the most from in your life and career?
2. Has adversity or failure ever opened doors to greater success in your life?
3. If Napoleon Hill's theory is correct (that a person's thoughts determine the results they experience) what have you been thinking?
4. Read over the "parts list" in this chapter. Which parts of this success formula do you have—and which do you need to find or develop? Speculate on what your definite purpose might be.



CHAPTER THREE:

If I Can Win This Race, So Can You!

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”

—Proverbs 23:7

When I meet new business owners I see the hope and excitement in their eyes, and I know with absolute certainty they *can* achieve their dreams. Sadly, experience tells me many will not.

I know I can provide the training, systems, support, and encouragement they need for their success, but I cannot provide the most critical parts: *desire* and *belief*. *My* desire for their success and *my* faith that they can succeed won't make the critical difference. Paradoxically, those persons I have mentored who achieve their dreams often tell me, “Your belief in me made me who I am today.” Still, I know that *their own* desire for success and *their own* faith and determination to succeed ultimately carried the day.

Napoleon Hill wrote that a person with a definite purpose and a burning desire will attract to himself (or herself) all the other elements required for their success—including expertise, connections, resources, money, plans, ideas, and opportunities. But this happens only when the desire to achieve one's purpose gets stirred into “a state of mind that becomes an obsession” (p. 31). This proved true for me, over and over, and I've watched this happen in the lives of countless other people.

THE MOUNTAIN IN YOUR MIND

Most people, however, become *obsessed with their circumstances* rather than their vision or purpose. They perceive the work required to accomplish a big dream as a labor-intensive effort to alter the circumstances, like moving the proverbial mountain. But the real work that needs to be accomplished is moving *the mountain in your mind*. It is your *belief* that you can achieve your dream that inspires the actions that produce results.

When you first conceive of a dream that inspires you, that belief gets planted like a seed. It takes a heroic effort to tend that seed, to water it, to feed it, and to protect it from weeds and predators until it has the opportunity to reach its potential. When your belief has been nurtured and becomes full grown, it becomes very powerful. Jesus often spoke of faith as a little thing (a mustard seed) with great power: “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you” (Luke 17:6). On a different occasion he said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” (Matthew 13:31–32). I take this to mean we can grow and nurture our *belief* from a fragile sprout into a mighty, life-giving tree.

To move you forward, a dream must be *specific* (you want a clear picture of what it will look like when it is fulfilled). And it must also *inspire you* (you want to be able to experience *right now* exactly what you would feel like when your dream is accomplished).

You’re looking for a spark—something that gets your heart pounding. When that dream *does* come true, how will you be then? How do you imagine you will feel? Will you be joyful, peaceful, thankful, ecstatic, proud, delighted, accomplished, giddy, self-assured?

When I was sixteen I saw an article in a hot rod magazine that showed how to replace the little four-cylinder engine in a Vega with a 350 cubic inch V-8. Immediately I imagined how it would look, how it would sound, and how it would handle. What drove me to build it wasn't simply imagining the power of that engine and the sensation of the wind in my face, but envisioning the looks on the faces of friends and others as I would drive by. Those feelings compelled me as I built that hot rod and five others.

Standing by faith in a vision of your dream accomplished, be that way *now!* The power of faith comes from your ability to imagine how you will be when your dream has been fulfilled and your capacity to *be that way*—long before your dream manifests outwardly.

Faith requires the exercise of your imagination. This is the central insight of Napoleon Hill's research: you have the ability to control your thoughts and your state of mind. "Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve" (p. 249). So let that dream be born within you. Then, holding it in your heart and mind as if it were accomplished, allow that way of being to permeate your life and actions.

FINDING PURPOSE

If you question whether you have enough purpose and desire, you may want to apply the "peak to peek" principle of Robert H. Schuller's "possibility thinking": Find any goal that you can get excited about and grow your faith in the process of fulfilling that goal. Once you climb a small mountain, you can "peek" from the top of that "peak" and see a larger mountain to climb. Once you build a little faith from a little dream, you realize that by continuing to develop your belief system (or your *success consciousness* as Napoleon Hill calls it), you can take on bigger and more exciting dreams.

The size of a dream doesn't matter. It only matters that a dream be important enough to ignite a *burning desire within you*. Once you have purpose and desire, then developing your faith muscle becomes critical.

If you follow this pattern and achieve some success, you will gain confidence in your ability to achieve your dreams. You will begin to discover your deeper passions, and maybe you will even recall dreams you have forgotten or buried.

Many of the men and woman I have mentored couldn't see a dream beyond getting out of debt, which doesn't make for an inspiring dream. Instead, imagine what you would have and enjoy when all your money issues are solved. For example, I dreamed of owning a home and land in Montana and providing my family with security and a lifestyle that included vacations and toys. I also dreamed of controlling my own schedule so I had time to enjoy my family and my life.

WHAT AND WHY BEFORE HOW

Just as people tend to be obsessed with their circumstances rather than with their dreams and desires, people also tend to focus on the "how?" question more than the "what?" and the "why?" questions. They want to understand the *how* (plans) before they clarify *what* they want and *why* they want it. This is like studying a map before choosing your destination. A map can be useful only when you know where you are *and* where you want to arrive. Someone once said, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there."

Mark Twain quipped, "I can teach anyone how to get what they want in life. The problem is, I can't find anybody who can tell me what they want." And even when a person knows what he or she wants, specific plans to achieve that dream are never the most important answer to the "how?" question.

Every success has an outer story and an inner story. Ask anyone who has ever accomplished something extraordinary, “Just *how* did you achieve your success?” He might tell you about his original dream and even about his initial plans. Then he will undoubtedly tell you a story of detours, setbacks, reroutes, restarts, wanderings, and nights in the wilderness so dark he was unable to read his map. That’s the outer story. And *how* did he persist through these challenges? Now you will hear the inner story of developing faith in his dreams and belief in himself. This offers the deeper answer to the question, “how?”

In the next section, I will address the specific circumstances, issues, and excuses that tend to stop people from achieving their dreams. You’ll see in each case, the solution is the same: If you have the white-hot desire to achieve your purpose, you must develop belief in that dream being fulfilled. Faith is the mountain-mover. Belief is the dragon-slayer.

THE ROAD TO MASTERY: MY 25-YEAR OVERNIGHT-SUCCESS

Those who *do* have a clear purpose and burning desire often face a long (and sometimes winding) road to learn lessons that will prepare them for their eventual success. Every field or discipline involves skills to develop, material to learn, and techniques to perfect. Most important in this process is what Napoleon Hill calls “success consciousness.” New ways of thinking must be mastered. You must learn to protect your mind. Not every thought that runs through your mind is true and helpful.

But as all the success gurus affirm, *you can master your mind*. You *can* learn to think optimistically and faithfully. And *eventually* that can become second nature. You may not have ridden a bike in years, but if you ever could ride, you can get on a bike and in a few minutes it would feel perfectly natural. But can you remember how it felt the

first few months when you were learning to find your balance? It's the same when you begin to reshape your patterns of thinking.

I often tell people I'm a twenty-five-year overnight success. People perceive the overnight success, but they don't see the years of effort that went into becoming a person who could have that kind of success. It amuses me when people attribute my success to luck—being in the right place at the right time. They don't see the whole picture. I've heard it said, "Luck happens when preparation meets opportunity." So yes, I've been lucky my whole life. I prepare, and God provides opportunities.

In his book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell makes a brilliant case that people who accomplish extraordinary things do so only after putting in the time it takes to master a field or discipline. He gives a rule of thumb of 10,000 hours to achieve mastery. According to Gladwell, The Beatles put in 10,000 hours playing in bars in Germany before they sprang onto the world's pop-music charts. Bill Gates took advantage of a unique opportunity to clock 10,000 hours as a computer programmer before most people knew that microcomputers even existed. Mozart may have been a child prodigy but, as Gladwell points out, he played music for more than 10,000 hours by the time most children were learning to read and write. It may seem like a daunting feat to do anything for 10,000 hours, but that is the amount of television the average person watches in just five years!

Think of a skill or craft that you've mastered. If I were willing to commit the time and resources to practice that skill, do you think you could teach it to me? Of course you could. It would all depend on *my* determination to acquire that skill. And there's the rub: *the price of success is paid in advance*. Here's the bottom line: if you are willing to invest the time, you can master just about *anything*.

WHAT MAKES IT WORTHWHILE

In the final analysis, the question comes down to this: *Is it worth it?* Is your dream worth putting in the time and enduring whatever discomforts you might have to bear? Of course, I want to tell you that from where I sit, it is absolutely worth it. At this point I never have to work again—residual income changes everything. Having achieved true freedom and mastered a level of success consciousness, I have the satisfaction of knowing I can achieve *all* my dreams.

But this is a question you must answer for yourself. Are your dreams worth the effort and the risk?

What if you could experience the journey as a *joy* instead of an arduous effort? Would that make a difference? People sometimes say that I seem to be *working* all the time. Yes, I do put many hours into developing my programs, training my leaders, and expanding my operations. Here's the thing: I love everything I do. If I don't love it, I don't do it. There is a paradox here: *Successful people do what unsuccessful people are unwilling to do. So you **learn to love doing the things that matter for your success.***

This requires getting out of your comfort zone. You always have to leave your comfort zone to learn new skills and develop new ways of thinking. Though I have achieved many of my dreams, I am always working on my success consciousness. Learning and growing is so much a part of my life that you would be hard-pressed to know if any activity in my daily routine is part of my vocation, education, or recreation.

Most of the time I work at my beautiful home overlooking the Pacific. I get to have meals with my wife, and I'm available to my family for whatever they want. In business, I surround myself with like-minded, positive, inspiring people. We take fantastic working vacations all around the world. My work is my play—full of joy and laughter all day long. A Greek philosopher named Heraclitus said,

“Man is most nearly himself when he achieves the seriousness of a child at play.” That reminds me of *me*. What I do all day is my hobby, my calling, and my passion.

Now I ask you: *How is that working?* It is what I call “living life to the full!” So I offer you this challenge: If you want to rediscover *your* American Dream, find something you love to do or a dream you have passion for, give yourself fully to that dream and you’ll really never *work* another day of your life.



Questions for Reflection, Discussion, and Action:

1. Do you have a dream that inspires you? How will you feel, think, and act when it is fulfilled? Are you able to feel, think, and act that way now?
2. What skill have you already mastered? What level of effort did it require?
3. What is it worth to you for your dream to be fulfilled? Are you willing to invest (risk) the time and energy it could take? How long will you give it: Two years? Five? Ten?
4. What are you most passionate about? Could you build your dream around that?



PART II:

RESTORING YOUR DREAM

CHAPTER FOUR:

Stalled Out

“We refuse to believe that which we do not understand. We foolishly believe that our own limitations are the proper measure of limitations.”

—Napoleon Hill, *Think and Grow Rich* (p. 27)

Back when I used to hold “opportunity meetings” for my associates to expose a business program to interested prospects, I would always stay after the presentation to meet those who showed interest and answer their questions. At just such a presentation I met my first mentor, Mr. Gould, so naturally that’s how I learned to conduct my business. It takes a while for most associates to get the hang of sorting those people who have a genuine interest from those who are merely curious or have other agendas. So as you can imagine, I encountered a mixed audience at every presentation.

INITIAL QUESTIONS

You might be surprised to discover the vast majority of people who *said* they were interested raised the same handful of initial concerns. Some were typically raised in the form of a question:

- “How long will it take me to be successful?”
- “How much time will this require (each week)?”
- “How much will this cost before I can make a profit?”
- “Will I have to give these presentations?”
- “What else would I have to do to make money at this?”
- “Who sells the products?”

Other concerns were expressed as statements that could be seen as objections:

- “I’m not good at sales.”
- “I don’t know anybody who would be good at this.”
- “I could never do what you do.”
- “The people I know wouldn’t be interested in this.”

Here’s the amazing thing about these responses to an opportunity presentation: The *interested* and the *curious* raise the same questions and concerns. Both usually start out with powerful preconceptions and misunderstandings that can take considerable time to address. Of much greater importance is this. A person who truly desires to find an opportunity to change their life and financial future—and a person who is curious but lacks a real interest in finding a viable business opportunity—*ask questions for dramatically different purposes*.

The concerns expressed by a genuinely interested prospect fall under one fundamental question that he or she needs answered: “*Could this (opportunity) work for me?*” But the one who is curious but not genuinely interested typically needs to find a justification for saying, “*I’m not interested.*” So they raise the questions and concerns as a way to explain why this opportunity won’t work for them. Of course, this unproductive conversation could have been avoided if we could have determined they were not interested in pursuing any sort of business opportunity.

The challenge is to enable a genuinely interested prospect to get past any *preconceived misunderstandings* of what a particular business program involves and to help them to see it *as an opportunity* to fulfill on their dreams and desires. Answering *their* questions occurs for them as an *educational process*.

But to someone who is not truly interested, responding to their concerns feels dramatically different. To that person it seems pushy and manipulative. It feels like “sales” in the objectionable sense. This

is why it's so important to learn to sort the truly interested from the merely curious. Efficient sorting saves all parties from awkward, uncomfortable conversations and supercharges the productivity of one's business-building efforts.

A LESSON IN SORTING

Fortunately, I learned the importance of sorting when I first met Mr. Gould and committed to the audacious goal of making \$10,000 in my first month in business. According to Napoleon Hill's formula from *Think and Grow Rich*, I clearly had the *purpose*, *desire*, and *determination* to succeed. What I lacked was a viable *plan* to achieve my goal and what Hill called success consciousness. When I met Mr. Gould, I realized he possessed both of these parts that I lacked. After he answered my questions, I became convinced his plan could work for me. And though I was surprised to learn that Mr. Gould had once installed car stereos for a living, it was clear that he had somehow acquired the leadership qualities that reflected an inner success consciousness.

When I told Mr. Gould that I was committed to achieving outstanding success in business with his help, his response seemed unimpressed. "Many people *say* they are committed," he told me, "but I will know your commitment by seeing how many people you put in front of me that have a genuine interest in improving their financial future."

It seemed like a macho dare. And it worked. I hustled. I started talking to everyone I knew who needed to make some extra money. I must have talked to dozens of people in the first couple days, but all I could show Mr. Gould of my commitment was one friend who came with me to hear his presentation.

Frustrated and embarrassed, I began to entertain doubts that Mr. Gould's program might not work for me. Now after years of experience in this opportunity industry, I can tell you that most people face initial

failure in one of two ways. Some blame the program, saying, “This business doesn’t work.” Others find fault with themselves, saying, “I am no good at this kind of thing.” These people stalled out before they got the car out of the driveway, so they call off the trip.

At this critical moment, something in me wouldn’t give in to these doubts and fears. Looking back, I can see it was my determination to make a better life for my son and my wife, and it was my simple faith that Mr. Gould had skills and ideas that I lacked *but believed that I could learn*. After that first failed attempt to launch my business, I said to Mr. Gould, “I can’t be doing this right. Can you teach me how to talk to people to get them to come take a look at this?”

Mr. Gould said, “You really want to succeed at this, don’t you?”

I nodded.

Then he said compassionately, “I can see that you do, but in order to succeed, you have to learn to get out of your own way.”

“How do I do that?” I asked, truly eager to learn.

“First, you said you want to ‘get people to come take a look at this.’” Mr. Gould’s voice intensified. “But you must understand that you can’t *get* people to do *anything*. You want to *find* people who *already want* what you have, and point them to where they can get what they want. “Look at the people at my meetings,” Mr. Gould said. “What do you see? There are a handful of people who are consistently bringing 80 to 90 percent of the visitors. These are the people who are determined to succeed at building a successful business. You will notice there are far more people who show up most weeks without a guest. Undoubtedly they are getting *something* from coming regularly to these meetings (social contact, inspiration, a positive environment), but they are *definitely not* building a business for themselves. If you really want to build a successful business, you have to find people with a serious desire to succeed (people like you). The problem you face is that you will only find maybe two or three people out of a hundred who have that level of desire.”

I looked at him. “So how do you find those people?”

“You work quickly and efficiently,” he said. “You say as little as you can to as many people as you can in order to find people who have a burning desire to succeed and are genuinely interested in finding a viable plan to achieve their success. If you get bogged down in conversation with people who really don’t have that kind of desire, you will take a very long time to find the ones who do, and you will wear yourself down in the process.”

“Keeping every conversation to an absolute minimum keeps the attention off of you and on them,” he said. “All you want to know is if they are genuinely interested in finding an opportunity to make more money.”

I shook my head. “But most of the people want to know *what it is*.”

He smiled. “Because they are looking at you and judging the opportunity by you—by their impressions of you. People can’t help evaluating the message by their sense of the messenger. If you were standing there in a Gucci suit with a Rolex and driving a Mercedes, they might respond differently. People like to think they are open-minded, but we all tend to judge a book by its cover. That’s just human nature, and we aren’t going to change that. So the moment you start answering someone’s questions he automatically starts judging you, and your message gets lost. And another thing happens. On some level—perhaps unconsciously—the person says to himself, *I don’t want to do what this guy is doing. I don’t want to bug people about things they couldn’t care less about.*”

“I get what you’re saying,” I said, “but I don’t see how I can get them interested in coming to see you without saying anything about what it is. I need to know exactly what to say to them.”

“Remember you won’t *get* them interested if they are not *already* interested in finding an opportunity.” Mr. Gould put his hand on my shoulder. “Let me ask you, Robert, why did *you* come to hear about this business opportunity? Was it because you were impressed or persuaded by the person who invited you?”

“No way.” I chuckled. “I came to meet you because he told me you made \$60,000 a month!”

Mr. Gould raised his eyebrows and smiled at me.

Suddenly everything went pop. He didn’t have to teach me what to say word-for-word. Once I *realized* that I was *sorting* not *selling* and I was *pointing* not *persuading*, I was home free.

He taught me what he called the side door approach. Instead of asking people directly if *they* were interested in making more money, I would ask people *who they knew* who might be interested in making more money. They would almost always respond, “What is it?” to which I would say, “Why do you ask, are *you* interested?”

When they would persist in getting more information, I would just say, “Look, you don’t want to hear about this from *me*. I’m just an auto mechanic on workman’s comp. If you are truly interested in making more money, you should meet my mentor, Mr. Gould. He makes \$60,000 per month. He’s the one you should be talking to, and he can answer your questions much better than I can.”

Finally, I got out of the way. I became the messenger instead of the message. My job became simply piquing interest in people, so those who had a genuine interest would seek more information. It worked amazingly well. It was simple, honest, and direct. I was able to sort rapidly and found in a surprisingly short time several people who were genuinely interested. And Mr. Gould did all the heavy lifting. He made the presentations, answered all the questions, and trained all the new people.

ASKING FOR HELP

I developed another helpful practice almost by accident. I knew that I didn’t have the Rolex and Gucci shoes and that people can’t help but judge us by our appearance. But I discovered that people are willing to help others in need when approached with sincerity.

So I started opening my conversations with the question, “Would you do me a huge favor?” People would usually ask what I needed with a concerned expression that suggested they thought I was going to ask for a loan. When I instead asked them for a referral (Who do you know...) they were relieved, and some of them helped me find the people I was looking for.

When I had that life-changing conversation with Mr. Gould, I was flat broke and running from bill collectors. I had a modest education and I didn’t think I was good at much besides working with tools and cars. I wasn’t a salesperson, and I wasn’t well spoken.

I certainly couldn’t see myself making presentations like Mr. Gould. In fact, I didn’t give any presentations until about eighteen months later. Mr. Gould helped me to understand that none of the things I saw as my limitations mattered a hill of beans—*unless I let them matter*. I had what truly mattered: I was *determined*; I had a *purpose* and a *burning desire* to see it fulfilled.



Questions for Reflection, Discussion, and Action:

1. If you find you are really only curious, what would it take for you to become genuinely interested in a new opportunity?
2. If you have started building a business in the past and stopped before reaching your dream, how did you explain your failure? Was it because the business didn’t work or because you didn’t have what it took to succeed?
3. What have you seen as your limitations in terms of building a successful enterprise?
4. What would you have to do differently in a new venture to be a success? What would you have to learn?



CHAPTER FIVE:

Crowded Highways

*Successful people do what unsuccessful people
are unwilling to do.*

—Origin unknown

If you listen to everyday workplace conversations, many people never stop complaining about the limitations of their present jobs and lifestyles. Ask people if they ever dream of a better life and often they will respond, “Who doesn’t?” But if you ask if they would seriously consider starting a business or doing something to improve their financial future, many say something like, “my life is not *so bad*.”

This reminds me of a story about a guy passing through a small town who stopped at a general store. No sooner had he walked through the door than he heard what sounded like a dog moaning. As he walked about the store he came upon the dog off in a corner. The dog seemed half asleep but quite restless. He shifted about and grunted and groaned. As the man got to the cash register he asked the storekeeper, “What’s wrong with your dog?”

The storekeeper replied, “He likes to lie by the swamp cooler, but there are some nails sticking up from the floor over there.”

The traveler asked, “Why doesn’t he move to another spot?”

The storekeeper shrugged. “I guess it don’t hurt *that bad*.”

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

One of the most challenging things for me to accept about human nature is that most people would rather continue to complain about

things than do anything to improve their lot. Knowing, as I do, that a better lifestyle is available for anyone who truly seeks it, I often feel that I want success for some people more than they want it for themselves. Then I remember what Jesus taught his disciples about the various responses they could expect from people on hearing his message. He told them the parable of the sower:

Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! ... "Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears

the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”
—Matthew 13:3–9; 18–23

This teaching of Jesus empowers me to be persistent in delivering my message—and to be confident that I can build a very successful business with the few represented in the parable by the seed that falls on the good ground. I’ve learned that success results inevitably from my faithful, persistent sowing of the message. A clever person put it this way: “Some will; some won’t; so what? Someone’s waiting.”

I’ve learned from this parable to trust that no individual’s response will ever determine *my* eventual success. It encourages me to take in stride the various responses people have to my message. And over time, I’ve found that these responses are remarkably predictable.

The first response most people have when faced with any opportunity is some version of: “I don’t have the time,” “I don’t have the money,” or “I don’t have what it takes (talent, skill, education, influence, temperament) to succeed in that.”

People typically offer these responses without much thought. You already know from my personal story that I had no money, no influence, a modest education, and a personality not generally deemed suitable for entrepreneurship. Although I was on workmen’s comp and basically unemployed, I still felt I had little spare time—I was spinning my wheels to find new employment that fit my skills, education, and financial needs. All of those automatic excuses fit my situation, but none of them truly mattered. Read any success story and you will find these excuses never stop a person who has purpose, desire, and determination.

THE WIDE AND DUSTY ROAD

These automatic responses (I don't have the money, the time, or what it takes) arise from our culture's ideas about success. These include notions like these:

- "The rich get richer."
- "It takes money to make money."
- "He was in the right place at the right time."
- "You have to come up with a good idea to succeed."
- "It's all about who you know."
- "People get rich by leveraging power and exploiting others."

These widely held beliefs rest on one common (but toxic) assumption: to *be* extraordinary one must first *have* something extraordinary (luck, wealth, influence, good looks, talent, ideas, power, etc.). While evidence can be found to support these assumptions, they miss the most **basic idea of capitalism**: *Whatever you need (to build a viable enterprise) can be had for a price*. You need money for a business? Sell stock, find partners, or take out a loan. You need talent? Hire talented people. You need ideas? Look around and borrow them. All the necessary components are available.

Furthermore, people often make the mistake of believing that what they *have* matters more than who they *are* at the core of their being. They believe lies like these:

- "When I have the money, then I will be generous."
- "When I have time, I will be more focused on my dreams."
- "When I have the education, I will be courageous in my career."

These misguided ideas lead to resignation and complacency. Like the dog that prefers to stay close to the swamp cooler, most people never make up their minds to do what it takes to improve

their lot. The inner resolve to change one's situation arises only when dissatisfaction reaches the level of disgust and repulsion.

Living *powerfully* begins when you recognize that everything new starts from *within*—*not* from *without*. In all matters of creation, *being* precedes *having*. Courage comes *first*; bold actions in one's career *follow*. Being generous *precedes* wealth creation. Focusing your mind on the fulfillment of your dreams creates openings for resources, money, and connections to appear.

Yes, it *seems* like it must be the other way around, but if you get this one idea, you will possess one of the “keys of the kingdom”: What you *have* directly *results* from who you are *being* and how you are *thinking as expressed through your actions*.

People in our pessimistic culture want proof and guarantees. Before beginning, they want to be assured of the outcome. As you will see later in this book, when I provide guidelines for evaluating opportunities, I believe a little skepticism is healthy. But cynicism kills your dreams before they are even conceived.

The cynic sees only the negative aspects of human nature and can't imagine that anyone can do anything that really improves the lives of others. This mindset leads to another series of automatic excuses that have to do with other people such as:

- “All these opportunities are schemes offered by con artists.”
- “You can't find any good employees/business associates.”
- “Watch out for anyone who says they want to help other people succeed!”

This common mentality doesn't want to see you succeed because it would call into question their fear-based, negative belief system. They point to those who have failed and say, “See, it can't be done.” They don't understand the wisdom contained in the parable of the sower. They live by the creed of failure consciousness: “I'll believe it when I see it.”

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

Success consciousness takes the opposite view: You must *believe* in your dream *before* you can *see* it fulfilled. Here lies the secret that Wallace Wattles wrote about in *The Science of Getting Rich*. He didn't use the language of *faith* and *belief*. Instead he wrote of operating in a "*Certain Way*."

"Getting rich," Wattles wrote, "is not dependent upon your engaging in some particular business, but upon your learning to do things in a Certain Way." I take this to mean that I must operate *with certainty* regarding the success of my business, even in the face of other people's doubts.

The masses always view the person with a great vision and say, "He's crazy." "Who needs a personal computer?" they scoffed in the early eighties. "I'll never waste my money on a cell phone!" they declared. To live out a dream, one must break away from the pessimistic pack and shrug off the responses of the masses.

Today some people bemoan that the American Dream has been stolen (by the rich, or big government, or some other dark force). The American dream *has* been stolen. It was stolen from *you* when something or someone convinced you to give up on *your* dream—when they convinced you that you didn't have anything of value to offer or have what it takes to succeed.

The American Dream offers a life of *freedom*. If you're going to live the life of your dreams, you'll have to break free of the failure consciousness of the crowd. If someone has stolen your dream, take it back! They're not using it anyway.

Without a doubt, the greatest freedom you will ever know will be yours when you are truly free of the opinions of other people.

It's scary to defy the crowd and go against popular thinking. But the freedom and satisfaction I enjoy today are a direct result of choosing "the road less traveled," as Robert Frost wrote in his

wonderful poem by that title. For me, this choice has made all the difference.



Questions for Reflection, Discussion, and Action:

1. What encouragement or warning do you find in the Parable of the Sower?
2. What excuses are most likely to keep you on the wide and dusty road?
3. What will it take for you to break through those excuses?



CHAPTER SIX:

Wrong Turns: Dealing With Past Failures

“Do the thing you think you cannot do.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt

We’ve all heard the stories of Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, and many others in our history who “failed their way to success.” The idea of “pulling yourself up by the bootstraps” features prominently in the lore handed down to us about the American Dream. Nevertheless, our contemporary society seems obsessed with *failure*. Print and TV news almost exclusively features scandals, disasters, and catastrophes. To be fair, the media reports whatever attracts the greatest audience, so it’s unfair to blame news outlets for our culture’s fixation on failure.

A MATTER OF FOCUS

In sharp contrast to popular media, all the gurus of success from Wallace Wattles to Anthony Robbins (and including Napoleon Hill) emphatically stress the importance of *celebrating and focusing* on one’s *successes* while *learning from* anything one might consider “*failure*.” On his way to creating his most famous invention, Thomas Edison, the story goes, made 10,000 attempts to create an incandescent light bulb. Rather than considering these efforts as failures, Edison said he had simply first discovered 10,000 ways a light bulb wouldn’t work.

This lesson was critical to my early success. Most people would consider my childhood to have been a recipe for failure. My father was a raging alcoholic who frequently acted out in violence. After one of these episodes when my mother was hospitalized, social services removed me from my home. After several troubled years in foster care, I wanted more than anything to fit in and be accepted and loved.

To fit in with the other kids in high school and to gain their friendship, I did something really foolish. I stole a beer truck, took it for a joy ride, and used the beer to throw a huge party. My popularity skyrocketed, but it was short-lived. The authorities wanted to make an example of me, so they arrested me two days before my graduation. The local paper printed my picture and called the incident, "Williston's biggest beer bust." Though I was still a minor, I was prosecuted as an adult and charged with a felony. I went to prison for a short time.

People have one of two responses from spending time in prison. The majority of convicts feel that somehow *they* are the victims. This outlook leads to behaviors that result in longer sentences and return visits to prison.

Fortunately I was among the minority of inmates who respond to prison as a wake-up call. After just a few days in prison, I declared to myself, "This is *not* where I am going to spend my life. Whatever it takes, I am never coming back here."

I wasted no time making good on that promise. While I was still in prison, I took two semesters of classes toward my AA degree in automotive engineering. When I got out I continued my classes. Within a year of my release from prison, the paper ran a second article about me. This time it praised me for making the dean's list in college. My felony conviction, which still stands, could easily have ruined my life. Instead I used it to focus my energy in a positive way.

Fast forward to the present. Having taken this important advice to heart (celebrate successes and learn from failures), I am sometimes still amazed when people see massive failure where I see extraordinary success. Forgive me if this seems like I'm tooting my own horn, but it seems necessary to make this vital point. So far in my career I have documented forty-four individual millionaires who acknowledge me as the mentor who empowered them to achieve their business and financial successes.

In spite of this being what I consider one of my great accomplishments, not infrequently someone will ask, "If tens of thousands of people have joined your marketing organizations over the years, why are there only forty-four millionaires? What do you say about the thousands of *failures* who never made a nickel?"

I ask them how it works in other industries and movements. How many people have set out in high school or college with a dream of becoming professional athletes? A great high school coach probably trains thousands of players over his career, and he wouldn't he consider himself blessed to have *one* of his students go on to become a star NFL player?

How about the healthcare industry? Should we measure the success of the medical profession and pharmaceutical industry by how many people fail to recover or who die while undergoing treatment? Or should we focus on those who are healed?

Consider the publishing industry. Tens of thousands of books are published every year. I understand that 95 percent of those sell less than 200 copies! Less than one percent sells more than 1,000 copies. A tiny handful achieves bestseller status. Then there is the question of how many books that are purchased actually get read!

The Bible is the bestselling book in history, but how many people have actually read it all the way through? How many people have mastered its themes and values in their own lives: generosity, hospitality, patience, humility, faith, hope, and love? Does our failure

to apply this wisdom to our lives mean that God or the Bible's authors should be considered failures?

The parable of the sower featured in the previous chapter agrees with the philosophy of the success gurus and suggests that we celebrate the seed sown on good soil that brings an abundant harvest—and not let ourselves be troubled by the seed that fails to bear fruit.

What you desire from life determines what you make of failure. If you have a dream, and you desire a way to achieve it, you look at failure as a stepping-stone. But if you want your life to be stable, predictable, and untroubled, you will find in failure a respectable excuse to settle for the life that you have. Every time you tell the story of your failure, people will listen with sympathy. Either way, failure serves to fulfill one's desires, so let's all be thankful for failure.

LEARNING TO FOCUS ON DESIRE

I can't overemphasize the importance of developing a mindset that *learns* from past failures and *focuses* on the fulfillment of one's dream. This mindset plays a key part in developing what Napoleon Hill called "success consciousness." Dwelling on the past while seeking to achieve a dream is like trying to drive a car with your hands and eyes fixed on the rearview mirror. When setbacks, breakdowns, and other events that might be judged as failures occur, take the time to learn from them. But never lose sight of your dream; keep your attention on the goal ahead.

Since the key to making the most of our failures is to learn from them, we need to learn a bit about learning. Because I approach my work as an educator, learning has been an area of ongoing interest for me. I have discovered that failure often provides us with the most important quality required for learning: humility.

People say, "What you don't know doesn't hurt you." But it seems obvious to me that failure serves as a wake-up call telling us, "*What you don't know has already hurt you.*"

Before that wake-up call, many a would-be entrepreneur went blithely on his way, unaware he lacked the basic abilities and knowledge required for his particular business. Educators refer to this part of a learning experience as *unconscious incompetence* (he doesn't know how to succeed, but he doesn't know that he doesn't know that).

As supplies of capital deplete and cash flow dries up, many of these people continue to operate from a false confidence in their knowledge and abilities. I want to ask them, "If what you already know could get you to where you want to go, wouldn't you already be there?"

For some, failure will be that wake-up call. They will suddenly enter what educators call the stage of *conscious incompetence* (they don't know how to succeed and now they *realize* that they don't know). This is true humility. For others, sadly, it will be the end of the road for their dreams. Rather than see failure as a learning process, they will either be ashamed of their failure or blame it on something other than their own lack of understanding and skill.

THREE AREAS OF COMPETENCE

To achieve success in business, I have found three areas of competence that one must learn and eventually master: personal development, people skills, and the specific expertise required in a particular business. While it may be possible to learn most of these through trial and error, I recommend a more streamlined approach: Find a mentor with a proven track record and go to school. Either way you will have to subject yourself to a learning process. In other professions people understand that education is indispensable. Nobody wants a doctor or lawyer who didn't complete his or her training. It's true in business as well: *The price of success is paid in advance!*

1. Personal Development

The first area of competence, *personal development*, may be the most critical. It has often been said, “For things to change, you have to change.” If you read any of the success masters I’ve mentioned, you’ll find they emphasize the importance of working on how you think and how you respond to challenges. Personal development includes learning to take responsibility for the life we have and learning to exercise control over our choices, reactions, thoughts, mental states, and emotions. Ultimately, personal development aims to free us and empower us to faithfully take the actions required for our success.

When we first begin to practice a new skill, we experience moments of *conscious competence* (we can do the thing only awkwardly and with great concentration). When we have invested enough time practicing a new skill (in the face of difficulty and discomfort) it becomes second nature. This stage, known as *unconscious competence*, opens the door to *mastery*.

People resist the development of new habits. Initially those practices are easy to forget. They require discipline, which sounds painful. Today there are all kinds of smart phone apps that will remind you to do your daily routines, but ultimately it comes down to taking the action. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his essay “Compensation” that “The law of nature is, Do the thing, and you shall have the power; but they who do not the thing have not the power.” It’s as simple as that—simple to do, and yet simple *not* to do.

You may have noticed that many heroic figures perform these practices with solemnity and ceremony. I was fascinated watching the movie *Braveheart* as the warriors carefully painted stripes on their faces and danced fervently as a formal rite before the battle. What superhero doesn’t have a routine for suiting up and preparing for action? I’m sure these practices gain almost religious significance because of their great power to tune up the mind, emotions, spirit, and body—and to focus our energies for effective performance.

When someone told me these practices are known as “rituals,” what I heard was “*rich-uals*.” To me that made perfect sense. Every successful person I know has a collection of routines that he or she faithfully practices to *train the mind for success consciousness*. Over time these *enrich* the way one thinks.

The one *richual* that all of my mentors practice faithfully involves reading and listening to inspiring, edifying books and presentations. For more than two decades I have followed a daily routine of filling my mind with inspiring ideas from other successful people. This practice started when I began reading *Think and Grow Rich* every morning and evening. After I read it about a dozen times, I asked my mentor to recommend other books. Later I began listening to audiotapes of people like Jim Rohn, Zig Ziglar, Bob Proctor, Earl Nightingale, Tony Robbins, and many others.

I paid thousands of dollars to build my library of books and audio programs. Today you can watch videos of many of these same wise teachers for free on YouTube. Just search for any of the names I have mentioned or by terms such as *inspiration, leadership, and success*.

Another wonderful *richual* I have incorporated into my life for decades is the practice of gratefulness. As part of my “quiet time” each morning, I give thanks for all the blessings that are daily poured into my life. You may be thinking, *I’d be thankful, too, if I had your income*. It’s important to understand that I began this *richual* back when the bill collectors were swarming like flies. I got the idea from reading Og Mandino’s wonderful book *The Greatest Miracle in the World*. Since then I’ve discovered that virtually all success teachers urge followers to develop a practice of thankfulness. It makes perfect sense.

It’s hard for me to understand how people can expect more from the universe or from life when they aren’t grateful for what they already have! When Oprah was asked to name the one thing she credits most for her success, she described her practice of keeping a gratefulness journal. Long before she began her astonishing media

career, Oprah began and ended her days by writing down all the things for which she was grateful.

The fact that all successful people practice such *richuals* points to the secret that clearly distinguishes winners from the masses in life: Winners realize that they can shape the patterns of their thoughts and beliefs, and they make it their top priority to do so. It was Tony Robbins who helped me to fully understand this. “The key to unlock your personal power,” Tony asserts, “lies in your ability to change your mental and emotional state at any time and in the blink of an eye.”

This realization produces one of the essential “pops” at the core of any worthwhile program of personal development. Reading one book probably will not bring about this “pop” for you. But engaging diligently in these kind of *richuals* over time will almost certainly produce this “pop”—and many others that will set you on the road to success. In *every way, the price of success is paid in advance.*

2. People Skills

The second area of competence required for success in business involves people skills. Success in any field requires a fundamental understanding of what works in dealing with people. Interpersonal skills play an essential role in my business, and so I discuss them at length throughout this book.

In many ways, the people skills that empower you in business grow naturally out of your personal development. Advances in personal confidence, competence, and self-esteem foster winning ways with other people: openness, respect, patience, and generosity.

The core competency in the area of people skills involves respect and appreciation for all varieties of human beings. Learning to listen with genuine interest and compassion for the unique values, ambitions, concerns, fears, and dreams of each individual must be a goal of every person who aspires to leadership in business.

3. Business-Specific Skills

The final area of competence for success in business involves learning the particular skills and practices of the business or enterprise we choose to build. In any given enterprise, there are half a dozen skills or competencies that collectively determine success or failure.

Ultimately, business is about *building a satisfied customer base*. Each enterprise has an approach to finding, contacting and serving their customers. As with all these areas of competency, the key to success is to *master the mundane*. That means you must find out what works to attract and retain customers, do it routinely, practice it, and master it.

Though the essence of an effective business operation can be distilled down to a handful of competencies, getting a business started—getting most dreams into operation—requires many steps. Discovering complete incompetence in one area, or finding that one cannot for any reason execute one step in the process, will often stop a person in his tracks. Instead of focusing on the thing you can't do now, find the steps that you *can* take. Take all of the steps that are possible today. These steps, taken as acts of faith, seem to trigger something in the universe or in your mind, and suddenly the doors open that allow you to do the step you thought you couldn't. Do the simple steps to train your mind to think, *I can do this*.

Never hesitate to ask for help. An expert can point out your blind spots (unconscious incompetence) if you are open to it. When you embrace the feedback of an expert, often something pops open. There is an “aha!” moment, and you see things with a new clarity. You shift from *wondering* about your future to a *realization* and a *determination* about how it *will* turn out.

When your “pop” occurs, suddenly you know that you *know* that you *know* your dream *will* become a reality. It will become real because you say so, and you will not back down until it happens.

Years ago when you decided you would get your driver's license, you determined to keep taking the test until you passed it. The matter was settled in advance. When such a pop occurs, suddenly you find you are doing the thing you thought you couldn't. You are moving toward your goal, and your life will never be the same.



Questions for Discussion, Reflection, and Action:

1. How has past failure held you back from reaching for your dreams?
2. What is there to learn from your failure(s)?
3. Which of the three areas of competency are you ready to go to work on?
4. What *richuals* will you put in place to begin to develop your *success consciousness*?



CHAPTER SEVEN:

Real Roadblocks

*“Nothing in life is to be feared.
It is only to be understood.”*

—Marie Curie

Past failures, properly understood, are not roadblocks, but aids to our eventual success. Nevertheless, the *fear of failure* has stopped countless dreamers from reaching for their goals.

FEAR OF FAILURE UNMASKED

I have interviewed thousands of individuals at the moment they are weighing the potential risks and benefits of starting a new business. I have found that the concerns people most commonly express at the outset, “I can’t afford it” and “I don’t have the time,” generally function as smokescreens.

Each time I hear one of these responses, I think, *Really? What you’re doing now has you broke and too busy to create the life of your dreams. How’s that working for you?* It seems these two conditions provide perfect incentives to say “yes!” to opportunity. Of course, I don’t actually express these observations out loud—people have to realize these things for themselves. Nevertheless, in twenty-five years and thousands of interviews, I have never met anyone who was really stopped by a lack of money or time. People get around limitations of time and money in all kinds of creative ways. I know a guy who sold his motorcycle to start a business so he could spend

more time with his family. I knew he loved that motorcycle, so I asked him why he sold it. He said, “I love my family more.”

A bit of probing often reveals that these excuses of “no money or time” hide an underlying force that most people balk at facing directly: fear of failure. Most people will say they dream of a better life and wish they could find a real opportunity, but the paralyzing fear of failure stops countless dreamers in their tracks. Over time I have discovered that fear of failure, in turn, conceals an even deeper concern for preserving one’s reputation. The primary roadblock that stops people from going into business for themselves arises from ***a misplaced value of keeping up appearances.***

If you’ve ever had a sense that a fear of failure keeps you from proceeding toward your dreams, please consider that you may not be afraid of *failure* as such. Perhaps you’re afraid of looking like a loser to your friends and family. You’re afraid of not fitting in. Let’s examine that. When you learned to ride a bike, how many times did you fail? No matter how many times you scraped and bruised yourself falling off, you kept getting back on.

Why was it okay to fail and keep going then, but not in business? Because *not* learning to ride a bike would make you an outcast. All your friends would be riding past you and laughing as you walked to school. It’s all about conformity, and what matters most is *what your peer group expects.*

Here’s another example: When you finish second grade, you’re expected to go on to third grade. If it looks like it might not happen, you get encouragement, special attention, maybe some discipline or tutoring. But failure is not an option. Why? It’s simply because *in your community* people are expected to go from second grade to third grade. So now you’re in tenth grade. Do you go on to eleventh grade? That depends. Do *most* of the people in your community finish high school? If most of the people finish, then that’s what’s expected of

you. This confirms every parent's intuition: *You become just like the people you hang around.*

And let's face it; the majority of your friends and family are not likely to risk their reputations to start their own business. The pull of conformity is stronger than gravity. So you have to choose either to pursue your dream or to fit in with the crowd. Sadly most people would rather spend the rest of their days complaining that they lack the time or money to enjoy life than do anything about it—if that means defying their peers' expectations.

What would people think? What will people think of you if you fail in business? Frankly, you probably wouldn't care what people think about you if you realized just how seldom they do.

FEAR AND FAITH FACEOFF

While fear stops many people in their tracks, paradoxically fear can also get us moving. Fear of loss can be a powerful motivator. The prospect of all kinds of loss—of possessions, relationship, social status, opportunity, or love—can thrust us into action with an alarming sense of urgency. Baby Boomers, frightened by the disappearance of their pensions and the inadequacy of their life savings for retirement, are scrambling to find new sources of income. Terrified at the prospect of losing their houses and lifestyle, they are seeking new employment opportunities and starting businesses in record numbers. Thus, fear of loss—closely related to fear of failure—also masks an underlying concern for protecting one's reputation.

Both kinds of fear seek to preserve our status quo. Fear operates like a thermostat, trying to maintain a constant comfort level in our environment. If something about our environment changes, fear kicks in and either tries to avoid the change or to return things to the way they were. In this way fear can be a powerful force.

Though fear may be the predominant force in most people's lives, *faith* can be even more powerful in the lives of those who practice and develop it. Faith generally seeks to *overturn* the status quo that fear seeks to *preserve*. Faith seeks to bring something new into being.

The writer of the New Testament book *The Letter to the Hebrews* wrote, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Elsewhere in the Christian Bible, the patriarch Abraham receives praise for modeling his faith after God himself, who "calls those things which do not exist as though they did" (Romans 4:17).

That is how I think of faith: holding a confident mental picture of that which I desire and speaking of it as if it were complete until it is manifested for all to see. It fascinates me that many people who ridicule acts of *faith* as some kind of fantasy or pipe dream, view *fears* as grounded in reality or as an expression of being practical and realistic. They fail to realize that both faith and fear are acts of human *imagination*. Each looks into the future and pictures how it might turn out. Fear envisions a future with an undesirable outcome, but faith foresees a happy ending. Neither is "real." Both are simply points of view.

EGO CREATES LIMITS

Beware of the little voice that may be saying that without fear, you will lose all motivation. This is your ego speaking, trying desperately to keep all the familiar pieces in place. The ego can't thrive without fear, but *you* can flourish by breaking free from the bonds of fear *and* ego.

All people encounter fears. On some level we all want to keep life as it is. Just as human beings *universally* experience fear, all people who achieve great dreams have overcome fear *universally* through acts of *faith*. Fear constrains us to operate within the limits of our

known strengths and weaknesses. Faith reaches beyond our egos and opens us to untapped resources and abilities.

For me, ego means “Edging God Out.” As long as you’ve got all the answers and rely on your own strength, there’s no room for miracles. Your quantum leap forward begins by taking a step back and humbling yourself. Only then can you learn what it means to “ask, seek, and knock.” I see many Boomers starting businesses out of fear of losing their familiar lifestyle. But I also encounter Boomers who *don’t* have to worry about personal finances, and yet they are also interested in business opportunities. Many of these are creating new enterprises out of a desire to make an impact in the world. They’ve had successful careers. They’ve created their nest eggs. Yet they desire to leave more of a legacy. This is all good. The greatest motivator—greater than the fear of loss—comes from a deep sense of purpose.

Here’s the interesting thing: These people often face a similar struggle with their egos as they seek to succeed in a new business. They see my success, and they don’t really understand it. Then, before they’ve taken the time to study my system and philosophy, they start “improving on it” based on their own past successes, strengths, and experience. Please don’t conclude that I think my system has no room for improvements—it has continued to evolve for twenty-five years and will continue to do so with the insights and help of many of the people who have mastered it.

Here’s what happens when people try to improve the system before learning it. Unwittingly driven by ego, individuals “enhance” my system in some way that inevitably features some quality that has proven successful for them in another line of work. For example, they rewrite my basic presentation to update and streamline it and give it more sophistication and polish. But they fail to recognize that my system works extremely well as it is.

I don't take their criticism personally. Often these are the same people who ridicule other very successful marketing campaigns. Have you seen the *Snuggie* commercial? People have spoofed it and made it the butt of many jokes. They ridicule the commercial as stupid and amateurish. Yet with that dumb commercial the Snuggie inventor has sold over twenty-five million of those silly, plush bathrobes. You think that guy's feelings are hurt knowing that people stand around the water cooler talking about his ridiculous idea? He's crying all the way to the bank.

People who want to change my system may mean well, but they fail to understand that my business operates on a principle of duplication that is psychologically delicate. If people see what looks like a polished presentation they think, *I will never be able to do that* and they don't look any further. The pattern of duplication never starts. Thus strengths, driven by ego, become weaknesses.

I can't tell you the number of promising new associates in my business who dive in with gusto and fall on their faces. When I investigate what they are doing, inevitably they have tweaked some part of the system to fit their personal style. But their personal style will not duplicate, so the system fails to work. Some of these individuals humble themselves and seek my advice, as I sought Mr. Gould's when I failed at the outset. Others, sadly, give up. They chalk it up to personal shortcomings or a weakness in my business system. They say, "I gave it a try," but they really didn't.

These miscalculations by ego—overconfidence and lack of confidence—produce the two major pitfalls that lead to failure in business. The one who *lacks* confidence feels he must master everything that can be known about his business in order to move forward. So he takes courses, reads books, and never stops preparing to begin—but never begins. The *overconfident* person fails to learn from those who have gone before, who made the mistakes and have

achieved success. He may eventually reinvent the wheel, but more likely he will recreate all their mistakes, traumas, and failures—and become discouraged.

How does one resolve this problem of too much or too little confidence? The secret weapon that cuts through this Gordian knot involves finding a well-documented mentor and following his or her proven system faithfully. As Peter Drucker put it, “The system is the solution.” Or, as I often say, ***people don’t duplicate—systems duplicate.***

Working with a proven mentor and a good system allows a new person to get out of the way, as my mentor advised me and “to *find* people who *already* want what you have and *point* them to where they can get what they want.” This enables a beginner to achieve results with surprising speed. I always encourage people to treat their first months and years in business as “going to school,” but the system allows them to *earn as they learn*. I’ll describe my specific implementation of this strategy in the next section.

DEALING POWERFULLY WITH DOUBT

Occasionally someone will come to me and say with all apparent humility, “I just don’t have the faith for this.” They perceive faith as the absence of doubts and fears. What you may view as a lack of faith may actually arise from ineffectiveness in dealing with your doubts.

Doubts are thoughts rooted in fear. But those thoughts influence you only to the extent that you believe them. In a strange way it is your *belief* in these ideas that steals your *faith*. Believing these fearful thoughts knocks you out of the game. Stop believing those things, and you may find you soar toward your dream almost effortlessly.

You may be asking, “How can I stop believing my fearful thoughts?” Here is where the real work takes place. Discovering how to get out of our own way is what it is all about. You inherited many

of the beliefs you have (or that have you). You can't blame yourself for having them, and you can't blame your parents and teachers because they inherited them, too! But you can *examine* your beliefs and *question* them.

Doubting your ability to succeed may come from a belief that you are a slow learner. You probably picked up that mindset in kindergarten, so it's been haunting you for a long time.

You may want to ask, "How is that working?" What would your life be like if you gave up that belief and started thinking of yourself as creative or dependable or some other powerful way of being? As you examine your beliefs, you can keep the ones that serve you and let go of the ones that limit you. This thought-sorting process lies at the heart of my work with all those I mentor.

Transforming fear into faith is the core message of books like *Think and Grow Rich* and Wallace Wattles' masterwork, *The Science of Getting Rich*. Many of the great success teachers have taken pains to point out that courage and faith are not experienced as the *absence* of fear, but only in the *presence* of fear. Courage, it has been said, is found in having fears and moving ahead in spite of them.

I wish I could give you a magic pill that would empower you to let go of all your fearful thoughts. There isn't any such thing. Identifying those fearful thoughts that hold you back and choosing to let them go—or to move ahead in the face of them—takes concentrated effort. Very few people accomplish this without the support of a mentor or a group committed to this empowering and transforming work. For this reason, entrepreneurship has been described as "a personal development program with a pay plan."

LIFE BEYOND YOUR COMFORT ZONE

The real roadblocks to success include fear, ego, limiting beliefs, and finally, complacency. Often I see people who seem to have all the right

parts to achieve success, yet never get the vehicle out of the garage. They say they are seeking opportunity, and they join a particular business program. *While* they are around other motivated business owners, they seem enthusiastic and focused. But when these people get back to their own homes, families, and familiar surroundings they don't take any of the necessary actions to build their businesses.

They face the roadblock of complacency. At some level they are comfortable with the way things are. They may complain about the circumstances, but they are somehow content with the status quo. As the storekeeper said about his dog lying on nails, "I guess it don't hurt *that bad*."

If I had to identify one culprit for the apparent disappearance of the American Dream for millions of people, I would blame it on *complacency*. We've had it so good for so long that people have lost touch with the qualities of vision, determination, desire, and faith possessed by those who built our prosperous way of life. The American Dream continues to burn brightly in a minority of individuals around the world. Witness the youthfulness of the Forbes list of the richest people in the world. It includes fifty billionaires under age fifty! People around the world are becoming millionaires and billionaires more rapidly and at a younger age than ever before.

Read the stories of the creators of Google, Facebook, and YouTube. Groupon broke through the billion-dollar valuation in less than eighteen months. If the American Dream has died or been stolen, these folks obviously didn't get the memo. Look at the dramatic innovations that other dreamers have brought about in the past few decades in the fields of technology, entertainment, communication, ecology, and health and fitness.

Nevertheless, for many people the American Dream has been co-opted, corroded, and corrupted by false promises of security and stability. It is my conviction that this magnificent dream of freedom can only be restored and redeemed one person at a time—

as individuals wake up to the extraordinary power of personal responsibility, freedom, and choice.

Since I achieved my success in business, I've had occasion to contend with complacency. Long after I achieved financial success and fulfilled many of my dreams, I grew restless and eager for a new challenge. I discovered an opportunity that excited me, and I found myself hesitating. Realizing that my hesitation came from a sense of comfort, I packed a suitcase and moved a thousand miles away from my family and beautiful home in Montana. I rented a small (uncomfortable) car and moved into a tiny apartment with my twenty-five-year-old son, Robert Jr., who would be my apprentice in this venture. Shaking off my complacency required getting out of my comfort zone.

Perhaps my actions in this instance seem extreme. Yet consider how athletes and soldiers train. They are removed from familiar surroundings, required to live in spartan quarters, and are subjected to a strict regimen and intense discipline.

Even corporations send employees away to receive intensive training. Though the food and bedding may be considerably improved over boot camp, companies often insist on a "no family" policy to achieve concentration and focus. Separation from the comforts of home, family, and friends plays an essential role in these training camps as it does in other initiatory experiences, such as going away to college. Breaking away from one's familiar environment creates an opening for learning, growth, and personal transformation.

None of us wants to let go of our creature comforts and familiar surroundings, but I'm so glad I did what I needed to do to break up my complacency. In these past years, I have enjoyed an unprecedented level of business success and satisfaction. I have begun to watch others implement my methods with technologies and techniques that were previously unavailable. And watching my son develop into an extraordinary business leader in his own right has been one of my great joys.

As in the early days after my accident, I found that discomfort heats up desire, keeps one focused, and, most important, opens your mind. As Napoleon Hill wrote, “Open-mindedness is essential to belief. Closed minds do not inspire faith, courage, or belief” (p. 37).



Questions for Discussion, Reflection, and Action:

1. Where in your life do fear of failure and fear of loss serve to preserve the status quo?
2. What is the reputation that you try to maintain—and with whom?
3. When your ego takes over, are you more likely to experience *overconfidence* or a *lack* of confidence?
4. What are the doubts that you most want to transform?
5. How might you break up your own complacency and get out of your comfort zone?



PART III:

**RENEWING
YOUR DREAM**

CHAPTER EIGHT:

Got Maps?

*If you don't know where you are going,
any road will get you there.*

Where do you really want to go? By now you realize that I subscribe to Napoleon Hill's premise that the journey to success begins with a definite purpose and a burning desire to fulfill that purpose. Next, when you've determined your destination, you need a plan for getting there. "By creating definite plans," Hill wrote, "you will have definitely given concrete form to the intangible desire" (p. 91).

PLANS FOR BUILDING YOUR DREAM AND YOUR FAITH

Plans provide a critical ingredient in the formula for success. Remember Hill's main idea from *Think and Grow Rich*: "What the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve" (p. 249). Plans build a bridge from *conceiving* to *believing*. When an idea gets conceived, it is often abstract. Someone says, "I want to build the tallest building in the world." That may *seem* clear. Then someone asks, "Exactly how tall would that be?" So architects create plans and build models to give their ideas tangible form. As my coauthor, Max, says in his *Imaginuity* workshop, "Plans provide an essential, transitional form in the creative process."

"Every collaborative form of art begins with a model of some kind. Movies start with a script. Composers create a score, which is a model of the music the orchestra will play. Entrepreneurs create

a business plan to give form to the business they intend to create. Once you see a model, it becomes much easier to believe that the final product can be achieved.”

Giving solid form to your vision builds your faith—and assists others to believe in the dream as well. This experience of growing faith by creating a clear plan or model reminds me of a teaching of Jesus from Matthew 18:19 (KJV): “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth *as touching any thing* that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”

A plan or model becomes a *touchstone* that allows people to agree on a specific vision with clarity and power to make things happen. My friend Bob Cline recently posted a picture of me taken in 2001. I was sitting in my office in front of a mindmap we had created of our new training business, UnlimitedProfits.Com. (A mindmap is a visualization of a collection of related ideas.) We zoomed in on the image to read the mindmap. Amazingly, nearly all of the ideas we included have already fallen into place—a decade after it was created.

MAPS PROVIDE DIRECTION

Maps are a special kind of plan. They generally tell us that someone has gone ahead of us (someone drew the map based on their travels). Metaphorically speaking, other people’s maps provide direction for our adventures in several ways.

First, they can give us the steps we need to take to arrive at a specific destination. When someone asks me to mentor him or her in business, I provide a step-by-step action plan that has proven effective for countless others to reach their financial goals. Everyone who offers a legitimate business opportunity provides some kind of plan for building a successful enterprise. In the next chapter, I will offer suggestions on how to evaluate the merits of these opportunities and find one that best suits your needs.

A second way that other people's maps provide direction pertains to the *inner journey* that it takes to achieve our hearts' desires. These maps prepare us for the sorts of challenges we will confront and the risks we will face. They warn us that we will encounter mountains and valleys along the way. They encourage us to take stock of what the journey will demand of us. Jesus said, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it" (Luke 14:28).

These warnings are not meant to deter us from making the journey, but to prepare us and to encourage us to endure when we face the inevitable difficulties. They admonish us that we will need to grow and develop along the way. An interviewer asked billionaire entrepreneur Richard Branson what made him such a huge success. He identified the key factor as "making *good* decisions." Asked how he came to make such good decisions, Branson gave a one-word response: "Experience." Pressed to describe how one gains such experience, Branson grinned and said, "By making *bad* decisions."

Other people's maps also give us insight based on their experience. "Here's the narrowest place to cross this river." "This shore offers the best fishing." "Here you will find a path to the summit." Much of what I have shared with you to this point falls into this category. The critical features of my roadmap to success include my advice to concentrate on sorting rather than persuading and to focus your energy on serving and educating others.

THE SECRET OF MULTIPLICATION: TRAINING TOUR GUIDES

Another essential element of my success map contains a critical secret to duplication and rapid business growth. I call it "Point, guide, and direct." People coming into my business-training program often have many questions. As much as possible, I don't answer them. Instead I *point* them to specific websites, online videos, audio recordings, and

live webinars where these questions are addressed. By *guiding* them with a link instead of making a presentation over and over again, I am already training them how to build their own businesses efficiently and enjoyably.

With no presentations to give, a new apprentice's learning curve shrinks dramatically. My apprentices who experience the fastest business growth are the ones who master this process. Through my example, they learn to:

- *Listen* to each person actively, empathetically, and thoroughly.
- *Guide* the individual to the resources that will best address his or her questions or concerns.
- *Direct* those who express interest through the start-up process.

It's incredibly simple. In a way I'm training people to be *tour guides* using the map I have provided. A tour guide's job is to point, guide, and direct people to things they want to experience. Like a tour guide, our job simply involves guiding people toward their goals by pointing out the resources and opportunities that can help to achieve them.

By following this simple process and by refraining from trying to address the person's concerns with personalized explanations, these apprentices can focus on the activities that actually build their businesses. People try to make this more complicated, but all we are doing is building a satisfied customer base by means of a simple education process that can be *readily duplicated by anyone*.

Something very subtle but powerful is at work. Over the years millions of people have been introduced to business opportunities by friends, colleagues, and family members. Typically the person making that introduction has little experience and no results. If a business relies on people with no successful track record to make

their initial presentations (as so often they have) they are heading for trouble.

The first question in a person's mind when they hear a new idea is one of credibility: "Why should I listen to you?" I train my apprentices to answer honestly and humbly, "You *shouldn't* listen to me. But I know of a guy who has had tremendous success in business, and it is all documented. He created this map to success. If you are *interested*, listen to *him*."

People are happy to learn from someone with a proven track record. Why not follow a tour guide who has already made the journey, knows the territory, and has created the map?

FINDING YOUR PASSION

One of my greatest satisfactions comes from watching my apprentices grow in confidence and faith as they follow my guidance and produce successful results. It fascinates me to see how, with gains in confidence, a person's dreams also seem to grow. Often a new apprentice will tell me he wants to build a business to add a little bit to his retirement nest egg or start saving for a child's education. Then, with a measure of success, these modest ambitions expand. As a person's dreams grow, his or her passion for life also seems to blossom. I often wonder if most people bury their dreams because they don't know how to achieve them or don't believe they can be achieved.

Plans answer the question, "How?" My roadmap to success says, "Here's *how* you get to where you want to go."

Your goal, purpose, dream, or destination answers the question, "What?" I am always encouraging my apprentices to clarify their goals: "What will it look like, feel like, smell like to have the life of your dreams?" And to continue with this metaphor, "Where do you want to arrive?"

Finally, a person's desires answer the powerful question, "Why?" Most often, you find your deepest desires and motivations in the faces of those you love. Some find their "Why?" in a cause, mission, or calling. Others enjoy a passion for a hobby, sport, or skill. What matters most is that it's *your* "Why?" and it lights *you* up.

If you have had trouble finding your passion, sometimes it helps to set a simple goal and get into action. Someone has said, "You can't steer a parked car." Perhaps your dreams are not gone, but just hidden from your sight. In the next three chapters, we will explore how you can find:

- an opportunity that excites you.
- a mentor who inspires and challenges you.
- a community of like-minded people to support and encourage you to reach for your dreams.

These three power sources will transform your fears into faith. As another person has said, "You can't think your way to a new way of acting, but you act your way to a new way of thinking."

The trail has been blazed. The path has been cleared. The maps have been charted. The tour guide stands ready to show you the way. Your traveling companions are eager to share the journey with you. Now the choice is yours to make those first, small steps.



Questions for Discussion, Reflection, and Action:

1. As you look back on your past successes, what role did planning play in achieving your goals?
2. Setting aside the question of “How?” are you able to clearly define the “What?” of your personal dreams and your vision for your future?
3. If you don’t know your “What?” but you know your “Why?” (your important motivators such as your love for your spouse, children, and others), can you see yourself following someone else’s plan to achieve financial independence?



CHAPTER NINE:

The Right Vehicle For You

“You can have anything you desire by helping other people get what they want and need.”

—Zig Ziglar

Most people go into business seeking a better lifestyle. Some seek to escape the corporate rat race and have greater freedom and control over their lives. Some seek rewards that seem unattainable by working for someone else. Though businesses sometimes give expression to a personal talent or passion, most business owners see a business as a *means to an end*; as *vehicles* to get to their lifestyle goals.

My purpose in this chapter is to equip you to effectively evaluate business opportunities and to choose a suitable vehicle to speed you on your way to your dream lifestyle.

BUILDING A SATISFIED CUSTOMER BASE

Though the incentive for starting a business may be to lift oneself to a better lifestyle, success in business comes from satisfying the needs of *others* (customers) as Zig Ziglar asserts. Remember the brass ring for any business involves *building a satisfied customer base*. The greatest asset any business can own in this socially networked, global marketplace—the key to generating residual income—is an army of happy, enthusiastic customers. In the long run a business thrives by fostering a passion for *servicing and delighting* its customers. This is how—for so many business owners—entrepreneurship becomes

almost a spiritual path. For some time, my attention in business has been focused on how I can help others achieve their personal and financial goals. Paradoxically, the better I get at serving others, the more prosperous my business grows.

For a business to thrive, it must make profits. So for an entrepreneur, *true opportunity* exists if the needs and wants of people can be met at an acceptable price for the customers—and at a profit for the enterprise. To achieve great size, a business must meet the needs of a great number of customers, so virtually all the giants of industry distribute products and services that people consume every day (such as gasoline, beverages, food, cosmetics, and entertainment.) Even big-ticket items like cars, computers, education, and health care qualify as *consumables* because we eventually go back for more.

WHAT IS IT?

When we begin to evaluate the merits of a specific opportunity, we typically ask, “What is it?” We are trying to locate this opportunity within our understanding of business and the marketplace:

- What is the product?
- Who buys it?
- What need does it meet?
- How big could the market be for this kind of product?

We are also asking about *the company*:

- How are they distinct in the marketplace?
- What unique innovations do they offer?
- Do they have any competitive advantages such as patents, expertise, or exclusive ingredients?

The challenge in evaluating many businesses arises from the one factor that often defines opportunity: *timing*. The marketplace is in

constant flux. Companies introduce new products and services all the time. The market responds swiftly to some and slowly to others. Whether it's easy or difficult to build a business in a particular market depends on how customers respond to the new idea.

A company selling fax machines may not have been very profitable in the first few years. Initially the fax machine industry had a long, slow growth curve. Other products caught on rapidly and then disappeared, such as eight-track tapes and audiocassettes. With digital audio devices such as Apple's iPod, we may soon say farewell to audio CDs.

DOES THIS MAKE SENSE?

When you hear about a new product or industry, you ask yourself, "Does this make sense?" But you have to question your own judgment, because few of us can spot a major market trend in its earliest stages. Like most of us, you probably missed many business and investment opportunities because you didn't understand them early enough to take advantage.

Someone has said that all social trends go through three stages.

First, they are ridiculed. Remember those huge early cell phones? How about bottled water?

Next, a trend meets resistance and opposition. When personal computers started showing up in offices, many people insisted they would never need one—or learn to use one.

Finally, a trend reaches a "tipping point" and becomes self-evident. Most of us recognize the new market at this point and ask, "Why didn't I think of that?"

Trends are easy to recognize looking backward, but by that point the opportunity to profit from them has passed. Ideally you want to get into a business just ahead of the "trend wave," where the fastest growth occurs.

But most of us don't know how to read the signs of change until they are long behind us. To illustrate this I often ask the question, "What color is a yield sign?" Write your answer in the margin. Did you write "yellow?" Do a search online and you will discover they haven't been yellow since 1971.

As consumers, there is no shame in being part of the crowd that recognizes a trend after it becomes obvious. But as a businessperson, it is important to assess market opportunities with objective detachment.

When most people evaluate an opportunity, they think like a consumer. They focus on a product and judge the business opportunity by whether *they* would buy the product. There are many good reasons to use your own products when you are in business. I frequently urge entrepreneurs to become "a product of their product." But when assessing a market opportunity, the question to ask about the product is not "Would *I* buy this?" but "Are customers buying this repeatedly?"

If you understand the pattern of trends, you realize that a small percentage of us are "early adopters" (first to buy a new product or service), so you won't be fooled by the market's current size. If a new product has enthusiastic customers and the product meets a need that is widespread, the market will likely grow. Only those who engage the market at this stage have a chance to grasp the brass ring: a *large, satisfied* customer base.

TOP PRIORITY: WHY SHOULD I LISTEN TO YOU?

When assessing a business opportunity, it seems natural to begin with evaluating its products and markets. Though these may be the topics of our initial questions, they are not our only—or even primary—concerns. In the previous chapter I mentioned that the first question *in our minds* (though usually unspoken) when evaluating an opportunity is, "*Why should I listen to you?*"

We want to know if the opportunity and the person presenting it are credible. It's easy to build a website and present oneself as an expert. Many people claim to be experts before their paychecks can back up that claim. They might impress you with all kinds of fancy talk, and presentations, but as I have always taught, "*documentation beats conversation!*"

When my original mentor, Mr. Gould, reached into his pocket and showed me his paycheck from the previous month still attached to the check stub, I knew he was the real deal. I publish my results on a website for anyone to evaluate. Many so-called opportunity experts will tell you it's illegal to show actual earnings. They're lying. It's illegal in most states to make predictions of what others can or will earn with a particular business plan. But anyone can (and should) document his own results.

Documentation is essential in evaluating all aspects of a business, especially the company that offers the opportunity. You can have a great consumable product that is priced well for consumers and for a profit. It can have a promising future in the marketplace. But that's not enough to ensure success.

With these fundamental criteria met, the growth of an individual enterprise depends heavily on two factors: *execution* and *leverage*.

THE ESSENTIAL OF EXECUTION

Execution refers to the efficiency and effectiveness of the operation:

- Are they well organized and reliable?
- Do they use state-of-the-art technologies?
- Are they financially sound?
- Do they function with integrity?
- Do they focus on the things that matter *most* to the customers and to the business?

- Do they devote energy and resources to what they say is important?
- Do they learn from their customers, their employees, and their other stakeholders?
- Do they learn from their mistakes and from their successes?

In evaluating the company and leadership behind a particular opportunity, a critical question to ask is: “Will the company outlast the market for its flagship product?” Often a company makes its initial mark by introducing a product that’s new to the marketplace. Then, if the leaders of the company pay attention to the market trends, they introduce other products and enter new markets.

Apple Computers, Inc. introduced the first user-friendly, personal computer, the Apple II, in 1977. Then they redefined personal computers in 1984 with the phenomenally successful “Mac.” After two decades in the computer industry, they dropped “Computer” from their corporate name to rebrand themselves as a consumer products company. They introduced the iPod in 2001, the iPhone in 2007, and the iPad in 2009. These three products, along with the iTunes store, now generate the majority of the company’s revenues.

THE POWER OF LEVERAGE

Leverage refers to what takes the growth of the business from a linear increase (*adding* customers gradually) to an *exponential* expansion (*multiplying* the customer base).

One type of leverage—residual income—involves getting paid repeatedly for your previous efforts. People get paid royalties for inventions, books, songs, and all sorts of creative products. People can also create residual income by marketing a valued, consumable product, taking good care of their customers, and continuing to add new customers each day.

One of my apprentices started selling pagers from a tiny storefront on a busy street in his town (back when pagers were popular). He sold the service for \$8.96 per month and earned two dollars in profit from each pager every month. At the peak of pager use, he had acquired over 5,000 satisfied customers. In 1993, over \$10,000 each month in residual income provided him a great lifestyle!

Another type of leverage involves capitalizing on the efforts and resources of others. The power of capitalism can be found in the fact that everything an entrepreneur needs to expand an enterprise can be had for a price. By offering incentives and rewards, a business can attract the talent, resources, ideas, and strategic partnerships that can lead to dramatic growth. The principle of being of service applies toward these stakeholders just as much as it does with your customers.

Zig Ziglar's axiom applies to all relationships: You have to give to receive. For any partnership to thrive, there must be a mutually beneficial exchange of value. So in my business, though I could easily sit back and rest, I am constantly striving to find new and better ways to support and serve my apprentices, business associates, and customers. As a result, I now earn residual income from the efforts of over a million people. That's what I call *leverage*.

DOES IT WORK?

Once you've satisfied your concern for the credibility and leadership behind an opportunity, and you are on board with their products and services and the markets they intend to serve, you will find yourself addressing another set of issues under the general question: "Does it work?"

Here you begin to assess your chances for success with this specific opportunity. There are three essential components of this evaluation:

- 1) The compensation program.
- 2) The business building system and tools.
- 3) The training and support that is available for you.

Every franchise, networking company, direct sales outfit, and affiliate program offers a compensation plan. Each opportunity attempts to reward those who produce results. A whole variety of compensation plans exist. Though they all have advantages and disadvantages, the proof is in the pudding. Here is where the idea of leverage becomes critical. What is the opportunity for residual income? Are you able to capitalize on both kinds of leverage (repeat business and duplication of effort)?

Meet people at various levels of achievement with the opportunity and ask them about their experience. Also ask to examine the documentation. If it seems you are being offered a “something for nothing” proposition, move on to another opportunity. But if people are producing the kinds of results and earning the amount of residual income that would satisfy your desires, then continue your evaluation.

Next, examine the business-building system. How do they attract, serve, and retain customers? What kinds of technology are involved, and what do they cost to use? Are any of the systems automated? A good business system helps you to focus your resources and energies on the most productive activities.

In my business system, I teach that there are only three productive activities. First we need to *pique* the interest of potential customers and future associates. We do this through advertising, online marketing, and personal contact. Second we *point* those who are interested to where they can get their questions answered and get started. Third we *promote* events, resources, ideas, and tools that can help our customers and associates achieve their desired results.

In my programs, I offer automated systems that streamline all these essential business-building activities. The Internet makes marketing so much more efficient today. In what we sometimes call old school marketing, we used to meet prospects at a hotel for a presentation, and the process of getting a new person started in business could take a week or longer. Now a person can view an online presentation, get his questions answered, get set up, and have his or her own prospects calling and asking for more information in just a few hours.

The final component in answering your question, “Does it work?” involves *training*. Every business system requires some education and practice. You want to find out what training this business makes available so you can quickly learn the skills you need to succeed.

Any program worth your time and energy will allow you to participate in basic training before you commit to get involved. This allows you to understand exactly what actions, skills, and resources it requires to achieve success. One of the great things about the training available in a good marketing company is that it will also help you succeed in other businesses.

WILL IT WORK FOR ME?

Once you have satisfied yourself that an opportunity is viable, ask yourself, “**Can I do it?**” I wish I could answer this for you, because I truly believe that you can. People can learn just about anything if they have the desire and put in the required time and energy.

The tremendous power of a marketing program to produce residual income stems from the duplication of a system that enables people to succeed with no special skills, abilities, or prior experience. The key to duplication lies in faithful implementation of the system. It is worth repeating that *people don't duplicate—systems duplicate*. The criteria for a great system comes down to *ease of duplication*.

This is determined simply by whether average people (those without special skills, talents, and abilities) will *actually follow the system*.

This is so critical. I've seen companies that have great products that meet a need, but for whatever reason average people won't follow the system. Since these companies' systems won't duplicate efficiently, these companies fail. So when you ask, "Can I do it?" you are really asking, "Can I learn to follow this system and show others how to do the same?"

Based on twenty-five years of experience, I can tell you that if you really throw yourself into any well-designed business opportunity—and you allow yourself to be trained by someone with a proven track record—you will likely succeed beyond your wildest dreams.

Most of the leaders in my industry started out part time, intending to generate some extra cash flow until they could find something "legitimate" to do for a living. The turning point at which most of us knew we had found a true calling was the realization that leaders in our industry have an opportunity every day to make a huge difference in other peoples' lives. So the marketing industry is populated with people who are eager and willing to help you succeed. Our success depends on helping others to succeed.

Finally, the most important question—more important than "Can I do this?"—is: "*Will* I do this?" The answer to this will be found in your own heart and mind, and nowhere else. Do you desire a better life? Is that desire strong enough to risk failure?

We call a new business a *venture* because it involves an uncertain outcome. The very nature of entrepreneurship involves risk. Typically, entrepreneurs risk capital (a financial investment) and something called *opportunity cost*, which is the amount that might have been earned by investing that capital in some other vehicle.

As the expression goes, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." You won't get something for nothing in a legitimate business opportunity,

so you have to ask yourself, “What do I have to invest in a venture, and what am I willing to risk?”

One great advantage of associating with an existing marketing organization has to do with the minimal investment required to begin. I was completely broke when I started twenty-five years ago. What I lacked in financial capital, I made up in sweat equity. People often ask me how I accomplished what I have in business. I frequently respond, “You really don’t want to know; it would scare you away.” I made lots of mistakes and wasted lots of time and energy. (I didn’t *always* follow what I was taught.) But I was willing to give whatever it took to succeed. I invested virtually every waking hour in my business initially to achieve my early success.

Another form of capital is known as good will. The reputation, trust, and rapport you have built—and the spheres of influence you have developed over the years—can yield tremendous dividends in this kind of business if you learn how to pique interest without alienating people. This can be a rich source of referrals and collaborative support. Most of the risks in this kind of capital arise from acting without training and support.

Having evaluated the potential of an opportunity and the associated risks, you face a choice: You take a leap of faith—or let go of your dreams and decide to be content with the life you have.

Ultimately every success story comes down to a simple two-step formula: A person found an idea that *inspired them*. Then they *worked their ass off* to make it happen. There it is! That’s the whole secret in a nutshell: *inspiration* and *committed action*.

Would you be willing to work as hard for yourself as you’ve ever worked for someone else? If I can do it, you can! Believe me, it is absolutely worth your effort.



Questions for Discussion, Reflection, and Action:

1. Which criteria are most important to you in evaluating an opportunity?
2. What do you perceive as the mass-market opportunities today? What are growing areas of need and desire that a business might be able to serve?
3. What sorts of capital are you willing to venture to gain the lifestyle of your dreams?



CHAPTER TEN:

Help Along Your Way

“There is no greater joy than to help another person to succeed.”

—Robert Hollis

Many of the people who come to me for mentoring already have experience in business. Some have had successful enterprises and want to discover how they can bump their achievement to the next level. Others have tried to build businesses and failed. In each case, something is *missing*, and the person is *unaware* of that missing element. If this were not true, he or she would already have achieved their desired success. This may seem obvious, but it cannot be overstated.

People often say they want a breakthrough in results, then argue for why they must keep acting and thinking the way they always have. “For *things* to change,” the saying goes, “*you* have to change.”

This applies especially to our thinking and beliefs. Remember, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.” The only way forward when you have hit the wall is to humble yourself and open your mind to new approaches. My colleague and dear friend Fred Herzog says, “The most expensive thing you can own is a closed mind.”

FIND A GOOD MENTOR AND SAVE TIME AND TROUBLE

As I mentioned in the chapter on learning from failure, you might be able to learn on your own, through trial and error, what you need

to succeed. But a good mentor can help you cut down your learning curve dramatically.

The first qualification of a mentor or success coach consists of a *well-documented track record of success*. You want to learn from someone who has faced the challenges you face and has achieved goals comparable to or greater than your own. But the true test of a mentor goes beyond *personal* business results. You must also consider the results of his or her apprentices. Producing results and guiding *others* to produce results are two distinct skills. A good mentor will have documented successes in both personal goals and in the achievements of his or her apprentices.

Bear in mind that some people in the marketing industry are like the blind leading the blind. They haven't taken the time to learn from an expert and master the process. They may sound impressive and they may be effective at "signing up" new associates, but if their recruits aren't producing results, they are just blowing smoke.

An essential element of my mentoring approach is what I call, "Get Them Results." Experience teaches me a new business associate has about sixty days to see concrete results before they get discouraged and quit. So I make it my job to make sure he or she sees those results before I welcome a new associate. Just as important, I make sure that my associates understand and duplicate this vital commitment. It follows that my organization has extraordinarily high retention.

Effective business mentors have either developed or learned a comprehensive, business-building system. Each system or approach to building a business requires a certain level of skill. The more capable one becomes in the required skills, the more effectively one can produce results. To achieve the top tier of results, some systems demand an extraordinary level of skill.

I prefer to design systems that can be mastered by anyone who has the desire and will to put in the effort. Over the years, I have found

ways to use technology to do the heavy lifting that once required individuals with advanced skills. The idea of making presentations to large groups terrifies most people. It took me a year and a half before I ventured to give any presentations, and when I came off the stage after my first failed effort, I was sick to my stomach. And all I did was introduce the next speaker!

Today, all the presentations that inform and educate people about our business are made by accomplished leaders and are recorded. With broadband streaming on the Internet, these presentations are a click away. Anyone can “point, guide, and direct,” so the level of skill required to achieve success with my systems has been reduced dramatically.

A good business-building system also allows for rapid duplication of effort. Not only are the skills relatively easy to master, but associates can readily model productive behaviors and skills for one another.

SUPPORT FOR YOUR INNER JOURNEY

Because the crucial journey on the road of entrepreneurship is an *inner* journey, a great mentor will nurture an apprentice’s personal development and people skills—at least as much as specific business skills. I always advise my students, “Work harder on yourself than you do on anything else and expect more from yourself than you do from anyone else.”

Much of what can be learned from a mentor comes through observation as the mentor *models* behaviors, language, and ways of being that are the substance of his or her success. Watch and listen as your mentor interacts with other people. Begin to discover what thoughts and beliefs distinguish *success consciousness* from *failure consciousness*. As you listen in on these conversations, stretch yourself to see if you can see what they see, hear what they hear, and think what they think.

If you really pay attention, you will become utterly fascinated (as I am) with people and also truly inspired. I often tell my associates, “When you think and act like me, you will have the kind of results that I have.”

Personal development engages topics that can touch sensitive and vulnerable places within us. Often a mentor will challenge ways of thinking and beliefs the student holds dear and may even consider essential to his or her identity. People get stuck in common mental traps. We call them blind spots.

You know some people who act like they already know everything. It takes some finesse to get a new idea over the bridge with them. Or try getting a compulsive people pleaser to give you their opinion or define their own goals. Then there are people who can't focus on a simple task because they are always dealing with distractions. And how do you get to square one with those who blame circumstances and everyone else for how their life doesn't work?

You can easily see these patterns in others, but confronting your own blind spots can be extremely unsettling. For this reason, you must select a mentor you *trust*. You want assurance that they have *your* best interests in mind—and that they believe *you* can succeed.

It helps to find a mentor whose style and philosophy strikes a chord with you. My original mentor, Mr. Gould, had a confrontational style. He could sound like a drill sergeant pointing out what was wrong with a person's technique or way of thinking.

I prefer a more nurturing approach, and I tend to look for what is *missing* rather than what is “wrong” with someone. Most people claim to be a good judge of character. I think of myself a cheerleader and a coach, not a judge. I remember where I was when I started—a broke, injured auto mechanic who didn't own a suit and was uncomfortable dealing with people. Many people might not have given me the time of day, but Mr. Gould treated me with respect.

Our minds make snap judgments of people. But I have found that if you learn to suspend your judgment, you can discover the gold in people—though it is sometimes hidden. Robert Schuller once said, “Any fool can count the seeds in one apple, but only God can count the apples in one seed.” I can’t tell you how many times people have completely surprised me. The ones who seemed to show the greatest promise often failed to put forth the needed effort. Others who initially showed little promise went on to become magnificent business leaders.

After years of these surprises, I regard my openness with people to be a hard-earned skill. If I could reach such extraordinary success from where I started, I can’t help but see promise in every person I meet. Every person’s dreams are precious, and I consider it a privilege to nurture and encourage them.

As a result, people are remarkably candid with me. People will tell me they got past their own fears because they saw that I believed they could achieve their dreams—even when they lacked faith in themselves.

When a person tells me he or she has nothing of value to offer—nothing to invest in building a business—I remind them they can offer the one thing that, more than anything, has made me a success. The old saying may be sappy but it is so wise: “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Anyone can offer a caring heart, a helping hand, a compassionate ear, and an encouraging word. One of my newest mentors, Brendon Burchard, insightfully observes, “People are most influenced by those they admire and believe care for them.”

I continue to be amazed and humbled by the loyal following I have developed. But if I have been a powerful influence in people’s lives because they believe I care for them, I’ll gladly accept that honor.

WHEN THE STUDENT IS READY

Though I take a nurturing approach, no mentor worth his or her salt will coddle people like little children. You may think I have overemphasized the topic of sorting, but it applies to every aspect of business and life— especially in a mentor/apprentice relationship. You can only coach a student who demonstrates they are ready.

I never try to cajole a non-student into becoming a student. Sometimes you want more for people than they want for themselves, but you have to exercise restraint. If you have to “motivate” someone today, you’ll have to do it *every* day. So I don’t go down that road. According to a Buddhist saying, “When the student is ready, the teacher miraculously appears.” I invest time in individuals who demonstrate their readiness by taking the necessary actions and producing results.

In the early stages of any journey, we must celebrate baby steps and seemingly simple results. The Bible asks, “For who has despised the day of small things (*or small beginnings*)?” (Zechariah 4:10). Michael Dell (Dell Computers) started assembling computers in his dorm room. Richard Branson (Virgin Records, airlines, soft drinks, space travel, etc.) started marketing records by mail order. Ray Kroc (McDonald’s Restaurants) started by selling milkshake machines to restaurants out of his station wagon.

Take the long view. You’re in school, but this isn’t Hogwart’s. It’s more like farming than magic. You’re planting seeds that may take a long time to sprout and grow. So give it all you’ve got, but also give it time. Everything happens in its season. An interviewer asked a successful Japanese businessman when he would see results from his latest projects. His response stunned me: “The results of my current efforts may not show up in my children’s lifetimes. Perhaps they will appear while my grandchildren are alive.” That’s what I call faith.

SPEED UP THE PROCESS

I understand if you can't wait that long to see results. There are three ways you can speed things up. First, ***be coachable***. Commit to do whatever it takes. If the coach tells you to do XYZ, then you do XYZ with gusto. Don't just go through the motions. Give it your all and trust that the coach knows what works. At first it may be awkward and uncomfortable. Do it anyway. *Successful people do what unsuccessful people are unwilling to do.* It's that simple.

Second, ***tell the truth***. Be brutally honest with yourself and your coach. The coach asks if you did it. Your answer must be "yes" or "no." Any explanation on your part is superfluous. Coach asks for your results, and you provide the numbers. Anything else is noise. Keep it simple. Keep your attention on taking the coaching and learning all there is to learn. Leave the outcome to God, who gives the increase (see 1 Corinthians 3:7).

Third, ***be hungry to learn***. You have to stir up your desire to learn, grow, and master the material. This reminds me of the story of the guy who asks the Zen master to help him achieve enlightenment. The Zen master takes the guy to the beach and holds his head under the water. When the master finally lets him up to breathe he says, "When you want to be enlightened like you wanted that breath, then you will be ready. Come back then." It seems dramatic, but you need that white-hot desire to make dramatic progress.

The only knowledge that matters is *applied* knowledge. You don't really know anything until you can produce the results that prove it. So be eager to practice everything you learn. Stay in action and pay close attention to what works.

Sometimes, even when you aren't clear about your own ambitions, you meet a mentor that inspires you. You admire how they live, how they interact with people, how they think, and who they are. On your

journey to discover your own passions and calling, it's okay for a while to hitch your wagon to another person's star.

For several years, I submitted myself to the guidance and teaching of one mentor. Under his leadership I achieved my first taste of success and made the shift from failure consciousness to success consciousness. Along the way I discovered that Mr. Gould was not the only master within my industry. In the past two decades, I have acquired many teachers. In spite of all the success with which I have been blessed, I continue to find wisdom, insight, knowledge, and inspiration from others who have blazed new trails in business and in living.

As you reach to achieve your goals, I hope you will grow to love this wonderful journey of learning and self-discovery. For now, to get you moving toward your dreams, find one mentor with a proven track record and an approach you can believe in.

Be a diligent apprentice and *go to school*. Dedicate yourself to a path of mastery and promise to give *whatever it takes* to achieve your dreams. And never be afraid to *ask for help*.



Questions for Discussion, Reflection, and Action:

1. What ideas and ways of thinking of yours are already being challenged as you read this book?
2. When has a mentor influenced your life? What qualities in that mentor made a difference to you?
3. What aspects of your thinking and skills can benefit most from a supportive mentor?
4. What will be your greatest challenges in working with a coach or mentor?



CHAPTER ELEVEN:

Traveling Companions

“Without inspiration the best powers of the mind remain dormant. There is a fuel in us that needs to be ignited. Fortunate is the one who has the person with the spark around them to ignite their fuel.”

—Johann Gottfried von Herder

One of the most challenging aspects of beginning a new venture has to do with how one’s peers, friends, and family respond. Since “birds of a feather flock together,” people may seem offended that you want more out of life. It can be very lonely to break ranks with those who are satisfied with the status quo. You love them, but you know you have to create some distance (at least for a while) to nurture a winning mindset. Let them be. Friends will remain friends, and family will still be there. Trying to change other peoples’ views and desires will lead only to frustration.

Here’s the good news. As soon as you step out of that comfortable peer group, you will begin to discover individuals who share similar dreams. Some of these will become your traveling companions. And if you have a spouse or a friend who shares your dreams, you are doubly blessed to share the journey with them.

On my journey I have found traveling companions in unexpected places. Some of my closest friends are what most of the world might consider competitors. While we may spar playfully from time to time, we freely tell one another about our latest resources, insights, and “trade secrets” because we share an *abundance mentality* that

sees our market as unlimited. We spark one another's creativity and gain inspiration from one another. Leaders in all fields learn from their peers. Basketball star Kobe Bryant famously watches videos of top players' games in his down time to continue to master his own game. Artisans and craftsmen of all kinds study the works and techniques of their colleagues. Great actors study the performances of other actors.

CREATING A MASTER-MIND GROUP

In *Think and Grow Rich*, Napoleon Hill wrote, "The human mind is a form of energy. When two or more minds cooperate in harmony, they form a great 'bank' of energy, plus a third, invisible force which can be likened to a Master Mind." (p. 199. *Note:* This quote comes from the *Think And Grow Rich Action Pack* edition ©1968 Hawthorn Books, Inc./ Napoleon Hill Foundation. Used by permission.)

Hill dedicates a chapter to the "Power of the Master Mind" (p. 50), which he defines as "coordination of knowledge and effort, in the spirit of harmony, between two or more people for the attainment of a definite purpose" (p. 171). Hill asserts, "This form of cooperative alliance has been the basis of nearly every great fortune" (p. 171).

As I pointed out in the chapter on plans and maps, it is very helpful to assemble a team or community of like-minded people to support and encourage you to achieve your dreams. You want to associate with those who share or support your purpose, desire, and determination.

When you are first getting started in business, joining with others who are following the same map or business system allows you to focus your attention on the steps required for success. As a team, you can learn a great deal from one another. Hold one another accountable for actions and results—and pay close attention to what's working. A proverb says, "Though one may be overpowered

by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12). Though you may face many challenges in beginning a new business, supportive colleagues can be a great source of courage, strength, and inspiration.

While you concentrate your collective energies on business-building actions, you begin to discover individual strengths and capacities. To achieve your group’s shared commitments, it helps to foster and encourage these diverse personalities, skills, strengths, and points of view.

A common pitfall occurs when we expect others to think and operate just like us. A big part of learning people skills has to do with developing a deep appreciation for the diversity in human thinking, motivation, and communication styles.

Many classification systems try to provide insight into this essential variety of the human family, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Kolbe Indexes, the Keirsey Temperament Sorter, and the DiSC Profile. At some point you have probably taken one of these personality classification profiles. You answer twenty to a hundred questions, and the system labels you with terms like assertive, analytical, social, aggressive, expressive, introverted, supportive, altruistic, dominant, researcher, implementer, protector, idealist, artistic, and conscientious. Filling out such a profile can be valuable if we develop a deeper appreciation for our own style as well as those of others.

It is critical to understand that *success in business does not favor one style over another*. You will find leaders in all businesses who can be described by any of the labels just mentioned. The common characteristics of all successful entrepreneurs are *purpose, desire, faith, and determination*.

Within a supportive team environment, each person begins to appreciate the talents he or she has to offer. The dynamic between the group’s shared commitments and diverse personalities creates

remarkable strength, if you dedicate yourselves to work in harmony with mutual respect. You learn how to share and leverage individual strengths. Watch any team sport, and you will see this in action. One player excels at setting up the shot, and another excels at taking the shot. Learn to pass the ball fluidly to one another, and everyone's game improves. As former President Harry Truman said, "It's amazing what can be accomplished when you don't care who gets the credit." Or as I like to say, "Let others have the credit, and you keep the cash!"

PITFALLS OF BECOMING A MENTOR

Working in this Master-Mind environment, you have an opportunity to acquire the skills that will take you to the top of any business model. As you master the fundamentals of your business and produce satisfying results, you will naturally begin to take on the role of the mentor.

This can be a precarious time for many individuals. This is when many people try to innovate before they really understand how duplication works. They discover something that works for them, and it may even produce an increase in a particular result. But for some reason, others can't or won't copy the behavior, so it won't duplicate. Then people get discouraged and think, *what he's doing doesn't work for me*, and the system falters. In this industry, *it doesn't matter what works for one person—it only matters what duplicates*.

When you begin to mentor others, it's easy to shift from a business-building mode into management mode. Nothing will kill off your business momentum quicker. As a mentor, you must *model* behaviors that lead to success. So you must always be taking the same actions that got your business off the ground in the first place.

Mr. Gould taught me that the only activities that contributed to my paycheck were *piquing*, *pointing*, and *promoting*. These are the activities that *duplicate*. I mastered *piquing* first and achieved more

with that one skill than I could have imagined. The Native American saying holds true: “The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.” The beauty of business is that you will begin to reap rewards long before you master all the skills.

Another aspect of this same management crisis arises when you start to *depend* on others to achieve your goals. This is a recipe for disaster. Believe in others and their ability to achieve their dreams—but never stake your dreams on what any particular person or group will accomplish. *You alone are responsible for your goals.*

This can be a difficult mindset to grasp, because in the end a leader will always acknowledge and edify those who have contributed to his or her success. But a true leader knows that while many people participate in accomplishing his or her dreams, ultimate *responsibility* for achieving them rests with the leader alone. Remember the parable of the sower: Some will, some won’t, so what? Someone is waiting. If you keep sowing the seed faithfully, you will reap a harvest.

TRUE PURPOSE

When I started in business, I imagined I could make some money to tide me over until I could return to working on cars. I prayed that God would heal me quickly so I could get back to my calling as an auto mechanic. But as Garth Brooks sings, “Some of God’s greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.”

Today my business touches the lives of millions of people. Yet I never lose touch with how it all began. Twenty-five years ago I imagined how great it would be to have maybe a couple hundred people in my organization. At that time, I thought that my purpose was to create wealth—and the means to achieve that was building a network of business relationships.

I thank God every day that I didn’t give up that first week when it seemed “nobody was interested.” Instead I showed up, and I listened

to my mentor. He taught me that you become *interesting* to others by being *interested* in them. As Mark Twain put it, “There was never yet an uninteresting life. Such a thing is an impossibility. Inside of the dullest exterior there is a drama, a comedy and a tragedy.”

This business has enabled me to know and love some of the world’s most fascinating characters. And now I realize that in the early days I had it backwards: My ultimate purpose has always been to build these beautiful relationships and to contribute to these precious lives. Our shared dream of creating wealth may, at times, have captivated the focus of our attention. Yet in reality, that shared ambition has merely provided the means and the path to achieving our greater purpose: true friendship.



Questions for Discussion, Reflection, and Action:

1. What people who share your dreams and desires might join you in a Master-Mind group?
2. What strengths and capacities do you have to offer in a team or Master-Mind effort?
3. In what areas will you benefit from other peoples’ strengths and capacities?



CHAPTER TWELVE:

Finish Line: From Racer to Pace Setter

“A burning desire to be and to do is the starting point from which the dreamer must take off.”

—Napoleon Hill, *Think and Grow Rich* (p. 35)

The American Dream has not died or disappeared. It may look different today than it did for our forefathers. We have a global economy dominated by giant, multinational corporations that can seem intimidating to small businesses. But new technologies have transformed how business gets done, and this has become an advantage for the independent entrepreneur.

At its heart, the American Dream still holds out a vision of freedom through personal responsibility, self-empowerment, initiative, and contribution. This dream remains very much alive.

THE ILLUSION OF SECURITY AND STABILITY

But there exists in our culture a widespread sense of resignation and cynicism about business and opportunity. I believe this results from the bill of goods we have bought about finding security and stability in working for someone else and climbing the corporate ladder. These ideas of job security and economic stability are illusions.

Author and cultural heroine Helen Keller expressed this with characteristic boldness and clarity: “Security is mostly superstition.

It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing.” Helen Keller overcame formidable challenges. She lost her sight and hearing at the age of one, and though the specialists of her day would have doomed her to life in an institution, she learned to speak and write and became an inspiration to a generation.

BREAK FREE

Breaking free from those illusions of security and stability may take a concentrated effort if the circumstances of your life don’t thrust you into a crisis. A few steps can empower you to stir up the kind of burning desire it will take to liberate yourself.

First, get in touch with your “Why?” Surround yourself with pictures of your loved ones and all that motivates and inspires you. Next, write out in detail how you imagine your life would be if you achieved success in your own business. Let your imagination run wild. Try to use all your senses.

Include all the items on your bucket list if you have one (a list of all you want to accomplish, see, or do before you kick the proverbial bucket). If you already have an idea about *how* you could achieve your dreams, also write that down, but don’t be discouraged if your plan is unclear or needs work. Remember that a clear vision (your “What?”) combined with desire (your “Why?”) will attract the elements that make up your “How?”

Finally, write how it might look if you stay in your present situation. Be brutally honest. Think of the contingencies that could happen. What would you do if, like me, you were suddenly unable to continue in your same line of work? What would happen if your job or your company got outsourced, downsized, or capsized?

I don't mean to frighten you. But rather than wait for your ship to come in, sometimes it's wiser to swim out to the ship while you still have some energy, resources, and freedom of movement. I am writing this at a time when the US economy has been floundering—and now economists predict the jobs market could stagnate for another decade! There are more people out of work in the US today than during the Great Depression.

But as it turns out, times like these are very good for my industry, because people flock to income opportunities when the job market fails them. You can take advantage of this movement and get ahead of the trend—or you can take your chances in the increasingly competitive job market. Yet this may be a time when the risks of maintaining the status quo outweigh the risks of entrepreneurship. As quality expert W. Edwards Deming warned, “It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory.”

If you have a Master-Mind group, share everything you have written with your group. Share your “Why?” as well as your dreams, your plans and the future you can anticipate if nothing changes. It may also help to talk about your fears of going into business for yourself. Have you failed before? Go public with your fears and your past experiences—*with the intent of letting them go* and replacing them with confidence based on your ability to learn and to grow.

GOT ONE MORE RACE IN YOU?

For those who have ever attempted and failed, what can I say to encourage you to give it one more wholehearted effort? If you're embarrassed because you've shared your dreams with loved ones, only to see those dreams shattered, here's a piece of wisdom from someone who might seem an unlikely source of inspiration for an aspiring entrepreneur:

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

—Henry David Thoreau (*Walden*, ch. 18.)

This time will be different. This time you will build solid foundations for your dreams. You will draw that line in the sand and say, “I’m never going back to the salt mines again.” You will find that source of inner strength and faith to separate yourself from the pack.

Determined to taste all the nectar you can wring from life, you will nurture that seed of faith and begin to trust that God (or “the power of the universe,” if you prefer) is *for* you—cheering you on and encouraging you to succeed.

As you let go of doubts and fears, you will begin to experience the power of enthusiasm (literally meaning *God within*). “Enthusiasm,” wrote David Hume, “being the infirmity of bold and ambitious tempers, is naturally accompanied with a spirit of liberty; as superstition, on the contrary, renders men tame and abject, and fits them for slavery.”

You, belonging to that first category, will humble yourself and become a student of what really works. A new trend comes along and the masses sneer. But *you* take a closer look. You ask, “What’s going on here? What need is this meeting? What’s changing in the marketplace?” And as you study what really works and makes a difference in business and in life, you will discover your own strengths and talents—and realize you have always had so much of value to offer in the service of others.

Along your way you will discover many secrets to success. Though there may be only a few activities that add to your paycheck, you will learn that the *way* you perform those actions makes all the difference.

You will discern what Wallace Wattles meant when he wrote that people “get rich by doing things in *a Certain Way*.” You will learn the power of gratitude and being creative rather than competitive.

You will find your fortunes increase as your faith expands. As you let go of fears and limiting beliefs and open yourself to new ways of thinking and being, you will become a more attractive person. You will naturally attract all the necessary resources and people for your success.

Even as you become increasingly aware of the gap between your own tender faith and the success consciousness of your mentor, you won’t be stopped by the thoughts that paralyze others. Instead, you will press on with confidence, courage, and a determination to grow and learn. You will feed your soul and mind daily on ideas like these:

The important thing is this: to be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become.

—Charles Du Bos

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

—Jeremiah 29:11

We cannot put off living until we are ready. The most salient characteristic of life is its coerciveness; it is always urgent, “here and now,” without any possible postponement. Life is fired at us point-blank.

—Jose Ortega y Gasset

You will wake up every morning with the realization that *this* is the day it all happens. There is no *other* time! Having compassion

for all, you will devote yourself in business to working with those who have ears to hear—those who are ready and interested *today* in what you have to offer.

You will tirelessly and faithfully sow seeds of hope and possibility—and entrust the results to God who (faithfully) gives the increase. You will find joy and satisfaction in being of service to people—and learning to really listen and observe and care deeply for others.

You will grow to love the process as you master the skills and actions that, with persistence, *inevitably* produce ever-expanding results and success.

You will learn to love the journey for its own sake and enjoy the wondrous gifts, discoveries, and dividends along the way. As Marcel Proust wrote, “The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”

In the end we may reflect on our journey and ask, “Was it worth the trouble?” From my experience, I have to say that achieving the goals I set out to accomplish might not be the greatest reward for having taken this journey. The lessons I learned, the person I discovered myself to be, and especially the rich relationships with wonderful people I gained along the way—these are my greatest rewards. I pray you will be so blessed.

Whatever your journey holds, buckle up and enjoy the ride!



Questions for Discussion, Reflection, and Action:

1. Do you have one more race in you?
2. What action will you take today to dramatically move your dream forward?



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APPENDIX:

FUEL AND OTHER RESOURCES

BOOKS, EBOOKS, AND AUDIO BOOKS

Links to these resources can be found at www.HowIsThatWorking.com

***The Master Key System* by Charles F. Haanel**

Originally offered as a correspondence course in 1912, this book lays out a systematic approach to creating the life of your dreams. It has influenced generations of entrepreneurs, inventors, and leaders. Study and apply these principles and practices and your life will never be the same.

***The Science of Getting Rich* by Wallace D. Wattles**

First published in 1910, this book is the granddaddy of self-help books. Acknowledged by many of the best-known success coaches including Rhonda Byrne (author of *The Secret*) as a wellspring of wisdom about creating wealth. Buy your own copy and read it again and again.

***Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill**

This is the volume quoted in the first few chapters of this book. For decades it was among the five bestselling books of all time, and it still might be the most quoted book on success, apart from the Bible. You can watch the author read the book on YouTube.

***How to Be Rich* by J. Paul Getty**

In this book, the world's first billionaire offers insights and strategies for creating wealth. He lays out a philosophy and criteria for wisely evaluating opportunities.

***Rich Dad, Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki**

This book will open your eyes to the real differences in values and attitudes that separate the rich from the poor. This is a must-read for anyone who desires personal economic freedom and security.

***The Strangest Secret* by Earl Nightingale**

Here's a book you can read in an hour, but you may want to read every day. You can hear the author read the book on YouTube.

***As a Man Thinketh* by James Allen**

A true classic of self-help literature written in 1902.

***Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* by Benjamin Franklin**

Perhaps the first self-help book in the US by the country's original success guru.

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www.TheWayOutIsUP.com

UP (Unlimited Profits University) provides training, tools and support for anyone seeking to build a business using social media and Robert Hollis's powerful online strategies.

www.UnlimitedWisdom.com

A treasure vault of resources for success, personal development, and enjoying a richer life.

www.GivingItForward.com

Robert Hollis's personal site. Links to resources and opportunities.

www.MaxJMiller.com

Max J. Miller's personal site. Includes Max's blog, books, videos, audios, and other resources.

To find out more about Robert Hollis's coaching and training programs please visit his website. Give us your name and email address for access to over 100 hours of free audio and video training by Robert. We won't share your information outside of our organization.

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