

## Contents

About the Author .....	9
<b>1. The Challenge.....</b>	<b>11</b>
My Background .....	13
Marine Corps.....	14
New York City High School Teacher and Assistant Dean of Boys .....	15
Founder and Owner of Three Businesses.....	16
Your Dream .....	18
<b>2. The Importance of Education.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Technology Explosion.....	25
The Arrival of the Computer .....	25
Changing Structure of the U.S. Economy .....	28
The Value of Education .....	29
I'm Thinking of Quitting School.....	30
High School Dropouts.....	31
Earning Statistics Between Dropouts and High School Graduates .....	32
Excuses for Dropping Out of School .....	32
I Don't See the Value of Schooling .....	34
Be a Dummy and Quit.....	36
Solutions for Failing Students.....	36
<b>3. Educational Success.....</b>	<b>39</b>
What Leads to Success or Failure?.....	39
Using Failures as Stepping Stones to Success.....	43
Gritty Determination .....	44
Lazy Students.....	46
Excuses for Low Achievement .....	48
Bitterness.....	51
<b>4. The Secret to Educational Success.....</b>	<b>53</b>
Taking Responsibility.....	53
Discipline .....	55
Delayed Rewards .....	59
Importance of Literacy and Math Skills .....	60
Continual Education .....	61
The Importance of Seeking Advice .....	63
Parental Advice .....	66

<b>5. Choosing and Preparing for the Right Career .....</b>	<b>77</b>
Choosing Between Agriculture, Industry, or Service Employment .....	80
Occupational Outlook Handbook from U.S. Department of Labor .....	80
Exploring Career Information from Bureau of Labor Statistics .....	81
Wrong Choices .....	82
Hasty Decisions .....	83
Finding a Job During School and Summer .....	84
Debt .....	84
Avoid Debt Like a Plague .....	88
Gambling.....	89
Key Money Lessons.....	90
Key Shopping Tips .....	92
Dating and Marriage.....	94
<b>6. The Resume and the Interview .....</b>	<b>97</b>
The Resume .....	97
Inferiority Complex .....	99
Healthy Self-Esteem .....	100
The Handshake .....	102
The Interview .....	103
Employers Reluctant to Hire Teens .....	107
Extra Steps.....	107
<b>7. The Free Enterprise System and America’s Foundation....</b>	<b>109</b>
Socialism and Capitalism .....	109
Karl Marx, the Founder of Communism .....	111
Sentiments of the Founders of Our Nation .....	114
Bill of Rights.....	115
Fruits of Moral Relativism .....	121
Be Knowledgeable and Assertive in Your Beliefs.....	124
Miss America Boldly Stands Up .....	125
<b>8. The Importance of Understanding the Free Enterprise System.....</b>	<b>127</b>
Think Like an Owner .....	127
Innovation .....	128
Doing Your Best.....	130
Thinking of Others .....	131
How to Have Friends.....	133

How to Make People Like You .....	134
Putting Yourself in the Other Person’s Shoes.....	136
Pleasing Customers.....	137
Starting a New Company .....	138
Secrets of Success.....	139
Loving Your Customers.....	141
<b>9. Advancing On the Job .....</b>	<b>143</b>
Elephant Ears, Eagle Eyes, and a Pinhole Mouth .....	143
Listening Ears.....	143
Eagle Eyes.....	145
Shut Up .....	147
When Wrong, Admit It .....	148
Enthusiasm .....	150
The Attire .....	152
Interpersonal Skills .....	154
Management That’s Fair, Firm, and Loving .....	156
Permissive Management .....	157
<b>10. The Importance of Character for Success .....</b>	<b>159</b>
The Importance of Integrity.....	160
Compassion.....	164
Peer Pressure .....	168
Sexual Peer Pressure.....	171
The Power of Bad Habits.....	174
How to Say, “NO!” .....	178
Courage .....	180
Quitting a Bad Habit .....	180
<b>11. Golden Rule Thinking .....</b>	<b>183</b>
Satisfy Wants.....	183
Focus on Customers.....	185
Please the Customer First, Last, and Always .....	185
The Key to Effective Marketing .....	187
Promoted to Management.....	188
Praising People to Success.....	190
Auto Salesman—Sold Twice as Many Cars as Any Other Human Being.....	190
Thread of Caring.....	192
Choose to Learn and Help Others .....	193

## Teen Success In Career and Life Skills

<b>12. The Choice .....</b>	<b>195</b>
What Is Success?.....	195
Never to Complain.....	196
Your Goal.....	199
Ingredients of Leadership.....	199
Practical Ideas for Teen Success.....	200
Free Will to Choose.....	203
A New Generation of Teens .....	204
<b>Questions.....</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Notes.....</b>	<b>225</b>

## The Challenge

The aim of this book is to help teens become successful. But I warn you, I'll be speaking bluntly. Some of you will squirm, so if you don't want the truth—DON'T READ THIS BOOK!

Many teens destroy their futures by making dumb decisions. This book explores how you can avoid making foolish choices. I'll be challenging you with straight talk that's hard-hitting, aggressive, and thought-provoking. But you're in the driver's seat. You can either choose to listen and learn how to become successful, or reject this book. It's your choice. There are those when confronted with straight talk will hiss as a cornered rattlesnake, "No one is going to tell me what to do!"

My goal isn't to make your life miserable; I want you to have a great life and a successful future. You'll learn either from the harsh "school of hard knocks," or be wise and learn from others. This book is jam-packed with real-life experiences showing what it takes to get ahead in life. I want you to be aware that once you leave school, the workplace is a totally different world. You may get away with your foolishness and stubbornness as a teen in school, but when you leave school, the real world won't put up with your nonsense.

I want to stress, this book is not just about *my* ideas. I'll be writing about and quoting famous people like Henry Ford, Winston Churchill, Walt Disney, Martin Luther King, Helen Keller, George Washington Carver, Benjamin Franklin,

## Teen Success In Career and Life Skills

Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, Mary Kay Ash, J. C. Penney, Colin Powell, and many others.

You'll learn about:

- Eddie Rickenbacker who spent 24 days stranded on a raft in the Pacific Ocean and what he learned from that experience
- A boy whose doctors wanted to amputate his legs because of a severe burn he received, but through persistence ran the world's fastest mile
- Someone the kids called "hatchet-face" who overcame his inferiority complex, opened a law firm, and became a United States senator from Oklahoma
- A woman who started a company with \$5,000 from her savings and became according to Baylor University the greatest female entrepreneur in American history
- A car salesman who sold twice as many cars as any other salesman
- What coach Paul William "Bear" Bryant, who won the most games in the history of big-time college football, told his players the first time he met them
- And many more fascinating stories that reveal the secrets of success.

In this book you'll examine such issues as the technology explosion; the value of education; choosing and preparing for

## The Challenge

the right career; instructions to write a resume and how to act in an interview; applying elephant ears, eagle eyes, and a pinhole mouth to get ahead in your job; how to handle finances; how millionaires obtain their wealth; what it takes to be a champion; understanding the free enterprise system; the importance of character; dating and marriage; how to handle peer pressure; the power of bad habits; what leads to success or failure; how simple things like shaking hands and the way you dress can impact your future; how implementing Golden Rule thinking can revolutionize your life; ingredients of leadership; practical ideas for teen success, and many more exciting topics aimed to make you a winner.

## **My Background**

Before I go into more detail about teen success, I'd like to share a few things about my background so you may get a better understanding of where I come from. After graduating from high school, I went to work first at an insurance company and then at Chase Manhattan Bank in New York City. I realized clerical work wasn't for me, so during lunch break I'd visit employment agencies in downtown Manhattan and look at their job openings. Being the mechanical type, I longed to find work in a machine shop. Without having any machining background, no one would hire me. In order to get into the machining trade, I took two nighttime classes of machine shop at Brooklyn Technical High School. Now with my schooling experience, I began searching for a machine shop job.

The minimum wage at that time was \$.75 an hour. I found a job in a small storefront machine shop in Brooklyn. The

machine shop had one employee and the owner. To get the job, I offered to work at half the minimum wage. They hired me for \$.37½ an hour. So by working eight hours, I'd earn \$3.00.

“That’s foolish!” you say. “No way should you have worked for half the minimum wage!”

Yet that was one of the smartest moves I ever made. After three months I earned \$.75 an hour. A year later, one of our customers hired me, and there I learned to become a tool and die maker—one of the highest paid jobs in manufacturing. My entire life has benefited from that decision. So if you want a successful future, Lesson # 1 is:

**When looking for employment, don't look just for what you'll earn now; look for what you may earn in the future.**

### **Marine Corps**

While working as an apprentice tool and die maker, I was ordered to report to Brooklyn for the draft because the Korean War was going on. The draft board had stamped on my papers, USMC (United States Marine Corps). All new recruits were sent to Parris Island, South Carolina. There they cut off our hair, gave us a physical, and issued us new gear. They were going to make us new recruits into “The Few. The Proud. The Marines!”

The first thing they taught us was discipline. In war you don't have time to debate. You must be trained to obey. Whatever the drill instructor (DI) said, we had to do. Period. We ate, slept, stood, marched, and ran whenever the DI gave orders.

## The Challenge

When a DI yells, “Attention!” you had better quickly snap those two legs and arms together and stand still. And don’t you dare swat that fly that’s sitting on the end of your nose.

“But the fly tickles my nose,” you may object.

Go ahead; swat that fly in front of a DI and discover what happens. It will probably be the last time you’ll try. I’ll tell you one thing; I wouldn’t want to be in your shoes. Discipline is extremely important in the military. You cannot win battles with undisciplined soldiers. Likewise in life, if you want to become successful, you must be disciplined.

### **New York City High School Teacher and Assistant Dean of Boys**

After the Marine Corps I met a beautiful girl. After dating her for one and a half years we got married and attended college together. The second year of college our first child was born, and I continued to attend. At the age of 40 I decided to leave my job as a foreman of a tool and die company and become a New York City high school teacher.

To become certified, I went back to college and attended Oswego State University, City College of New York, and New York University. In addition, I became an assistant dean of boys in a high school with 3,600 pupils where I counseled students and parents. As I taught, I saw many educational deficiencies and decided to investigate the system, both locally and nationwide. I took a one-year leave of absence, and during that time became a substitute teacher. I taught every grade level from 1 to 12 in 27 different schools in all the boroughs of New York City. I interviewed students, parents, teachers,

assistant principals, and principals. After working ten years on this project, I wrote *Schools in Crisis: Training for Success or Failure?*

From my research and experiences as a high school teacher, assistant dean of boys, and substitute teacher in some of the worst schools in New York City, I have much to say about why many teens end up as losers. No one in their right mind would want to hire some of the teens I've encountered. Some teens will wake up after traveling the road of hard knocks; others will suffer their entire lives for their defiant and bitter attitudes.

### **Founder and Owner of Three Businesses**

My wife and I decided to move our family of five children to Houston, Texas. I loved to teach, but the pay for teaching in Houston was insufficient to support my family, so I went back to my trade as a tool and die maker. After two years I found employment as a tool designer. Six months later the president offered me the job of operations manager of this large tool and die stamping shop and a machining company.

After working there as manager for 5½ years, I decided to start an electrical discharge machining (EDM) company with my son who had an engineering degree. Within four years we became the largest wire EDM job shop in Texas. During that time I also started Advance Publishing and Digital Cornerstone, a recording and video studio. After nine years, Reliable EDM, with 15 wire EDMs, became the largest company of its kind west of the Mississippi River. Today we have over 50 EDMs.

## The Challenge

What happened?

That is what this book is about: How *you* may become successful. I've shared my varied background with you so you'll realize I'm speaking from years of personal experience. As a company owner and operations manager, I've interviewed numerous employees. From my five children I've had 19 consecutive years of teenage experience, and lots of experience from my 19 grandchildren. I want to stress that what you'll be reading isn't just *my* ideas. I'll be sharing secrets from many individuals and leaders about what they have discovered to become successful.

I've elaborated on my background to show you I've learned not only from my own experiences but also from the successes and failures of others. As you read this book you may wonder, "Where did you get all these ideas and stories? Did you one day get the idea to write a book on teen success and began researching and writing?"

No, I didn't get an idea one day about teen success. This book started over 40 years ago. I have a vast filing system where I've been collecting articles and materials for many years in hopes of one day using them to inspire others. One of the subjects that always fascinated me was: how to become successful. Since I've written many children's books teaching important life skills and virtues, and now many of those children are today's teens, I wanted to write an inspiring book to challenge them how *they* can become winners starting out as a young person. Many seeds of destruction are planted in teen years, and this book is my dream of helping teens avoid

the pitfalls and instead sow seeds of success. Will you accept the challenge to become a winner?

## **Your Dream**

As you read this book, I hope it will inspire *you* to dream that one day you too will become successful. Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Motor Company and the inventor of assembly lines and mass production, had this dream:

I will build a motor car for the great multitude.... It will be so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one and enjoy with his family the blessing of hours of pleasure in God's great open spaces....When I'm through, everybody will be able to afford one, and everyone will have one. The horse will have disappeared from our highways, the automobile will be taken for granted [and we will] give a large number of men employment at good wages.<sup>1</sup>

This was Walt Disney's dream for Disneyland:

The idea of Disneyland is a simple one. It will be a place for people to find happiness and knowledge. It will be a place for parents and children to spend pleasant times in one another's company; a place for teachers and pupils to discover greater ways of understanding and education. Here the older generation can recapture the nostalgia of days gone by, and the

## The Challenge

younger generation can savor the challenge of the future. Here will be the wonders of Nature and Man for all to see and understand. Disneyland will be based upon and dedicated to the ideals, the dreams and hard facts that have created America. And it will be uniquely equipped to dramatize these dreams and facts and send them forth as a source of courage and inspiration to all the world.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Winston Churchill was the prime minister of England during World War II. This was his dream about winning the war against Adolf Hitler:

Hitler knows he will have to break us on this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free, and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, the whole world, including the United States, including all we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age, made more sinister and perhaps more protracted by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties and so bear ourselves that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, "This was their finest hour."<sup>3</sup>

Since she was one year old, Helen Keller was blind and deaf, but she learned to dream. "I am only one," Keller said, "but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do

something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.”<sup>4</sup>

Keller, in spite of her great difficulties, wrote books and travelled around the world helping those in need.

The last dream I’ll share with you is the famous “I Have a Dream” speech by the great civil rights leader, Martin Luther King:

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.”

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character....

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be

## The Challenge

exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."<sup>5</sup>

These are dreams of great individuals. What's your dream? Do you have a dream to become a success, or will you be satisfied to drift along and end up as a failure? *Education Week* states that a majority of youth today lack a direction in life. They report: "Among the disconnected youths the researchers came across were people like Tommy, an 18-year-old from Pennsylvania, who tosses a coin to select his college courses and is candidly unbothered by his lack of goals or ambition."<sup>6</sup>

You don't have to join this army of disenfranchised youth who are living for the moment, instead of aiming for a bright

future. You can make a difference with your life. It's a choice only *you* can make. Doing nothing, and letting things happen as they may, doesn't lead to success.

Successful dreamers take intelligent action to fulfill their dreams. I hope you'll be inspired to take intelligent action to fulfill your dream so that one day you may look back and say, "I'm glad I made the right choices in my youth."

You may say, "These dreams are from great leaders. I'm just an average person." I'd like to share an article by Alan Loy McGinnis on, "Why some fast-trackers fizzle and...How 'Average' People Excel." McGinnis is a family therapist and corporate consultant and has written *Bringing Out the Best in People* and *The Power of Optimism*. McGinnis tells about Jim, a "classic fast-tracker" who made good grades and whose classmates voted "Most Likely to Succeed." However Jim just kept switching from one job to another and never seemed to make it. Then McGinnis writes about another person:

Then there is Joseph D'Arrigo. "I've always regarded myself as average," D'Arrigo told me. "I got into life insurance and did reasonably well. By a fluke, I was put on a committee with several of the biggest salespeople in the industry. I was terribly intimidated."

As he came to know these achievers, however, D'Arrigo realized something: "They were no more geniuses than I was. They were just ordinary people who had set their sights high, then found a way to achieve their goals." He also realized something more:

## The Challenge

“If other average guys could dream big dreams, so could I.” Today he owns a million-dollar company specializing in employee benefits.

Why do ordinary individuals like D’Arrigo often seem to achieve so much more than people like Jim? To find out, I interviewed over 190 men and women in my work as a corporate consultant. The results of this informal survey confirmed for me what Theodore Roosevelt once said: “The average man who is successful is not a genius. He is a man who has merely ordinary qualities, but who has developed those ordinary qualities to a more than ordinary degree.”<sup>7</sup>

Then McGinnis wrote these words, and I hope you read them over and over until they sink into your mind:

“ULTIMATELY, there is nothing more powerful than a person with an average mind who holds his or her head high and goes about life with zest and surety.”<sup>8</sup>

If you’re average, then you may become successful. But you must hold your head high and possess enthusiasm that you can reach your potential. I’ll be saying much more about this, but for now I want you to have hope that YOU can become successful. But I want to point out, you don’t become successful by sitting on an easy chair and twiddling your thumbs or playing video games. There are certain things *you* must learn to do. This book is loaded with universal truths that illustrate what you must do to become successful.

## Teen Success In Career and Life Skills

If you think that by simply reading this book you'll become a success, you'll be greatly disappointed. *You* must apply these universal truths. There must be a sincere desire on your part that you want a successful life. Notice I said, "universal" truths. These are not truths I invented; these truths have been around for thousands of years. You'll be reading many stories of successful individuals who have applied them.

of the farm work that used to be done by hand.

Today there are farm machines that use computer monitoring systems, GPS (global positioning system) for location, and self-steering systems that allow the machines to become more precise and more productive in the use of fuel, seed, and fertilizer.

The global economy and increased productivity have also caused declines in industry; however, finding employment in industry is still a very viable field with many high-paying jobs. In contrast, the service industry has exploded. This includes such industries as: transportation, utility, financial investments, insurance, teaching, wholesale, retail, professional, health care, social, entertainment, recreation, scientific, and technical services.

To earn decent wages you need to be educated. The chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers reports: “The median wage of a college graduate is now more than 70 percent higher than the median wage of a high school graduate.”<sup>5</sup>

In other words, if an average high school graduate earns \$50,000 a year, an average college graduate would earn \$85,000. That’s an extra \$35,000 a year! Think about it. For the rest of your working career, you’ll earn that extra money every year just by being a college graduate. For most students, it pays to go to college and earn a degree.

### **I’m Thinking of Quitting School**

Today the number of high school dropouts is a major problem. There are many high school students who are fed up with school and are thinking of quitting. It’s a very tempting

## The Importance of Education

situation. These quitters are likely to shout, “Hooray! No more books; no more studying. This is great! I’m free at last. Now I can get a job, start earning money, and do whatever I want.”

Let me say in bold capital letters:

### **QUITTING SCHOOL IS THE DUMBEST DECISION YOU CAN MAKE**

Quitting school is the easiest road to take. But I warn you, you’re in for a real shock. You’re hallucinating if you think you can get a job, earn money, and do whatever you want. The world you will likely find yourself in because of your lack of education is minimum-wage jobs such as sweeping floors, cleaning tables, washing dishes, digging ditches, cutting lawns, stuffing envelopes, or being unemployed.

### **High School Dropouts**

I’ve asked students in my classes why employers would require job applicants to have a high school diploma in order to stock shelves. The students were puzzled that for such a simple job as stocking shelves an employer would require a diploma. The reason? High school dropouts are prone to be quitters. When the going gets tough, they quit. Dropouts have never mastered toughing it out when things get hard. That’s one of the key ingredients for success.

High school dropouts usually lack discipline. One of the greatest benefits of getting a high school diploma is it proves you have the stamina to stick it out. Put yourself in an employer’s shoes. If you had a choice of hiring someone who quit school or one who graduated from high school, who would you choose?

## **Earning Statistics Between Dropouts and High School Graduates**

Read carefully these shocking statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor: a person who has some high school education but no diploma earns 25% less money than a person with a high school diploma. In other words, if the person graduated from high school earned \$400 a week, the person quitting school who had some high school education would earn \$300. That's a loss of \$100 a week for the rest of their working career—just for quitting school! That's \$5,200 a year, or \$52,000 in ten years!

The person who quits school earns 54% less money compared to a college graduate with a bachelor's degree. In other words, a college graduate earns twice as much money as a school quitter.<sup>6</sup>

### **Excuses for Dropping Out of School**

1. My classes are boring and irrelevant.
2. I've been absent too many times to catch up.
3. My previous education didn't prepare me for high school.
4. I'm not motivated to work hard.
5. I'm failing most of my subjects.
6. I have a job offer.
7. I'm a parent.
8. I need to take care of a family member

## The Importance of Education

Let's examine the first five excuses for quitting school: boring and irrelevant classes, excessive absences, classes too difficult, unmotivated, and now failing most classes. Many of you giving these excuses were lazy and refused to do the assigned class work in the early grades. You didn't listen to your parents or teachers. You stubbornly refused to do your homework and skipped school whenever you felt like it. Instead of really trying to learn, you took the easy road. You goofed off. You were more interested in having fun with your friends than in doing school work. Now you're paying the price for your foolish behavior.

Since they kept promoting you, you felt you could keep on acting like this. But now in high school you must pass your subjects; otherwise you'll get failing grades. You're reaping what you sowed. Due to your lack of education, classes are now boring and difficult, and you want to take the easy way out and quit school altogether.

### **STOP AND THINK!**

Can you take a moment and stop and really think of the consequences for quitting school. Do you realize that dropouts are much more likely to be unemployed, to end up in prison, and to live in poverty? Dropouts are also more likely to be divorced, single parents, unhealthy, and earn much less money. Do you want this to be your future?

Let's look at the other three excuses for dropping out of school: receiving a job offer, being a parent, and needing to care for a family member. Just having a job offer, isn't a good

reason to quit school. The question should be, “What will your wages be ten or twenty years from now?”

I was on a men’s retreat, and a father told me about his 24-year-old son who was working as a waiter. Now working part-time as a teenager waiter going to high school or college is an excellent job. But there are much better jobs available when you’re older. His son now realizes that he had better find some other career. The problem is he has no experience. In contrast, his younger sister is in college and in a doctor of physical therapy program. She’ll probably start work earning three times the wages of her older brother.

The excuse for dropping out of school because you’re a teenage parent is a serious problem, and I’ll be discussing this later on. But you’re still much better off continuing your education than quitting school. If you need to earn money to support a family member, try to work after school and on weekends rather than quit school. Whatever you do, try to do whatever possible to earn at least a high school diploma. It’s critical for your future success. Don’t take the easy road and quit school. Instead, take advantage of the education you are now being offered. You’ll never regret staying in school.

### **I Don’t See the Value of Schooling**

Let me share my experience. I attended Grover Cleveland High School in Queens, New York. I took an academic course that required me to take algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. If it were up to me, I wouldn’t have taken these courses. When I began working as a tool and die maker, I discovered I needed

## The Importance of Education

to know algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. I brushed up on my math, and I've been using these three subjects to this day. My entire career would have suffered if I hadn't taken these subjects.

After serving in the Marine Corps, I went to college. One of the courses I had to take was English. If it were up to me, I would have skipped this "boring" subject. A few years ago I had the opportunity to speak at a large student assembly at the college I graduated from. I told the students that out of all the subjects that I took at college, in hindsight, English turned out to be my most profitable subject.

Why was English so important? It's because I do a lot of writing. And to be a good writer, one must know English. I want to make sure the books I write are grammatically right. I've written over 100 books, and some are yet to be published.

You may say, "I'm not a writer. Knowing English isn't important to me."

That's what you think. Today English is more important than ever. We're now corresponding with one another more and more with email. Do you want to look like a dummy when you write your email comments? You had better know how to write if you want to get one of those high-paying jobs that requires communication.

Did I see the future of what I would be doing when I was in high school or college? Absolutely not. I never dreamed of being a tool and die maker, foreman, tool designer, operations manager, teacher, assistant dean of boys, author, and owner of three businesses. Talk to your parents and others about their

careers. You'll find many of them also had multiple careers. That's why it's good to get a broad education. You never know what might be in your future.

### **Be a Dummy and Quit**

“Schooling may have benefited you, but I still don't see any value for me.”

Is that the real reason you want to quit, or are you too lazy to take the hard road and begin studying and doing the things you know you should do? Booker T. Washington said, “Nothing ever comes to one, that is worth having, except as a result of hard work.”

You can take the easy road and quit. But don't gripe when you can't find a decent job and employer after employer rejects you. Yes, there are always minimum paying jobs available, but one day you may get married and have kids. To support your family with a decent life, you may have to work two jobs to survive. Do you want this to be your future?

Some may want to quit school because of being bullied or sexually harassed. If that's the case, report these incidents to proper officials. Try to change to a different school. But whatever you do, don't quit. Getting an education is critical for your future success.

The U.S. Department of Labor states that the unemployment rate for high school dropouts is over 30 percent.<sup>9</sup> Since unemployed teens have more idle time, many end up with self-destructive habits, as drugs and alcohol. Some, unfortunately, end up supporting their habits by resorting to crime. By far most prison inmates are high school dropouts.

## **Solutions for Failing Students**

You have two options—quit school like a dummy, or buckle down and do everything possible to graduate. Okay, you messed up. You refused to listen to your teachers. You cut classes whenever you could. You had your fun; now you're paying for it. Some of your problems could be from the faulty education you received. Regardless, you're now failing most of your classes.

Face your problems and say with gutsy determination, “Whatever it takes, I don’t want to be a failure. I’m going to graduate from high school! I’m not ruining my entire future and earning much less money because I took the easy and dumb road of quitting school!”

Go to your teachers or school counselor and ask for advice on what you can do. Let me warn you, this won’t be easy. You’ll have to buckle down and begin to study and do your homework. Be willing to take remedial classes. Whatever you do, make sure you stick it out and graduate from high school. You’ll never regret it.

Who are your friends? Are they a group of quitters? If they are, find new friends. There’s an old saying, “Show me who your friends are, and I’ll show you what you’ll become.” Don’t let your friends drag you down. You’ll avoid many problems if you learn to choose your friends wisely. The path of failure is littered with those who followed their friends.

In some schools the “cool” ones are those who don’t study, don’t carry books, and cut classes. They mock those with books and label those who get good grades as “nerds.”

## Teen Success In Career and Life Skills

One day the tables will be turned. These so called “nerds” who carry books and are interested in getting a good education will be the bosses of the “cool” ones who refused to study and cut classes when they felt like it. One day these uneducated “cool” ones will be sweeping the floors and taking the trash out of the offices of the “nerds.”

Wise up. Refuse to follow and listen to the crowd who ridicules education. These so-called “cool” ones are stupid. What employer will want to hire them except for low-paying work? Stiffen your back and be determined to do what’s right and not be a crowd pleaser. Envision your possibilities with an education.

## Educational Success

**Y**ou want to make your future bright and successful, however, you say, “I have a learning disability. I’ll never be successful. Everything I do turns out to be a failure. I’ve tried to get good grades in school, but I couldn’t grasp the material. I tried to get on the track team, but I wasn’t fast enough. I tried to join the football team, but wasn’t accepted. Everything I do ends up in failure.”

You could go on and on looking for excuses for why you’re a failure. Benjamin Franklin said, “He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.” Abraham Lincoln said, “My great concern is not whether you have failed, but whether you are content with your failure.” I’d like to ask you, “What leads to success or failure?”

### What Leads to Success or Failure?

Pick from the list those having the potential for success or failure:

1. Born a slave; mother kidnapped; didn’t walk until three years of age; was sickly and stuttered when he spoke; graduated from high school at the age of 21; was rejected from college because he was African American.

**George Washington Carver** became a world famous scientist. He created over 300 products from the peanut alone.

## Teen Success In Career and Life Skills

2. He came from a family of 17 children, and at the age of ten his father pulled him out of school to learn his trade.

**Benjamin Franklin** became a writer, businessman, inventor, scientist, and ambassador. He helped Thomas Jefferson write the Declaration of Independence.

3. At the age of one she became sick with scarlet fever leaving her blind and deaf. As a child she became furious; she pinched, hit, and kicked to get whatever she wanted.

**Helen Keller** went to Radcliffe College, the best university for women in the United States. She learned through Braille to read and write French, Greek, German, and Latin. She wrote 12 books and traveled around the world speaking to promote the needs of the physically challenged.

4. Born in a tiny one-room log cabin, mother died when he was nine years old, lost eight elections, failed twice in business, and suffered a nervous breakdown.

**Abraham Lincoln** became the 16<sup>th</sup> president of the United States and in 1863 signed the Emancipation Proclamation making all slaves free.

Steven Schulman, a clinical psychologist, in *Psychology Today*, “Facing the Invisible Handicap,” reports:

Learning disabilities don’t automatically lead to low achievement in life. Many accomplished scholars, politicians, artists, entertainers, entrepreneurs, athletes and professionals have had to struggle with learning

## Educational Success

disabilities. Serious weaknesses in one area seem to spur some people on to develop exceptional strengths in other areas. The extra energy of hyperactive individuals, for example, can come in handy once it is put under control.

Albert Einstein would probably be diagnosed as learning disabled if he were growing up today. He showed no signs of genius in his early years; his parents and teachers feared he was less than normal intellectually. It has been reported that he did not learn to talk until he was 4 years old nor read until he was 9, and he failed his entrance exam the first time he applied to the Federal Institute of Technology. In his own words, “As a pupil I was neither particularly good nor bad. My principal weakness was a poor memory and especially a poor memory for words and texts.”

One of his problems—and, ironically, his later claim to fame—was that he either could not or would not solve scientific and mathematical problems in the usual ways. Instead he invented his own unique, creative ways of conceptualizing problems.

Today the young Thomas Edison probably would be recognized as dyslexic, but during his childhood he was simply thought of as stupid. “I remember I used to never be able to get along at school. I was always at the foot of my class...my father thought I was stupid, and I almost decided that I was a dunce.” Eventually he was withdrawn from formal schools and tutored at home by his mother. He never did learn to spell or write grammatically; at the age of 19, he wrote to his

mother:

“Started the Store several weeks. I have grown considerably I dont look much like a Boy now—Hows all the folk did you receive a Box of Books from Memphis that he promised to send them—languages. Your son Al.” [Edison’s nickname.]

Sculptor Auguste Rodin had difficulty learning to read and write. His father said, “I have an idiot for a son,” and his uncle agreed, “He is ineducable.” President Woodrow Wilson didn’t learn his letters until he was 9 years old or learn to read until he was 11. General George Patton never learned to read well and is said to have gotten through West Point by memorizing whole lectures. Other historical notables now thought to have learning disabled include Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, Leonardo da Vinci and Hans Christian Andersen.<sup>1</sup>

One of the reasons people suffer so much from failure is because of their pride. They want everyone to see them as the picture of success. Living your life with the constant aim to impress others can lead to a frustrating life. Learn to accept yourself. Your goal in life should be to do your best, not to be concerned what other people think is doing your best.

If you want encouragement in your failure, go to a nursery where children are learning to walk. You’ll see them fall again and again. What do they do? They get up and try again. They don’t give up in spite of their repeated failures. You need to do the same. Okay, you failed—you messed up—but don’t lie in a

pit of despair and groan the rest of your life. Get up, brush the dust off your clothes, and evaluate what you can do to become successful. Because of discouragements, some spineless teens take the foolish path and think of committing suicide. Wake up! Face your problems! Stop worrying about what others think! Take steps to become successful.

### **Using Failures as Stepping Stones to Success**

You'll find many great men and women encountered failure, but they used their failures as stepping stones to success. Remember, the only ones who never fail are those who never attempt to do anything. There's a story told about two frogs that fell into a pitcher of cream. One frog said, "What's the use?" So he gave up and croaked. The other frog kept kicking and kicking until the cream turned into butter, and then jumped out.

The story is told about how people began to eat young chickens or broilers. In 1923 Mrs. Wilbur Steele ordered 50 baby chicks from a mail order house, but by mistake they sent her 500. She realized that if she let these chicks grow to full maturity, she'd have so many eggs she wouldn't know what to do with them. She got the bright idea to sell those birds while they were still young and tender. From that the broiler industry was born.<sup>2</sup>

Joseph Boyett and Jimmie Boyett in "*The Guru Guide*," wrote a book on "The Best Ideas of the Top Management Thinkers." This is what they had to say about failure:

One experience you absolutely must have to

## The Secret to Educational Success

As we have seen from the previous chapter, many famous individuals could have made excuses for being failures, but as John C. Maxwell, in *Developing the Leader Within You*, stated: “They refused to hold on to the common excuses for failure.”<sup>1</sup>

Notice, “they refused.” You must make the decision if you want to become successful. The secret to educational success is YOU must take full responsibility for your actions. This is so important that I want to emphasize this by putting it in bold letters:

**The secret to educational success is YOU must take full responsibility for your actions.**

Stop blaming others. There may be legitimate reasons you’re failing now. But that doesn’t change a thing. You must decide if you want to be successful.

### Taking Responsibility

Denis Waitley has a doctorate in human behavior and has been one of Americas most sought-after keynote speakers on self-determination and productivity. Waitley, writing in *Readers Digest* about “What Makes a Winner?” says:

In many years of interviewing successful people—Olympic athletes, business executives, astronauts,

government leaders and others—I have come to realize that there is a fine line between them and the rest of the pack. I call this line the winner’s edge.

This edge is *not* the result of a privileged environment or having a high I.Q., a superior education or unusual talent. Nor is it a matter of luck. The key to the winner’s edge, I have found, is attitude.

There are many ingredients in a winning attitude, but the most important is being honest with yourself. To do this, you must follow three major precepts.”<sup>2</sup>

Waitley lists these three precepts. The first one is, “Don’t escape—adapt.” The second precept is, “Find your own gifts; follow your own goals.” The third precept, and the one I want to stress is:

**Assume responsibility for your actions.** The Bible tells us that as we sow, we reap. Scientists talk of cause and effect. The meaning is the same: our rewards depend on the contributions we make. You yourself must take the credit or the blame for your place in life. Responsible people look at the shackles they’ve placed upon themselves and, in a moment of truth, declare their independence.

Joe Sorrentino grew up in an inner-city neighborhood, became a teen-age gang leader and served time in a reform school. Remembering a seventh-grade teacher’s confidence in his academic aptitude, he realized that, despite his poor high-

## The Secret to Educational Success

school record, his only hope for success was through education. He returned to night school at age 20, went on to the University of California where he graduated *magna cum laude*, and then finished at Harvard Law School. He became an outstanding juvenile-court judge in Los Angeles. None of this would have happened if Joe Sorrentino had not had the courage to alter his destiny.<sup>3</sup>

What's your attitude? Do you always blame others for your failures? Do what Waitley says and assume responsibility for your actions. Look failure in the eye and say, "I'm going to take full responsibility for what I did and for who I am. I'm going to change and take control of my life where it is right now! I'm going to do my best to make my future bright and successful.

### **Discipline**

One of the most important keys for educational success is having discipline. What's discipline? Discipline is eating the crust of a sandwich first and saving the middle for last. Those with discipline are willing to sacrifice the present for the future. Look at successful athletes. Everyone admires successful athletes, but many don't realize the sacrifice these athletes had to make in order to become great. Successful athletes are willing to work hard to obtain their desired goal.

The key to success is to have goals. Do you want to be successful? If you do, are you willing to pursue a lifestyle that

## **Choosing and Preparing for the Right Career**

**I**n choosing a career, the intelligent thing is to plan while still in school what you'd like to do with your life. The important question is what kind of work are you best suited for and what do you enjoy doing. That's the ideal job—something you're naturally gifted at and something you'd enjoy doing. But in the pursuit of your career, be realistic. Statistics bear out how much more money college graduates earn because of their degrees. But they need to be useful degrees. You may desire to be a specialist in a certain field, but if there are only ten positions nationwide, there's little likelihood you'll get that job.

Some don't bother to think; they enter the job market and simply accept the first job offered that pays decent wages. Bingo. They didn't have to bother to think about choosing a career. However, five to ten years later, it's a dead end job leaving them dissatisfied.

For many the ideal employment would be playing professional sports. Certainly there are opportunities, but those opportunities are only for those with exceptional abilities. You're much wiser to choose a career that gives you a good chance of getting the employment you'd like. If your parents are short and you're 5 foot 6 inches tall, don't aim to become a professional basketball player. Some claim whatever you dream, you can achieve. I don't care how much you dream,

## Teen Success In Career and Life Skills

at your height you'll never become a professional basketball player. Be intelligent and dream *realistic* dreams. Remember, choosing a career is one of the most important decisions of your life, so think carefully and seek advice.

"I don't know what I'd like to do," you may say. "Is there a test I can take that will tell me what I'm best suited for?"

Yes, there are ability and career tests that you can take that will show your strengths and weaknesses. This is a good place to start. Speak to a school counselor about these tests or go online. Choosing a career requires much thought, and this is work. If you want a successful career, you must be willing to examine yourself. Take a survey of yourself on what you'd like to achieve. Let me warn you, this isn't easy. You're a teenager, and many of you don't want to bother to think about a subject like this.

Others are scared. It's understandable to be concerned. Your entire life will be affected by your decision. But don't forget, this isn't something that's written in stone. There'll be opportunities to make future changes. And whatever you do, don't forget to seek advice from your parents. They will often give you the best advice.

One day you'll graduate and must choose an occupation, go to a trade school, or attend college. Your choice of occupation, trade school, or college can affect your entire future, so it's best if you begin now to examine your life's objectives. Doing so can result in avoiding many future pitfalls. Some students enter higher education without the foggiest idea what they want. They take different courses, and then in their junior year

## Choosing and Preparing for the Right Career

finally make up their minds. But since they didn't take an early survey of themselves, they took courses that didn't benefit them. This results in additional costs and spending additional time in college.

The intelligent thing to do is to ask yourself these questions concerning your career and write down your answers:

**Interests:** What do you like to do? What subjects in school do you enjoy? What are your hobbies?

**Personality:** Are you outgoing or more introverted? Do you like to be around people and talk, or are you more the quiet type?

**Aptitude:** What is your talent or inherent ability? Are you mechanically inclined and like to figure out what makes things work, or would you rather operate equipment and work in an office? Do you like to deal with people as in sales? Choose a career that naturally fits you.

**Values:** What motivates you? Are you just interested in making money, or are you interested in helping people?

Once you have an idea what you'd like to do, do a job search. The Internet is an excellent source to gain valuable information. One of the most important questions to ask is: What do I need to do to achieve my goals? What technical school or college should I plan to attend?

---

## The Resume and the Interview

**Y**ou may ask, “What resume? I never had a job before.” Did you do any volunteer work, babysit, work in a church help or teach children, mow lawns, do chores for the sick or elderly—it all counts. What are your strengths? Are you enthusiastic, energetic, and hard working? Give examples that would support your statements. “I sold the most tickets for the school musical.” “I’m an active member of three clubs in my school.”

### The Resume

**Contact Information:** First thing in a resume is to make sure you have your contact information: full name, address, phone number, and email address if you have one. You want to be available if the person wants to hire you.

You may have on your cell phone this answering message, “Yo dude. What’s up?” If your prospective employer hears this, he may have second thoughts about hiring you. You’d be wise to change your phone-answering message to, “Hi. This is Dave. Please leave a message.”

**Education Experience:** Tell where you went to school and the classes you majored in. Include also any extra courses, such as CPR training or drama classes, and if you’re an honor student. If you have any citations for outstanding achievement, include them.

**Activities:** List activities that you have participated

## Teen Success In Career and Life Skills

in: team sports, gymnastics, band, chorus, clubs, student committees or councils, leadership training, hobbies, and class officer or president. List honors and awards.

**Skills:** Are you computer literate? What programs are you familiar with? How well do you get along with others? What kind of skills do you have that would benefit the company? Tell something about yourself that an employer would like to hear. Don't embellish your story. Nothing turns off an employer more than someone who exaggerates or is dishonest.

**Work Experience:** If you were employed, list your previous employers. If not previously employed, include any extra work you've done from volunteering to mowing lawns.

**References:** List at least two adults who know you well and will have something good to say about you. A good source would be your previous supervisor. If you have never worked before, you won't have any references dealing with your work experiences. But you can list individuals who know you such as: teachers, coaches, or anyone with authority. Ask their permission to use their name. Include their name, company, address, phone number, email and their relationship with you.

Many students don't have enough job experiences to create a compelling resume. Think of anything positive about yourself that would help you get the job. For example: "I've had perfect attendance for the last two terms." Don't be overly concerned; employers don't expect a lot of experience. They're searching for someone with the right attitude and a willingness to learn. But resumes are important, particularly when there's much competition. Go on the Web and search for ideas. Make

---

## **The Free Enterprise System and America's Foundation**

If you want to be successful in the working world, you need to understand that our economic system is built on the concept of free enterprise. There are two basic types of economic systems: socialism where the public or the state owns and controls the means of production, and capitalism or the free enterprise system where individuals own and control the means of production. Some socialists want the complete nationalization of the means of production; others propose select nationalization. Under the free enterprise system or capitalism there are various government laws, such as laws dealing with monopolies and banks. There are many versions of these two economic systems, but we'll examine just the basics of socialism under communism and the capitalistic system.

### **Socialism and Capitalism**

The communist economic system is advanced socialism. It is based on common ownership of the means of production. It is a classless society where everyone is an owner. Let's take a farm operating under communism, and a farm under capitalism or the free economic system.

In the communistic system every worker is an owner of the farm and all get paid according to their needs, not according to their ability. If a farm machine breaks down during harvest, it's no big deal under the communistic system. Why? All farm

employees get paid whether they get the machine working or not. There's no incentive to get the farm machine repaired quickly to harvest the crops.

Take that same farm under the free enterprise system where the owner has his farm machine break down. He knows that if his machine is not fixed, he won't get paid. That farmer will do everything possible to get his machine working again. If he can't get the machine working, he'll use every available method to harvest his crops, even if he has to do so with extra hired hands.

Chairman Mao Zedong was a hard-line communist who ruled China. After his death in 1976, new leadership emerged in the communist government. Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve from 1987 to 2006, in his book, *The Age of Turbulence*, tells what happened:

As much pragmatist as Marxist, Deng had set in motion China's transformation from a walled-off centrally planned agrarian economy into a formidable presence on the economic scene. The nation's march to the market began in 1978, when, because of a severe drought, authorities were forced to ease tight administrative controls that had long governed individual farmers' plots. Under new rules, the farmers were allowed to keep a significant part of their produce to consume or sell. The results were startling. Agricultural output rose dramatically, encouraging further deregulation and the development of farm markets. After decades of stagnation, agricultural productivity blossomed.

Success on the farm encouraged the spread of reform to industry. Again, a modest easing of constraints produced greater-than-anticipated growth, giving impetus to the arguments of reformers who wished to move more quickly toward a competitive-market template. No advocates ever dared call the new model “capitalism.” They used euphemisms like “market socialism” or, in the famous phrase of Deng, “socialism with Chinese characteristics.”

China's leaders were far too perceptive not to see the contradictions and limitations of socialist economics and the evidence of capitalist success. Indeed, why else would they have embarked on so ambitious an enterprise so alien to the traditions of the Communist Party? As China was inexorably drawn further and further down the road toward capitalism, economic progress became so compelling that the ideological debate of earlier years seemed to have passed into history.<sup>1</sup>

The new communist leaders foresaw the failures of the socialistic policies of the previous government and permitted the people to own their means of production. The result as Greenspan reports, “were startling.” Today, China is a world economic power.

### **Karl Marx, the Founder of Communism**

Karl Marx is often called the father of communism. He was a 19<sup>th</sup>-century philosopher and political economist. He wrote the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848 and argued that capitalism

---

## **The Importance of Understanding the Free Enterprise System**

**W**hy do I write to teens about the free enterprise system? If you want to become successful in your employment, it's critical for you to understand our economic system. Business owners must have efficient employees to remain competitive in order to please their customers. When we find such employees, we pay them high wages and often promote them into leadership positions.

Let me share incidents about the world of work. As you read these stories, think of the main reasons for success. When I moved to Texas I wanted to continue to teach, but the pay for teaching was insufficient to support my family, so I went back to my trade as a tool and die maker. Then I applied for a job as a tool designer. After working there for six months, the president of this large tool and die stamping shop and a machining company told me he was looking for an operations manager. He described the benefits, and then pointed to me and said, "You're the man."

I received a substantial raise in salary and then managed the tool and die stamping company and another company that specialized in making pellitizer blades. Why within six months of my employment was I offered that lucrative job promotion?

### **Think Like an Owner**

I aim to live by the Golden Rule, "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." Now as a tool

designer, I wanted to apply Golden Rule thinking to help my new employer become profitable. One of the companies they owned was losing money and about to go bankrupt. I began designing tooling that would make the machining operations much more efficient. I gave the president many suggestions on how to make his company more profitable. He told me no employee ever offered him suggestions. After six months, I was promoted to operations manager because I thought like an owner. I aimed to make his company profitable. I simply looked at the company's existing way of doing things and tried to make the operations more efficient.

Zig Ziglar, a former successful salesman, author, and motivational speaker who has helped millions worldwide, has a motto, "You can have everything in life that you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want."<sup>1</sup>

What is Ziglar saying? The secret to getting ahead in life is to help others. If you're in sales, think of what you can sell that will benefit the customer. If you're an employee, think like an owner. I thought like an owner, and then I received a substantial pay raise and became operations manager of all the manufacturing operations. I reorganized the entire stamping shop, made operation sheets, and began to train the employees to do their own setups and to work efficiently. For the other company that was going under, I instituted many changes to make it more efficient. Twenty-five years later this company that was on the verge of going under is still in operation.

## **Innovation**

The free enterprise system encourages innovation. Think of all the changes that have taken place within the last hundred

## The Importance of Understanding the Free Enterprise System

years: television, computers, internet, space exploration, medicine, and many others. However, sometimes the greatest innovations are very simple. Take the metal shipping containers where goods are transported on large ships around the world. Imagine how labor-consuming it was to ship products before these shipping containers existed. Now a company loads a shipping container with its products. A truck transports this sealed container to a dock where it is loaded onto a ship with the aid of large cranes. The ship enters a port, and the container is unloaded and transported to its customer either by rail or by truck.

The idea started when Malcolm McLean drove his trailer truck loaded with cotton bales to be loaded onto a ship. As he waited, he watched men unload bales of cotton from the trucks and into slings to be loaded onto a ship. Then they had to unload these bales and put them in their proper place on the ship. This is what McLean said when he got the idea.

What a waste in time and money. Suddenly the thought came to me: Wouldn't it be great if my trailer could simply be lifted up and placed on the ship without its contents being touched? If you want to know that's when the seed was planted.<sup>2</sup>

A few years later he purchased a company and implemented his idea about containers. Shipping by means of containers revolutionized shipping by dramatically reducing the cost and time to load products. In ports around the world you will see ships loaded with containers. You may also observe these

containers on trucks on the highways delivering products to customers. That simple idea of shipping goods in containers so revolutionized shipping that the Maritime Association of the Port of New York and New Jersey named McLean as “The man of the Century,” and Forbes Magazine said, “One of the few men who changed the world.”<sup>3</sup>

## **Doing Your Best**

Zig Ziglar tells the story of a woman who got married after high school. The only job she could find was cleaning rooms at the Holiday Inn. To many people that would be a low-end-job not deserving their best efforts. But this girl determined to do her best at cleaning the rooms. Within six months she was the manager of the floor, a few months later of the entire housekeeping department. About a year later she received a promotion to the restaurant, first as an assistant manager, then as a manager. A couple of years later she became manager of the Holiday Inn in Zanesville, Ohio.<sup>4</sup>

If you want to be successful, you need to have a passion for excellence. Be the best secretary, best hamburger flipper, best homemaker, or best sweeper. Many times when employers see individuals giving their best, these are the ones they promote. Some may make fun of you for working so hard, but refuse to listen to them. Some objections may be:

“I’m not getting paid enough.”

“I’m not getting paid for that kind of work.”

“It’s someone else’s job.”

“If I work hard and fast, I won’t get overtime.”

Many people shift into another gear when the boss is

---

## Advancing On the Job

**Y**ou're now employed. What can you do to get ahead? The same principles that make a business successful in the free enterprise system will also make you successful in your career: working to please the customer and working to be productive.

But there's a big problem. You're inexperienced. How should you act on your new job? If you want to rapidly advance, follow these principles.

### **Elephant Ears, Eagle Eyes, and a Pinhole Mouth**

Having elephant ears, eagle eyes, and a pinhole mouth is the secret to rapidly advancing. Listen, look, and learn. Have big ears, eager eyes, and keep your mouth shut and learn. Don't be a smart aleck—Mr. or Miss know-it-all.

### **Listening Ears**

I was seeking a publicist for my new book, *Character Under Attack and What You Can Do About It*. At the Book Expo in McCormick Center in Chicago, I happened to meet the president of a publicity firm. He showed extreme interest in my book and in what I was doing. I was very much inclined to use his firm.

He assigned me to one of his staff members. The staff member told me over the phone he wanted to have a four-

month commitment that would cost \$10,000. As I began to share my story about what I was doing, he cut me off. Instead of listening to me share my vision, I sensed he wasn't interested. Then I said, "Let me tell you in a nutshell," and proceeded to give a very short version of my story.

Here I was going to spend a sizable amount of money, and he wasn't interested in what I had to say. The president was very much interested, but the staff member who would be working with me wasn't. I knew what to do. I sought another firm.

It gave me a powerful lesson in sales and the importance of putting the right kind of person in sales. What makes a good sales person? Put yourself into your customer's shoes. Learn to listen. Show a sincere interest in what your customer wants. Let your customers know in no uncertain terms that you're interested in helping them succeed.

Seek advice and be an eager learner. I often quote this Chinese proverb: "He who asks a question is a fool for five minutes, but he who doesn't ask a question remains a fool forever." Seeking advice is something you should do your entire life. In fact, the more you learn, the more you learn how ignorant you are.

I'm constantly reading trade magazines and going to trade shows to learn and get advice. I've written the book, *Non-Traditional Machining Handbook*, which examines all the non-traditional machining methods that are currently available. To write this book I went to many exhibits at the International Manufacturing Technology Show (IMTS), one of the largest industrial trade shows in the world, and

obtained information and sought counsel. I searched through various trade magazines. I also had numerous experts in non-traditional machining read chapters dealing with their specialty. In other words, I sought advice. I wanted to listen to what they had to say.

*Readers Digest* in “Getting Along With Your Boss,” quotes George Berkley, professor of management at the University of Massachusetts. The number one guideline is: “*Listen*. Much of the time we only pretend to listen. We are so busy looking for signs of approval or disapproval or framing our response that we fail to hear what is being said. Good listening means hearing not only what the boss says, but also what he or she implies. It means being able to summarize and to respond intelligently.”

Then Berkley suggests, “Create eye contact without staring. Take notes. When your boss has finished, pause to show that you are letting the words sink in. Ask a question or two to clarify a few points, or briefly summarize what has been said. Remember: bosses like people who don’t have to be told things twice.”<sup>1</sup>

Imagine you’re the boss and you’re speaking to an employee. How would you want that employee to react? It is this principle of visualization of others that is so important for those wanting to become successful.

### **Eagle Eyes**

In the tool and die making trade, there are many secrets. I worked with many tool and die makers, and few were willing to share. The way to learn is to have eagle eyes and duplicate

## The Importance of Character for Success

Character is moral excellence. People of character are honest, respectful, responsible, open-minded, humble, fair, compassionate, friendly, cooperative, diligent, and self-disciplined. Many teens can't understand the importance of character, but character is one of the keys to success both at school and on the job.

If a person tells a lie, can he or she ever be fully trusted again? There will always be doubt. If a person says she'll meet you at a certain time, but comes 15 minutes late three times in a row without an excuse, won't you begin to see that person as undependable? If you observe someone hitting and pushing those who are weaker, you'll recognize quickly he's a bully. He's only interested in pleasing himself; he doesn't care about anyone else.

Character is who we are when no one is looking. Character is also revealed when we are in a tight situation. One day I was in the office with the president of the company where I was operations manager. It was apparently early in the morning before the secretary came in, because when the phone rang, I picked it up. The person on the phone asked to speak to the president. When the president heard who it was, he said to me, "Tell him I'm not here."

My aim in life is to always tell the truth. But now I have a high-paying job as operations manager and the president is telling me to lie. What was more important, my job or my

integrity? I didn't hesitate, I handed him the phone. He looked at me in disgust and took the phone. I didn't lose my job, but even if I had, my integrity was more important than my job.

We had placed an ad in the papers for a tool and die maker. I instructed those who answered the phone to give me all the calls so I could weed out the applicants. One applicant told me he could do anything as a tool and die maker. "Did you work on compound, blanking, and progressive dies?" I asked.

"Yes," was his immediate reply. He kept affirming his ability to do any kind of tool and die work. The way he talked, I became suspicious of his abilities. Then I asked, "Did you work on an EDM machine?"

"Yes," he quickly replied.

"What kind of work did you do on the EDM," I asked.

"What kind of machine?"

"EDM."

"No. I never worked on an EDM," he finally replied.

You think I hired him? Do you think I wanted a liar working for me? Never!

## **The Importance of Integrity**

One of the most important virtues for success is to have integrity, to be honest. Alan Loy McGinnis, in *Bringing Out the Best in People*, had this to say about the importance of integrity:

The Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina, recently studied 21 derailed executives—successful people who were expected to

## The Importance of Character for Success

go higher in the organization but who reached a plateau in their careers and were fired or were forced to retire early. They were compared with 20 “arrivers”—those who made it all the way to the top.

The researchers found the two groups astonishingly alike. Every one of the 41 executives possessed remarkable strengths, and everyone was flawed by one or more significant weaknesses. So a person can make a lot of mistakes and have certain weaknesses, evidently, and still rise to success. But closer study of the derailed executives showed that certain types of flaws kept cropping up in a large number of them, and that one error, when committed, always led to their downfall. The researchers called it “the unforgivable sin—betraying a trust.” Integrity here means more than simple honesty. It embodies consistency and predictability built over time that says, “I will do exactly what I say I will do when I say I will do it. If I change my mind, I will tell you well in advance so you will not be harmed by my actions.”<sup>1</sup>

Thomas J. Stanley, in *The Millionaire Mind*, asks “What are the top five factors most often mentioned by millionaires as being very important in explaining their economic success?” This is what they said:

- Integrity—being honest with people
- Discipline—applying self control
- Social skills—getting along with people

## Teen Success In Career and Life Skills

- A supportive spouse
- Hard work—more than most people<sup>2</sup>

John C. Maxwell in, *Developing the Leader Within You*, said “According to 1,300 senior executives who responded to a recent survey, integrity is the human quality most necessary to business success.”<sup>3</sup> Then he quoted Dwight Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II, and the thirty-fourth president of the United States:

In order to be a leader a man must have followers. And to have followers, a man must have their confidence. Hence, the supreme quality for a leader is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office. If a man’s associates find him guilty of being phony, if they find that he lacks forthright integrity, he will fail. His teachings and actions must square with each other. The first great need, therefore, is integrity and high purpose.<sup>4</sup>

Zig Ziglar in *Top Performance* illustrates the importance of integrity:

The Forum Corporation of Boston, Massachusetts, did an in-depth study of 341 salespeople from eleven different companies in five different industries. Of this

## The Importance of Character for Success

group, 173 were top salespeople and 168 were average salespeople. The primary difference between the two groups was not skill, knowledge, or ability. The 173 super salespeople were more productive because their customers *trusted* them, and customers are far more likely to *believe* the honest salesperson. They discovered that people do not buy based on what you tell them *or* what you show them. They *do buy* based on what you tell them *and* show them, which they believe.<sup>5</sup>

Skill, knowledge, and ability are certainly important, but this study shows that unless there's integrity where customers trust you, you'll never reach the top. You'll never become successful being a phony; people must trust you.

Ever since I was a teenager, I've made it a goal to have integrity—I'll do whatever I say. For years I always carry a pen and 3 x 5 cards with me in a separate wallet with my business cards. I do this because I'm a writer, and also when I say I'll do something, I want to write a note so I won't forget. I strongly desire to be a person of integrity. I've met those who say they'll do something, but they fail to do it. After a few repeated failures, I no longer trust them when they say something. In my eyes they have lost their integrity, they're untrustworthy.

It's a shame the loss of integrity we find today in our culture. Many will lie and cheat in order to make money. What we need is people who put character first, above making money. Don't believe the lie that you can't be honest and be in business. You definitely can be honest in business. When I

---

## Golden Rule Thinking

I want to stress the importance of Golden Rule thinking in your pursuit of a successful career. The main idea is to ALWAYS aim to help others. It's a lifestyle of unselfish thinking.

### Satisfy Wants

James H. Worsham, in his book, *The Art of Persuading People*, says:

My book and magazine writings have necessitated numberless interviews with successful professional men—with executives whose persuasive talents were put to daily use in the handling of thousands of employees; with “star” salesmen whose work resulted in large manufacturing plants having to strain their facilities, day and night, to fill orders; with heads of government, who had been able to persuade millions to vote for them; with foreign diplomats whose persuasive efforts had led nations away from and into war; with cunning lobbyists whose strategies of persuasion made or unmade national laws; and with thousands of others whose persuasiveness was important in their spheres of influence.

Out of all this study and observation I have found the simple secret of persuasion. I have discovered that

it is employed alike by all, whether they realize it or not. In it you have a common denominator—a simple formula to which you can turn again and again for new ideas, tactics and strategies, as you meet the manifold requirements of new situations.

The secret is so simple and obvious that I hesitate to state it, because of its very obviousness and simplicity. Yet, after all, isn't all truth simple and obvious after discovery?

The basic secret of persuasion is this:

INDIVIDUALS (OR MASSES OF PEOPLE) ARE PERSUADED THROUGH THE INFLUENCE OF THE THINGS THEY WANT. In actual operation this means: FIND OUT WHAT PEOPLE WANT (not just NEED); BE IN A POSITION TO CONVINCCE THEM THAT WHAT YOU OFFER WILL SATISFY THE WANT, AND PLACE YOUR PROPOSITION WITHIN THEIR REACH. [Capitals in original.]<sup>1</sup>

Are you getting the message? What matters is not what YOU want, but what OTHERS want. It's satisfying individual's desires and expectations. If you want to become successful in persuading others, it's not some psychological method trying to trick someone into doing something they don't want to do. Yet many people think they're successful if they can somehow persuade people to do something they really don't want to do. That's being deceptive.

## **Focus on Customers**

For sixteen years, a company was manufacturing a pump for household use. Sales of the pump stayed the same for years. They brought in an outsider to see if he could increase sales. He had one dominating question on his mind, “What do the customers of this pump want?”

Notice this outsider wasn’t focused on the company, but on the customer’s *wants*. The pump had only one moving part that was inside a casing. He discovered that customers buying household pumps wanted one that would be safe around children. This outsider discovered this pump fits the bill.

They thought about this feature of the pump and created a new slogan: “Safe to Install Where Children Play.” They showed children playing around the pump. Within a few months sales increased several hundred percent.<sup>2</sup>

What changed? The pump was the same, but the message changed. They discovered the want of their customers and then created a sale pitch to satisfy that want. Bill Gates, one of the founders of Microsoft, said, “Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Please the Customer First, Last, and Always**

Gallery Furniture in Houston, Texas, has more sales per square foot than any other competitor. Jim McIngvale’s personal philosophy is, “Please the customer first, last, and always.” What do customers want? Customers want to get the products they buy as soon as possible. Gallery goes one step further. They promise to deliver furniture the same day it’s

bought. It's no wonder they're successful. I know this place well, for every day I come home from work I pass Gallery Furniture. Usually there are many cars in their lot.

I taught an American Junior Achievement course to English-speaking Czechoslovakian high school and university students in Prague University. George Testar, manager of a large department store in Minneapolis taught my class one day. Four miles from his store, Sears and Roebuck was opening a store.

Upon hearing this he became depressed. Obviously, he was going to have stiff competition, lose sales, and receive a smaller bonus. He decided to take action. He gathered his sales force together and told them they had to satisfy their customers. He instructed them if they didn't have an item, they would get it. That year they had greater sales than the year before.

He told the class this incident. A woman complained to a clerk that she couldn't find any pantyhose like the ones she saw in Rome, Italy. Testar heard what happened, so he went to the woman and said they would get the pantyhose for her.

He called his department store in Rome and told them to ship six pairs of those pantyhose by air. Within five days he had those special pantyhose on his desk. He called the customer and told her he had her pantyhose. This person was a woman of influence. He asked the class, "What do you think this woman did?" She undoubtedly told her friends about the great service of his department store. Is it any wonder his sales increased that year when they treated customers in that fashion?

## **The Key to Effective Marketing**

Doug Hall, author of the *Jump Start Your Business Brain* book series, in “What’s In It for Customers?” stated:

### **WHAT’S THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE MARKETING?**

Being overt, blunt, and unquestionably specific about the benefits customers will get from your goods or services can triple your chances of success. I studied 901 new products and services over a five-year period and found that those whose marketing and advertising hyped obvious benefits had a 38% survival rate, compared with a 13% survival rate for those whose benefits were less clear. [Caps and bold in original.]<sup>4</sup>

In a *Readers Digest* article, “Getting Your Own Way—The Easy Way,” Morton Hunt stated: “After hundreds of studies, researchers have concluded that persuasiveness is greatly enhanced by identifiable techniques that we can all borrow—keeping in mind that persuasion is not manipulation; it’s a matter of creating the right environment for your ideas and then communicating them effectively.”

One of his points is, “Reflect the listener’s experience.” Hunt points out:

A good persuader also tends to reflect, not rebut, the other person’s objections to his argument. The skilled persuader restates the objection, allows that it has merit and only then goes on to show that his

## Teen Success In Career and Life Skills

own views are more cogent. One top-notch insurance agent agreed with a customer that life insurance wasn't a good investment. "In fact," the agent said, "it's *a terrible* investment." Having thus disarmed the customer, the agent demonstrated that insurance has different purposes from investing: it's a protection against catastrophe, a way of making up for savings or investments that one doesn't have.<sup>5</sup>

Good persuaders are those who are willing to honestly evaluate the other person's position. They are excellent listeners. They identify with the person they are speaking to. Ben Feldman has sold nearly a billion dollars worth of life insurance. He says his toughest sale was to the chief executive officer of a major corporation who insisted he was too busy to have a life-insurance salesman see him. Feldman took five \$100 bills and put them into an envelope and handed it to the secretary. He requested only five minutes of the officer's time.

Feldman agreed with the officer that his time was valuable. That gesture opened the door for Feldman to see the officer. He sold him over \$50 million worth of life insurance.<sup>6</sup>

### **Promoted to Management**

John Miller in *Guideposts* answered this question, "What can I do to make a difference?"

I ducked into a busy restaurant for lunch. There

---

## The Choice

I've covered many topics in this book hoping to help you become successful. We've examined the technology explosion, the importance of education and character, the free enterprise system, choosing the right career, the resume, the interview, how to act on the job, and Golden Rule thinking. Now let's answer the question, "What is success?"

### What Is Success?

Let's examine various views of success:

- To have a satisfying career requiring a degree as a doctor, lawyer, or teacher; or one that may require technical training as a plumber, electrician, or machinist
- To become an entrepreneur and own a business
- To be rich and famous
- To become a champion sports player
- To have so much money that it makes others envious
- To be happily married and have children
- To be healthy and live a full and satisfying life
- To make this world a better place

Some define success from selfish reasons and others have noble purposes. Those who are proud and selfish want the flashiest car, the biggest house, and latest fashions. These individuals are never content, for their view of success

depends on how others view them. Many of these people foolishly go into deep debt trying to impress others.

Some make the wiser decision that focuses on having a satisfying career and living a happy and fruitful life that includes others. These individuals are not focused on impressing others, but are satisfied to live within their means. It's only when you learn to give and think of others that you will attain a life of success.

### **Never to Complain**

Eddie Rickenbacker was an American fighter ace in World War I. He was called, "America's Ace of Aces" and had the highest number of aerial victories over the Germans. He was also a race car driver, designer of automobiles, and the president of Eastern Air Lines. The U.S. government sent him on a mission to deliver a message to General Douglas MacArthur during World War II. He was flying in a Boeing B-17 which had a defective navigation system, and the plane overshot its destination. It ran out of fuel, and the pilots were forced to ditch the plane in the Pacific Ocean, close to Japanese-held enemy territory.

The eight men bound together three rubber rafts so they would be a larger target for search planes to see. Sharks followed the rafts continuously. They had some survival food rations and fishing kits. After three days they ran out of food. For the next six or seven days the ocean was calm and the heat intolerable. Every inch of exposed flesh blistered. The nights were filled with groans, cries, and prayers.

They conducted prayer meeting and sang hymns in order to lift their spirits. On the eight day after the afternoon prayer service, Rickenbacker lay down with his hat covering his

## The Choice

face. Then something landed on his hat—a sea gull. Slowly Rickenbacker lifted up his hands and grabbed the sea gull's legs and held tight. He wrung its neck and pulled its feathers, and equally divided the bird among the survivors. They used the intestines for fishing bait. They were so hungry they ate the raw meat and even the bones. They also lived on sporadic rain water. This incident of the bird convinced Rickenbacker that God had a purpose in keeping them alive, and they should not lose faith. Rickenbacker took charge.

Since the rafts were uncovered, sunburn was a serious threat. As the days went by without their being seen, the men became discouraged. When sympathy didn't work, Rickenbacker would lash out and criticize them. He insulted and angered everyone in order to help them survive. After spending two weeks searching for the downed crew, the U.S. Army Air Force wanted to call off the search. However, Rickenbacker's wife convinced them to search for another week.

One of the survivors died, and they let his body float away. The other survivors became weaker and weaker. After two weeks the survivors saw search planes, but the search planes didn't see them. They decided to untie the rafts in hopes it would give them a better chance of being seen. Finally, a search plane found one raft, and the occupants were rescued. Another raft landed on an island, and a missionary notified the authorities. The third raft with Rickenbacker was located by a Navy Catalina flying boat. The surviving members suffered from exposure, dehydration, and starvation.

For 24 days, Rickenbacker had drifted in the Pacific Ocean. Rickenbacker had lost 60 pounds and was severely sunburned and had salt water ulcers. He rested for a few days, and then continued on his original mission to see General MacArthur

and to visit bases. From this incident they redesigned the survival equipment on rafts, such as a rubber sheet to protect the survivors from the sun and to gather rain water, and a small seawater distilling kit.

A successful life is a satisfied life. But you'll never have a satisfied life unless you include others. Notice that Rickenbacker assumed leadership and tried to motivate the men to want to live. One of his methods to help the survivors not give up was to use sarcasm and ridicule. One man tried to commit suicide to make room for others, but Rickenbacker hauled him into the raft and accused him of being a coward. After the incident Rickenbacker learned that several of them made a vow they would continue to live just to have the pleasure of burying him at sea.<sup>1</sup> Rickenbacker's concern for those men helped to keep them alive.

After this great rescue, Dale Carnegie asked Rickenbacker what was the biggest lesson he learned from being hopelessly lost in the Pacific. Rickenbacker said the biggest lesson he learned was:

If you have all the fresh water you want to drink and all the food you want to eat, you ought never to complain about anything.<sup>2</sup>

What a lesson to learn. How many teens go about griping that they don't have the latest fashion clothes or gadgets? The home is too hot or too cold. Their parents don't give them enough money. Both parents may be working to make ends meet, but they're never satisfied with the sacrifices their parents make. They're only concerned about themselves. "Give me, give me, give me," is their constant demand.

## The Choice

Wake up teens! Life is more than trying to impress others with your clothes or gadgets. Stop griping so much and learn to appreciate and be thankful for the things you do have. It's like the person who complained he had no shoes until he saw someone who had no feet.

## Your Goal

Success is simply accomplishing a desired goal. The first thing you must do is make goals for your life. What do you want to accomplish? What's your dream? You're young, so dream big. But dream realistic dreams that are built on your desires and abilities. Then be willing to work hard to fulfill your dreams.

In your desire to fulfill your dream, make sure you remove any obstacles that will hinder you from fulfilling your goals. Once you have established your goals, ask yourself, "What must I do to accomplish these goals?"

Then this difficult step must be applied: be disciplined to make the proper choices to bring your goals to fruition. Everyone has dreams, but few are willing to pay the price to achieve them. Benjamin Franklin said, "There are no gains without pains."

Setting goals is an important step to become successful. We'll examine the goals one should pursue in order to become a great leader. Many of these same principles apply for whatever goal you desire to achieve.

## Ingredients of Leadership

Warren Bennis is a university professor and has had a significant impact on the fields of leadership and management. *Forbes* magazine called him, "dean of leadership gurus." *The*