

TEEN SUCCESS **In Career & Life Skills**

IF YOU DON'T WANT THE
TRUTH
DON'T READ THIS!

STRAIGHT TALK FROM
A FORMER U.S. MARINE
CARL SOMMER

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, ASSISTANT DEAN OF BOYS, FOREMAN,
OPERATIONS MANAGER. CURRENTLY PRESIDENT OF 3 COMPANIES
& AN AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the thousands of children who have read my story books promoting principles for successful living and are now today's youth.
I desire everyone to have a bright future.

Teen Success In Career and Life Skills

About the Author

Carl Sommer, a devoted educator and successful businessman, has a passion for communicating values and practical learning skills. As a successful businessman and educator, Sommer is eminently qualified to impart to students the principles necessary for success in an increasingly complex world.

Following his passion, Sommer has authored books in many categories. His works include: *Another Sommer-Time Story™* series of children's books, read-alongs, and videos that impart values and principles for success for children; literacy programs dealing with reading; technical books; and a video math program from addition to trigonometry (see www.advancepublishing.com for the latest information about these programs).

During the Korean War, Sommer served in the Marine Corps. At age 40, he became a New York City public high school teacher. To become certified, he attended Oswego State University, City College of New York, and New York University. Sommer then became an assistant dean of boys in a high school with 3,600 pupils where he counseled students and parents.

As Sommer taught, he witnessed firsthand the many deficiencies of the educational system and began to investigate. His research led him to work as a substitute teacher at every grade level in 27 different schools in all of the boroughs of New York City. After identifying the problems and needs of America's students, he proceeded to craft solutions. His exhaustive ten-year study, including a one-year leave of absence from teaching, led to his first book published in 1984, *Schools in Crisis: Training for Success or Failure?*

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Across the nation, Sommer appeared on radio and television programs, including the nationally syndicated Oprah Winfrey Show. He has served on the Texas State Board of Education Review Committee and taught a Junior Achievement economics course at Prague University, Czech Republic. The International Biographical Centre in Cambridge, England, has nominated him for International Writer of the Year.

Sommer is the founder and president of Advance Publishing; Digital Cornerstone, a recording and video studio; and Reliable EDM, a precision machining company that specializes in electrical discharge machining. It is the largest company of its kind west of the Mississippi River (www.ReliableEDM.com). Two of his sons manage the EDM company, and another son manages his publishing company and recording studios which allows him to pursue his passion for writing.

Born in 1930, Sommer has been happily married since 1955 and has five children and 19 grandchildren. Sommer likes to read, and his hobbies are swimming and fishing. He exercises five times a week at home. Don't think of him as an old man. To this day Sommer regularly does 40 chin ups at one time. For his 78th birthday he tested himself and did 46 one-time chin ups. Twice a week he does dips at his kitchen corner countertop and chin-ups on a bar between his kitchen and garage. Three times a week he works out at a home gym and does push-ups and leg raises. Five times a week he walks on a treadmill for 20 minutes. He's in excellent health and has no plans to retire.

From Sommer's rich experiences and his passion to help students become successful, he is producing many new products that promote virtues and real-life skills.

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,

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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

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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.¹

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

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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.²

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."³

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.”⁴

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

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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."⁵

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."⁶

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:

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“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.”⁷

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.”⁸

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.

The Importance of Education

To become successful, it's critical to understand what's happening in today's world. Dramatic changes are taking place everywhere, and having an education is extremely important for you to understand and to take the necessary steps to benefit from these changes.

Technology Explosion

The cause for these dramatic changes is the explosion of technology. Let's look at a simple operation, such as writing and publishing a book. To write my first book I used a typewriter. After cutting and pasting the manuscript and having to retype it numerous times, I finally sent it to the printer. The printer then retyped the book to make hard type in order to print the book. We still weren't finished with the book. We had to examine the hard typed copies for mistakes the printer had made in retyping. This was an extremely labor-intensive way of producing books.

The Arrival of the Computer

Then computers arrived. It radically transformed writing and publishing. I was quick to embrace this labor-saving technology. With the aid of the computer I've written technical books and numerous full-color picture books. Today, we can take a full-color book, make a PDF file, and send the file directly to the printer by means of the Internet. The printer takes the PDF file and automatically produces plates to print

the full-color books. The printer never receives a hard copy of the book, it's all done electronically.

Computers have also transformed industry. My EDM (electrical discharge machining) company relies heavily on computers. We now do machine work that a few years ago was impossible to manufacture. Computers have dramatically reduced the cost of making many parts. You may visit our website at www.reliableedm.com to get an idea of this new technology and its remarkable capabilities. We also have a video and recording studio. Computers have dramatically altered the way videos and music are produced.

I've written the book, *Non-Traditional Machining Handbook*, which provides information on the latest technology concerning lasers, waterjets, EDMs, rapid prototyping, photochemical and electrochemical machining, and abrasive flow and ultrasonic machining. Dramatic revolutionary and labor-saving changes have taken place in industry. Under "The Machining Revolution," I stated:

From the earliest ages, individuals learned to use various hand tools to shape objects. As knowledge increased, the use of tools also increased. The industrial revolution arrived and introduced more sophisticated and precise tools such as drill presses, lathes, and milling machines.

Another revolution came—CAD/CAM (computer aided design/computer aided machining). Instead of manually moving machines, computerized programs were downloaded into machines and the operations

The Importance of Education

proceeded automatically. The use of these machines dramatically increased productivity.

With the addition of high speed computers, these machines achieved faster processing times. Then fuzzy logic was introduced. Unlike bilevel logic, which states that a statement is either true or false, fuzzy logic allows a statement to be partially true or false. Machines equipped with fuzzy logic “think” and respond quickly to minute variances in machining conditions. They can then lower or increase power settings according to messages received.

Another great innovation was virtual reality for prototyping and manufacturing. Virtual reality is an artificial environment where any of the human senses such as sight, sound, taste, touch, or smell can be simulated. Virtual reality is simply a computerized experience of real world situations.

In virtual prototyping and manufacturing, a three-dimensional CAD image can be made into a solid part or model directly from the computer. In virtual reality, engineers can visualize and manipulate a 3D model and make any necessary changes before incurring hard tooling costs. This process of rapid prototyping dramatically reduces time and costs.

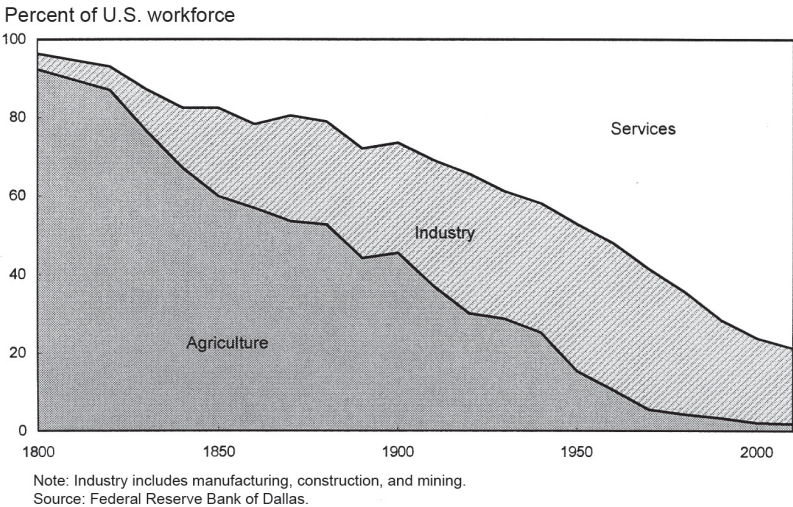
Other innovations include automatic tool changers, robots, workpiece and pallet changers, and artificial intelligence that enables machines to “think” through complex machining sequences.¹

Changing Structure of the U.S. Economy

Edward P. Lazear, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, in a document to the Executive Office of the President on, “The Changing Structure of the U.S. Economy,” stated: “The United States, like all developed countries, has largely a service economy.”²

The document had this chart showing from years 1800 to 2000 how the U.S. has changed from an agricultural to a largely service economy.

The U.S. has evolved from an Agriculture Economy to an Industrial Economy to a Service Economy



This chart³ is extremely important for those who will one day enter the job market. It clearly demonstrates the United States is today largely a service economy. Lazear pointed out:

The Importance of Education

Like manufacturing, the service sector has benefited from technological advances in information technology and communication. The productivity gains that were associated with new technologies first showed up in manufacturing. But in recent years, productivity in services has been rising at almost the same rate as the high level of productivity growth in manufacturing.

We can continue to expect the demand for services to grow particularly in health and education. Changing demographics, particularly the aging population, will mean more demand for health care. Education has become all the more important in a modern economy.⁴

I want to emphasize in bold print the importance of this last statement of Dr. Edward P. Lazear. If you want to become successful you had better think seriously about Lazear's comment.

Education has become all the more important in a modern economy.

The Value of Education

Modern technology has decreased the number of jobs in both agriculture and to a certain extent in industry. Today less than 2% of the U.S. population works in agriculture. People are not eating less; rather, farming methods have become extremely efficient. Large automatic machines now do most

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.”⁵

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

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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.⁶

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

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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

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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.⁹ 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.

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You 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.

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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 16th 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

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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.¹

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.²

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

become a leader, say our gurus, is failure. Failures seem to be the spark that ignites early leadership lessons and burns them into your consciousness. Warren Bennis cites the executives he knows well who felt that they learned the most when they hit bottom and really screwed up. Problems, he says, shape leaders like weather shapes mountains; “difficult bosses, lack of vision and virtue in the executive suite, circumstances beyond their control, and their own mistakes [are] the leader’s basic curriculum.” Bennis quotes Margaret Thatcher: “It’s at that moment when the iron entered my soul that gave me the steel I needed to have the resilience to become a really first-rate leader.”³

Take a good look at your failure, and then say with gritty determination, “You’re not going to keep me down! I may be defeated, but I’m not giving up!”

Gritty Determination

Early one bitterly cold morning two brothers went to school to build a fire in the pot-bellied coal stove to heat the room before their teacher and classmates arrived. One of the boys was thirteen and the other was eight. By accident, the boys used gasoline. There was an explosion. The schoolhouse was filled with flames. They dragged the unconscious eight-year-old out of the flaming building. His older brother died from his wounds.

In the hospital the doctor told the mother that her eight-year-old son would surely die too. He tried to comfort her by

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telling her it would be best since the fire had destroyed the lower part of his body. But this young boy wanted to live. The doctors got together to decide what was best for the boy. His knees and shin bones had no flesh, all the toes on his left foot were gone, and the arch was practically destroyed. The doctors called the parents in and informed them since the legs were so severely damaged the best thing to do was to amputate the boy's legs.

When the boy heard this, he pleaded, "No, no! Please, no! Please don't cut off my legs!"

Upon hearing the pleas of their boy, the parents decided not to go along with the doctor's advice to amputate the legs. The mother kept massaging the boy's legs and encouraged him to work hard so he could stand. At this point the boy's life was spent either in bed or in a wheelchair.

One day as he sat in his wheelchair, he got off the wheelchair and pulled himself through the grass to a picket fence. With determined effort he pulled himself up and began dragging himself along the fence stake by stake. Every day he did this, until he made a smooth path around the fence. He was determined to walk. His determination paid off. Slowly he began to stand up, then haltingly walk, and then run.

He began walking to school, and then decided to run to school. In college he joined the track team. This young man, Glenn Cunningham, who was thought to be a hopeless cripple, ran the world's fastest mile. In 1933 he won the prestigious Sullivan Award as the nation's top amateur athlete. In 1974 he was inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame.

John C. Maxwell, in *Developing the Leader Within You*,

stated:

A study of three hundred highly successful people, people like Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Helen Keller, Winston Churchill, Albert Schweitzer, Mahatma Gandhi, and Albert Einstein, reveals that one-fourth had handicaps, such as blindness, deafness, or crippled limbs. Three-fourths had either been born in poverty, came from broken homes, or at least came from exceedingly tense or disturbed situations.

Why did the achievers overcome problems while thousands are overwhelmed by theirs? They refused to hold on to the common excuses for failure. They turned their stumbling blocks into stepping stones. They realized they could not determine every circumstance in life but they could determine their choice of attitude toward every circumstance.⁴

Lazy Students

I was on my way home after speaking to parents at our open house when I met a furious student in the hall. He was yelling at his aunt who was taking care of him. He had received a failing grade from one of the teachers.

I asked him about his problem. He told me what happened. I asked to see his report card. I examined his report card and said judging from the report card, you're a goof off and not doing the work and studying. He readily admitted this.

Then I said, "What you should do is look at yourself and try to change." Then I challenged him, "Do what you're supposed

to do.”

What was I doing? I was advising him to take intelligent action for his failures. He listened. It was one of those beautiful moments when I witnessed a raging student being transformed by listening to instruction. I used straight talk to help him see his problem wasn't the teacher, but his lackadaisical attitude toward learning.

In the dean's office a 19-year-old student was reported for being disruptive in his English class. These are some of the reports on his record: threw a chisel in his woodworking class, used abusive language, was repeatedly late to school and classes, was defiant, refused to identify himself, defaced an English textbook, cursed a substitute teacher, and raised his fist at a teacher. He had many other negative comments on his record.

As the dean, I discussed the son's defiant and rude behavior with his mother. But she defended him by saying he was having these problems because he was black. I told her we had many black students in school, and they were never in the dean's office.

This same student happened to be in my automotive class. He really enjoyed this class, and out of all the students in the class, only one other student received a 100 on a test. Some of his grades for the first marking period were: chemistry 40, speech 65, English 60, and automotive 93.

I told his mother about the grades, and she called him stupid. As a dean we can be very frank with parents. I disagreed with the mother and told her that her son wasn't stupid, but lazy, for only her son and another boy in my class received a 100 on a

test.

On the last day of school a student came and asked if I would change his failing grade of 60 to a passing grade of 65. I went over his record and showed how he failed the tests and didn't do most of his homework. I had warned him, but he never listened. Now that he failed, he was concerned. I told him that to get ahead he must be able to read, study, and apply himself. Then I said, "I purposely gave you a 60 to show you that you nearly passed. One day you'll thank me more for the 60 than if I gave you a 65. I hope this will wake you up to apply yourself." He smiled.

Why did I do this? It wasn't to punish him, but to help him realize that to become successful in life he had to work, study, and apply himself.

Excuses for Low Achievement

I've taught teens for years, and to investigate the schools for the book I was writing, I became a substitute teacher in 27 different schools in all the boroughs of New York City. This included lower East Side, South Bronx, Bedford Stuyvesant, and Harlem. Some schools were good, but many were truly "blackboard jungles."

I am a strong believer that all people are equal, and because of that belief I treat all races the same. If students don't do the required class work, whether black, brown, or white, I fail them. It really riles me when students claim I'm racially biased. One day a black student complained that the white race prevents the blacks from learning. I said, "Look around."

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I had put notes on the board to help students pass the midterm test. There were at least four failing black students who didn't bother to write down the notes. Besides, the one who did the complaining had failed my course last term.

When I have issues like this, I often confront the one complaining. I looked this student straight in the eye and slowly walked towards him while speaking to the class. I said that many of them wouldn't get a good job because they were too dumb. It didn't matter what the color of the boss was. At the end of the class this complaining student came to me and said I was a good teacher because I try to teach.

What's so sad is this complaining student had high self-esteem, but he was lazy. His excuse for ignorance wasn't his laziness, but the white race was trying to keep him down. Is there racial prejudice? Certainly. There will always be those who are racially biased. This is true for all races.

Look around. There are many people from different races who have succeeded in today's marketplace. I'll tell you why they succeeded. They didn't go around being lazy and blaming others for not being successful. They made the best of the situation they were in. They studied and applied themselves, and today many are high paid employees, entrepreneurs, presidents of large corporations, and in Congress.

One of the most destructive attitudes is to always blame others for your failures instead of looking at yourself and examining what you can do. It's like the time I went to the employment agencies in downtown Manhattan trying to find employment in a machine shop. No one would hire me. I couldn't use the race excuse, because the ones rejecting me

were the same race as I was. I wasn't rejected for my race; it was for my ignorance of the machining trade. What did I do? I went to night school and took machine shop classes.

Another destructive attitude is when you fail to do something to label yourself as a failure. If you put a walleyed pike into a fish tank with minnows, soon there'll be no minnows. The pike will eat all of them. Take this same fish tank and put a glass pane in it that separates the pike from the minnows. The pike seeing a minnow will launch an attack. He will hit the invisible glass and fail to get the minnow. He'll keep trying and finally learn the futility of his efforts to catch a minnow.

An interesting thing happens when the glass is pulled from the tank. The minnows can swim around the hungry pike, but he'll never again make any attempt to eat one. He has experienced so much failure, that he's convinced it's senseless to try again. He'll literally starve himself to death with minnows swimming all around him.

Elephants are the same. Elephants are powerful and can easily uproot large trees. However, when an elephant is a baby, the owners will tie one leg to a tree. The young elephant will keep trying to get free so it may roam. Finally the elephant realizes it's hopeless and gives up. It has permanently learned its lesson.

When the baby elephant is fully grown, it can be tied to a small tree which it could easily uproot, but it will make no attempt to do so. This powerful creature has limited its present capabilities because of its past failures. Many people are just

like the pike and the elephant. They encounter one failure after another. Now they're convinced they can never succeed. They will never try again. They have stamped on their minds, "I am a permanent failure."

Bitterness

There's another extremely destructive attitude that leads to failure. It's having a bitter attitude towards another race. I've taught in many diverse schools, and I've met many pleasant students of all races. Unfortunately, I've met many bitter ones who take great offense at proper authority. Some are so bitter that they're ready to fight with teachers or students over the slightest issue.

I was the substitute teacher in a minority junior high school in Brooklyn. I mispronounced a black girl's name while taking attendance. The girl became highly insulted and scolded me. I rebuked her for being so touchy.

In some schools, if a student of another race accidentally bumps into one of them, they're quick to fight. These bullies are filled with rage and dare anyone to challenge them as they strut around. In many schools they get away with this attitude because of the permissiveness in the schools.

Let me warn you. I'll be saying some very blunt and strong words in order for you to become successful. You can take it or leave it. For this book I reread many of my experiences when I was a substitute teacher in 27 different schools throughout New York City. I met *many* bitter and defiant students. I know when these defiant students enter the workforce, they'll have a rude awakening. The world of work is nothing like their

permissive school environment.

Let me introduce you to the real world of work. I'm going to speak to you as a business owner. I couldn't care less about the racial makeup of my workforce. For years I've hired people of different races. My primary interest is having intelligent employees who are hardworking and teachable. But bitter, defiant employees who carry a chip on their shoulder are people I don't want working for me. I don't care what race they are. If I detect that attitude when I interview them, you can rest assured they won't be hired by me or by thousands of other employers.

You may call us racists, and in your rage try to justify yourself and say we're holding you back because of your race. Nonsense! We're not racists trying to hold you back. We don't want bitter defiant employees like you working for us. That's not how you build successful companies. George Washington Carver said it well, "Ninety-nine percent of failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses."

4

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.”¹

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."²

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-

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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.³

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

leads to success? The article, “What it takes to be great,” in *Fortune* magazine stated:

How are certain people able to go on improving? The answers begin with consistent observations about great performers in many fields....The first major conclusion is that nobody is great without work. It’s nice to believe that if you find the field where you’re naturally gifted, you’ll be great from day one, but it doesn’t happen. There’s no evidence of high-level performance without experience or practice.... So greatness isn’t handed to anyone; it requires a lot of hard work.⁴

Alan Loy McGinnis in “Why some fast-trackers fizzle and...How ‘Average’ People Excel,” said they “Learn self-discipline.” The article states: “You don’t need talent to succeed,” insists Irwin C. Hansen, chief executive of Porter Memorial Hospital in Denver, who has gained a reputation for turning around under-performing hospitals. “All you need is a big pot of glue. You smear some on your chair and some on the seat of your pants, you sit down, and you stick with every project until you’ve done the best you can do.” Then McGinnis said, “Average achievers stay glued to their chairs and postpone pleasure so they can reap future dividends.”⁵

In the book, *The Millionaire Next Door*, Thomas Stanley and William Danko said in the introduction:

It is seldom luck or inheritance or advanced

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degrees or even intelligence that enables people to amass fortunes. Wealth is more often the result of a lifestyle of hard work, perseverance, planning, and, most of all, self-discipline.⁶

Work? It sends chills into those who are lazy. But if you want to become successful, you must be willing to work. When I was 16 years old, my friends and I chipped in and bought weights. My friend's father had a health food store, and we set up the weights in the basement. I ended up being the only one weight lifting. Why did I do this? As a teen I made a goal to be strong and healthy. Along with weight lifting, I also aimed to eat right.

Results? Over sixty years later I'm still healthy and doing exercises. I eat whole grain foods, lots of fruit and vegetables, and a balanced diet. At home I exercise five times a week. Twice a week I do chin-ups on a bar between my kitchen and garage (I regularly do 40 full chin-ups at one time), and dips at our kitchen corner countertop; three times a week I do push-ups, leg raises, and work out on a home gym; and five times a week I walk on a treadmill for 20 minutes. I take no pills and have no significant problems of aging.

Thomas J. Stanley in, *The Millionaire Mind*, discovered: "The majority of millionaires exercise regularly....Decamillionaires, those with net worth of \$10 million or more, have the highest incidence of regular exercise. About two-thirds exercise regularly."

It is rather interesting, the more money these millionaires earned, the more they tend to exercise. Do I look forward to

exercise? Not really. Exercise is WORK. On Saturdays and Sundays I don't exercise. It's a good feeling to get up on these two days and go straight to the table and eat breakfast instead of doing my morning exercise. The reason I exercise is the tremendous health benefits I receive. When I tell people my age, often they don't believe me. I usually take out my driver's license to prove my age.

Since I have no plan to retire, I know a mind functions much better with a healthy body than with a sick one. So unless there's an ailment in my body, I exercise. I don't go by my feelings. I'm extremely grateful for a healthy body and that as a teenager I decided to take care of my health. I'd hate to have the body that some teens will have when they get older because of their eating habits and destructive lifestyles.

"You're young only once," you may say, "so let's have fun." That's one of the dumbest statements you can make. Yes, you're only young once, but would you want to spend the last 20 to 30 years of your life in misery because of some stupid thing you did in your youth? Who says you can't have fun doing the right things? There are lots of fun things to do that don't destroy your life. It reminds me when I worked with a man who spent the weekends partying and drinking. On one occasion he was so miserable on Monday, that when lunchtime came, he lay on the floor and wished he were four hours older so he could go home. That's a fun lifestyle? Get drunk on the weekends and suffer the next day with a hangover.

If you owned a thoroughbred horse worth five million dollars, how would you take care of it? Would you keep it up late at night? Would you feed it junk food? If you're

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smart, you'd make sure it got a balanced diet, proper exercise and rest. No way would you want to jeopardize the horse's health. Your body is a thousand times more valuable than any thoroughbred horse. Remember, it's your body you'll have to live with while on earth. Be intelligent; take care of your body as you would a five-million-dollar thoroughbred horse.

Before I moved to Houston, Texas, I took a camping trip with my family to explore the possibility of moving there. On our way home we stopped to camp outside Dallas. While sitting on a bench, I swatted at a fly and wounded him. Many ants flocked on the fly. One of the first things they did was to clip the wings of the fly. Then one ant bit off the fly's head. Now this ant had a morsel of food for the colony. It raced furiously to go home with its treasure climbing over leaves and pine needles.

I was amazed at the frantic pace this unselfish ant kept to get the food to its home. And it probably didn't even get a bite of this food because it was for the hive. This example inspired me; for nothing deterred this ant. When this ant came close to its hive, I had the ant go on a piece of paper. I then released the ant on the opposite side of her hive. Would this stop this ant? Would it become confused and drop its morsel of food? No way! It traveled in a circle, found the trail, and headed straight for home.

Delayed Rewards

Delayed reward is the ability to sacrifice a temporary pleasure for a future good. How often we become discouraged

and give up when things become unpleasant. But the successful are those who are determined to work and to sacrifice the present for their future. There's toil in work, but after the toil we receive the fruits of our labor. It's the concept of delayed rewards we must be willing to accept to become successful. Permissiveness, with its constant pursuit of instant pleasure, hinders success.

No one becomes a master of a pursuit who doesn't forsake the pleasures of the moment for the rewards of the future. It's much more pleasant for athletes and musicians to forsake their practices than to spend hours every day training. The call of nature comes to everyone to pursue leisure rather than work, but only those who have learned to discipline themselves succeed. Basking in the sun is much more pleasant than practicing. But those who are diligent in their training become successful, while those basking only in the sun fail. There's a time to bask in the sun, and those who are successful have learned when.

Importance of Literacy and Math Skills

The American Management Association, the world's leading membership-based management development organization, in a report stated: "One-third of Job Applicants Flunked Basic Literacy and Math Tests." The association surveyed firms and over 40 percent of these firms "required basic skills tests of job applicants."⁷ If applicants failed the test, they weren't hired.

One of my businesses is in the machining trade. We require applicants to have math skills. One of the first things we give applicants is a math test, regardless of whether they have a

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high school diploma or not. It's amazing how many fail this basic math test. If they fail, it's an automatic rejection. I urge you if you're weak in literacy and math to get help. Your future career hinges on your literacy and math skills. Be willing to take remedial courses or go to night school. The best time to learn is when you're young and not tied down. Having basic literacy skills can dramatically affect your future.

Continual Education

You finally graduated, and now you're finished with schooling. I've got news for you. It's just the beginning. Why do they call graduation ceremonies, "commencement?" Commencement means beginning. When you graduate from school, you're beginning a new career. Wherever you go in your pursuit of a successful career, continuing education will be important. The American Management Association reports:

AMA offers a full range of business education and management development programs for individuals and organizations in the Americas, Asia, and Europe. More than 700,000 AMA customers and members a year, including 488 out of the Fortune 500 companies and many federal agencies, learn superior business skills and best management practices through a variety of seminars, conferences and executive forums, e-learning and self-study courses, books, research studies, and onsite and customized learning solutions.⁸

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I've attended five colleges and earned over 180 college credits, but I'm constantly reading books and magazines to keep abreast of what's going on in the world. As a businessman I must keep up with technology, otherwise my business will eventually fail. I read magazines and go to technology shows to learn about the latest developments. I also own an audio and video recording studio, and a publishing company. I've seen firsthand the many dramatic changes in these businesses. There's constant learning. Now we hear of fiber optics, virtual reality, hard drives, gigabytes, and terabytes. People cannot afford to stay in the past.

We switched from a leading software company to another one because we felt the company decided to rest and enjoy their success instead of perfecting its software. While they were resting, another company came along and quickly usurped their position. This meant we had to make many costly changes and also learn this new software. This happened again with our video software.

Then there's the ever changing world of the Web. There's an information explosion. One can do research on practically any subject and instantly get information. In operating a business, one must be familiar with how to take advantage of the Web. I've studied how Web search engines work so we can maximize that technology to draw customers to our companies. Henry Ford said, "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young."⁹

The Importance of Seeking Advice

Dale Carnegie, in *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, related this story of a failing salesman who would ask for criticism.

When he first started out selling soap for Colgate, orders came slowly. He worried about losing his job. Since he knew there was nothing wrong with the soap or the price, he figured that the trouble must be himself. When he failed to make a sale, he would often walk around the block trying to figure out what was wrong. Had he been too vague? Did he lack enthusiasm? Sometimes he would go back to the merchant and say: "I haven't come back here to try to sell you any soap. I have come back to get your advice and your criticism. Won't you please tell me what I did that was wrong when I tried to sell you soap a few minutes ago? You are far more experienced and successful than I am. Please give me your criticism. Be frank. Don't pull your punches."¹⁰

By doing this it won him a lot of friends and priceless advice. What happened? E. H. Little's constant desire for improvement led him to gain priceless advice. Results? He eventually became the president of the Colgate-Palmolive Soap Company. At that time it was the world's largest maker of soap. Out of the entire population of America, only fourteen people had a larger income than E. H. Little.

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One day, Harry Moser, president of Charmille EDM, one of the leading EDM manufacturers, came to visit our company. Out of the many EDM machines we owned, only two were from his company. After we introduced ourselves, he took out a pad and wrote down every objection we had about his machines. He was eager to learn how his machines compared to his competitors, even if it was bad news.

Tom Hopkins provides seminars to help sales personnel become successful. He is the author of *How to Master the Art of Selling*. He related an incident that happened in one of his seminars:

Even though I've seen it happen over and over, I'm still amazed when I go back to the same city and, time after time, see the same people sitting there in front busily taking notes. I had a little fun with this a few months ago at one of my seminars where about fifteen-hundred people were in the audience. A gentleman sitting in the front row looked familiar. I said to myself, "I'll bet he's been here five years in a row."

I talked to him from the stage and found out that I was right. So I asked him, "Did you bring all your people?"

He said, "Tom, I'm the top salesperson in my company, so you'd think what I say would carry some weight. I told everybody about this seminar and talked it up, but only a few of our people are here—and they're all strong salespeople. It's the same every year; the people who need it most never go."¹¹

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Notice what the top salesman said, “The people who need it most never go.” These unsuccessful salesmen may wonder why they’re not successful, but the problem is they refuse to take the necessary steps to learn. You’d think that if anyone didn’t need to go to this seminar about being a successful salesman, it would be the #1 salesman. But what do you find? He *always* attends the seminars! He’s an eager learner. Tom Hopkins, who has trained nearly a million salespeople in his national seminars, also points out:

This final characteristic of great sales people is also true of their companies. They all believe in *continuing education*. They study technique. They learn new skills. The company managements encourage their salespeople to go to seminars, to listen to cassettes, to watch videotapes, and to read books. You never have to push a Champion to invest in his mind. He or she knows that if you put better ideas into your brain, better performance will come out. Champions know that the place to start improving one’s environment is inside one’s own skull. Invest more time, money, and effort into your mind, and finer things will start gravitating to you. ¹²

Do *you* want to be a champion? Then be an eager learner. One of the secrets of success is to have listening ears. Everyone desires to be successful, but are you willing to put forth your best efforts? Are you open to advice? If you go to our website,

www.advancepublishing.com, you'll see that many of the children's books I've written and the read-alongs that I speak on have won numerous awards. Why? Is it because I'm so smart? No. I'm constantly seeking advice.

I send my books to editors, and I urge them to critique my books with a sharp pen. One of the individuals I use to critique my children's books is an adjunct professor and owner and director of a manuscript critique service. She authored 29 books and numerous articles. She has also taught at over 145 writers' conferences. I deeply value her comments.

Before this book will be published, I'll have various individuals critique it. This adjunct professor will be one of them. I often quote King Solomon: "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."¹³ I strongly desire correction and seek the advice of others. Through the years I've learned there are many people much smarter than I am. I've learned to pick their brains.

Parental Advice

I'm going to say something that many teens will hate to hear. I warned you in the beginning that I'll be blunt with you and make you squirm, so here it comes and I'm going to put it in bold print.

One of the best sources for teens to obtain wise counsel is from their parents.

"Not my parents!" you may object. "What do they know about me? They're too old."

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Wait just a minute. We parents were once exactly your age. We also were teenagers. Do you think we've forgotten how it was to be a teenager? We remember lots of things. But along the way we learned many important lessons that we want to share with our children.

The way some teens want to live would destroy their lives. They want to stay up late at night, but don't want to get out of bed in the morning to go to school. So what do many parents do? They set a time to go to bed.

Many teens object. "If my parents love me, they would want to make me happy. They would let me decide when I should go to bed."

Many of these parents will say, "We love you so much that we're willing to incur your wrath. We know that getting proper rest is critical for your health and future success, so we will enforce a bedtime."

Loving parents are not only concerned about your wants, but also your needs. Teens make a big mistake and think when parents give rules they dislike, their parents are being mean and unfair. Some advocate, "Let the kids go through the school of hard knocks and learn from their own mistakes. Parents shouldn't be always protecting them."

There's some truth to allow kids to suffer for their mistakes, but there are some mistakes that sensible, loving parents will do everything possible to protect their kids from. Why? Some mistakes are irreversible—they will live with children the rest of their lives and may cause them untold suffering and even death.

Listen to Stephen Reynolds as he tells his story in *Reader's*

Digest. “I was in my 40s, with a young son, and my wife and I were building a life around him. That’s when something from my past threatened to take it all away.”

The past threatening his future was from his previous sexual encounters. Reynolds had a graduate degree and was a business strategist in the technology industry. He had never smoked, yet he was diagnosed with lung cancer. Reynolds reports:

Maura Gillison, a researcher and professor at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, was among the first to study the link between the growth of head and neck cancers among younger nonsmokers and certain types of the sexually transmitted human papillomavirus (HPV). It’s the same virus that causes the majority of cervical cancers and warts. The risks are scary because the virus is really common, even in teenagers...Of the more than 35,000 people who will be diagnosed with oral cancer this year, 25 percent of us will connect our diagnosis to HPV infection.

Reynolds describes his painful experiences dealing with the operation to remove the cancer and his chemo treatments. They provide a feeding tube to help him in eating. “They tell me that I can put a Big Mac in a blender,” he says, “grind it up with protein shakes, and pour it all into the tube.”

He struggles not to use the feeding tube, and his treatments leave him so frail. He longs to play with his son, but there are times, “I just don’t have it and fall asleep in the middle of

giving him a horsey ride,” he says. “My poor wife. My poor son. All I have the energy to do is lie still and try not to bother them.”

Reynolds asks, “So what is the virus that causes cervical cancer doing in my throat, creating a tumor on my tongue, leaching into my lymph nodes, threatening my larynx and my life? According to Dr. Gillison and others, the answer goes back to the late 1970s, when the medical community began to notice the spread of HPV. ‘It is linked to a change in sexual habits,’ she says simply. “Between the Pill in 1960 and AIDS in 1984, more people had more sex and more *kinds* of sex.”¹⁴

In a side note on “HPV and You,” *Readers Digest* brings out these facts: “Most people with HPV infections don’t have any symptoms. At least half of sexually active men and women may become infected in their lifetime. About 23 percent of women ages 14 to 65 have high-risk HPV, including 35 percent of 14- to 19-year-old girls....

“While most infections clear up on their own without patients ever knowing they were exposed, the consequences can still be severe. For instance, one type of HPV raises the risk of oral cancer by 3,200 percent.

“The virus spreads through any form of sexual activity, and condoms can’t fully protect against it. Having more than five oral sex partners boosts the risk of HPV-linked oral cancer by 340 percent.”¹⁵

With facts like these, is it any wonder that parents strongly urge their children to abstain from sex until marriage. You may laugh at your parents and call them “old fashioned,” but you won’t be laughing at them if you like Reynolds suffer 25 years

later from a devastating disease linked from your premarital sex.

Here's a bit of advice that will revolutionize your life. It was given by Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Motor Company. "If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from his angle as well as from your own."¹⁶

Read that statement of Ford over and over until it sinks deep into your brain. Put yourself into the other person's shoes and think like that person. Teens, I challenge you; put yourself into your parents' shoes. Are your parents really mean because of all their rules, or are they really making these rules for your benefit? Can you humble yourself and be mature enough to see things from your parents' point of view?

I speak as a parent and one who has taught and observed teens for many years. I'm going to say something so important for teen success that I'm putting this in bold print:

You'll avoid many problems in life if you learn to trust and listen to your parents.

Unfortunately, many teens are cocky and take pride in their backtalk. They also get this attitude from teenage shows. They sass their parents, walk around the home with a bitter attitude, and complain when their parents want them to do something. If they're asked to put out the trash, do the dishes, or any household chores, they object. They refuse any correction. They're Mr. and Ms. Know-It-All. Their parents' hearts are broken over their defiance. But they couldn't care less.

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Let me warn you teens—you'll pay for your defiance. Some of you will never learn, and you'll suffer your entire life for your bitter and defiant attitude.

No, we're not perfect as parents, but we've learned much. We love our kids and want the best for them. We could be permissive and let you do whatever you want, but we know it will destroy your life. So we're willing for you to be angry with us. We'll lay down restrictions you hate. But one day when you're older, you'll look back and thank us for refusing to listen to you.

You should see the many cards I repeatedly get from some of my married children telling how much they appreciate the training they received. Did I get these cards when they were teenagers? Never. But now that they're grown and have children of their own, they look back and are extremely thankful for the training I provided them. Here are two Father's Day comments from two of my sons who work for me: "Thanks For Being A Wonderful Dad, A Good Boss, And A Great Man. We Love You Very, Very Much." The other comment, "Thanks for all you have done for me & my family. You are the best Dad any son could have."

I was drafted into the Marine Corp during the Korean War. When it came time for me to be going home, I wanted to do something to show appreciation for my mother. I decided to paint every room in our house instead of immediately going back to my previous job. We lived in Ridgewood, Queens, in a six-story railroad flat, all the rooms were lined up like boxcars, that had a front room, two bedrooms, living room, kitchen,

and a bathroom. These were old houses, and they had layers of paint on the ceiling that would chip off. Some of the ceilings had to be plastered. It took me about a week to paint every room.

What can you do to make your Dad and Mom glad? Shock them. Volunteer to do something around the house without being told. Weed the garden, mow the lawn, clean the kitchen floor, empty the dishwasher, vacuum the house, clean the car both inside and outside, clean the windows, clean your room....

“What?” you may ask in astonishment. “Are you out of your mind? If I’d clean my room, my mom would have a heart attack!”

Your mom has been hounding you to clean up your room, but you have stubbornly refused. Why not try to make your mom happy? Do a role reversal and visualize yourself as a parent. How would you want your child to be? Now put your thoughts into action.

One of the critical attributes for becoming successful is to have empathy, the ability to feel for others. Those with empathy realize their world doesn’t just revolve around their axis, they have a compassionate concern for others. Your parents brought you into the world and take care of you, it’s only right you show appreciation.

Coach Paul William “Bear” Bryant won the most games in the history of big-time college football. According to the Paul W. Bryant Museum, he was “national coach of the year three times, SEC coach of the year eight times, coached six national championship teams and on November 28, 1981, he became

the winningest coach in the history of college football. Bryant retired from coaching with an astonishing 323 victories.”¹⁷

Thomas J. Stanley, in *The Millionaire Mind*, told about a senior sales executive, called Hugh, who had played for Coach Paul “Bear” Bryant at Alabama. Stanley wanted to find out why this coach was successful. Knowing it would take a long time, he decided to take another approach. This is what Stanley said:

I wanted to ask why Coach Bryant was so successful, but thought it might take hours for this former football player to respond. So I asked Hugh a different question: “What was the first thing Coach Bryant said to you and the other scholarship athletes after you arrived on campus?”

Surprisingly, Coach Bryant asked the group:

Have you called your folks yet to thank them?

According to Hugh, after hearing those words the players looked confused—most had their mouths open. They looked at one another with disbelief. Apparently not one of them had anticipated this question.

These freshman athletes had been on campus less than twenty-four hours, but they already had their first lesson in team productivity. I understand that no one in the room that day acknowledged having called home with words of thanks. What was the essence of this lesson?

Hugh said that Coach Bryant followed up his initial question with a second statement:

No one ever got to this level without the help of others. Call your folks. Thank them.

In other words, the coach had news for these gifted freshmen. Extraordinary natural athletic talent does not fully account for success in football. Without their folks nurturing, protecting, and sacrificing for them, they would not have had the opportunity to play football at Alabama.

Hugh told me that he never forgot this initial experience. It served him and his teammates well during four very successful years playing football. He also gives much credit to this and related lessons from the coach for his success and achievements in business.

It's rare that anyone becomes successful without the assistance of others. A group of individuals, no matter how gifted, is not a team at all. How many running backs became All-Americans without their linemen opening up opportunities? Zero. Becoming wealthy in America is very similar. I have never met one affluent person who takes complete credit for his economic success. Most will give credit to their spouse, key employees, mentors, and others. No man or woman is an island, whether the context is sports, business, or building wealth—nobody gets to the

highest peaks without the help of others.¹⁸

In other cultures, the elderly are held in high respect for their wisdom; unfortunately, not in our culture. But think for a moment how much knowledge the elderly have gained through their years of living, and you as a teenager are just starting out. Be wise, tap into their knowledge. Go to your parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and the elderly. Ask them questions. You'd be surprised at the wisdom you can gain if you listen with open ears. Don't hesitate to speak to them, for you'll find they'll be thrilled to have a teenager seeking their counsel. The older I get the more I realize that in a multitude of counselors there is safety and wisdom. I'm constantly seeking advice from others. You can observe it in this book I've written. I'm constantly quoting experts. I urge you to fall in love with wisdom; you'll never be disappointed.

Andrew Carnegie came to America from Scotland and built a steel empire. How did he get to build such a great empire? You can get a glimpse into his thinking from the saying he wanted to be engraved on his tombstone: "Here lies a man, who enlisted in his service better men than himself."¹⁹

What did Carnegie do? He searched for intelligent men and used their knowledge to build his empire. He had used one of the fundamental keys to success—always seek advice. Why do so many teens get into trouble? They refuse to listen to advice.

For my *Number Success* math program I filmed my grandson Andy playing basketball to show how math is used in the real world. That night we invited his family over for

dinner. His father wanted to see the video, and while they were watching it, I called Andy into my study and said, “If you really want to be good at playing basketball, ask your dad how you can play better.”

Andy immediately went to his dad and asked how he could play better basketball. The next time he played, his team beat an undefeated team 22 to 19, and Andy made 16 of the 22 points! Andy listened to me and sought his father’s advice.

Many teens are proud and stubborn and refuse to listen to advice. They hate to be corrected. Reasoning with them has the same effect as wind against granite. It’s one of the most destructive attitudes teens can have. Many teens will suffer, even when they’re older and married because of their bitter and defiant attitude towards wise counsel. I’ve seen it. How one would love to help, but these defiant and unteachable individuals have built an iron gate around their minds.

Parents want their kids to receive a good education and graduate from high school. They want them either to learn a trade or go to college. Why? They know what’s best for their kids. Remember, there’s no one who loves and cares for you more than your parents. Don’t be a fool, be wise. Listen and follow your parents’ advice. If you really want to be super wise, take the initiative and go to your parents and ask how you can improve yourself. Tell them, “Dad, Mom, don’t pull any punches. I want to hear the truth.”

Choosing and Preparing for the Right Career

In 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,

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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

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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?

Choosing Between Agriculture, Industry, or Service Employment

Due to globalization and automation, many jobs today have shifted from agriculture to service. However, it needs to be emphasized that there are many high-paying jobs in industry that don't require a college degree: well trained electricians, plumbers, air conditioning and heating mechanics, auto mechanics, computer repair technicians, machinists, mold makers, tool and die makers, and many others. These specialties offer satisfying careers and well-paying jobs in today's economy. Some with these trade skills will earn more than those with college degrees.

To enter these fields some only require one or two years of schooling. In addition, many companies offer on-the-job training. However, to get top positions, education is often required. Some trades as electricians and plumbers require a license where individuals must pass a test in order to become qualified.

There are many choices in the service field: doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses, dentists, psychiatrists, veterinarians, ministers, police officers, journalists, insurance agents, government workers, and many others. Find out the educational requirements for the occupation you choose. The key is to find where your natural gifts make you the best candidate and provide you with a satisfying and successful career.

Occupational Outlook Handbook from U.S. Department of Labor

The U.S. government publishes an excellent sourcebook

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for hundreds of different types of jobs. The information is free at www.bls.gov/oco/. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* tells you:

- The training and education needed
- Earnings
- Expected job prospects
- What workers do on the job
- Working conditions¹

The Occupational Outlook Handbook provides job search tips and links to information about the job market in each state. It is a nationally recognized source for career information. Every two years the handbook is revised.

Exploring Career Information from Bureau of Labor Statistics

Another excellent source to obtain information about what career to choose is available free from the Bureau of Labor Statistics: www.bls.bof/k12/. It also provides a teacher's guide and A-Z list of careers. The caption on the website says: "What Do You Like?" Then it lists:

- Math
- Reading
- Science
- Social Studies
- Music & Arts
- Building & Fixing Things

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- Helping People
- Computers
- Law
- Managing Money
- Sports
- Nature²

One of the advantages of figuring out in high school what kind of career you'd like to enter is you may choose extracurricular activities that relate to your career. This will help you learn and develop your skills in your chosen field. Proactive career planning can also save you money when you go to college. You won't be taking unnecessary courses, or need to take an additional year of college to graduate and lose that year of earning income.

Also you may explore the possibility of finding employment in that field during summer recess. It would be an entry-level position, but it would provide you an excellent opportunity to develop skills and to learn about your choice of occupation. This would also provide you with credentials and a better chance to be admitted to the college of your choice.

Wrong Choices

I'll be straight with you. If you make a wrong choice, you'll probably suffer for it. A wrong choice is not a wrong thing to do, and it's not the end of the world, but it can cause much misery and cost lots of money. Someone I know earned

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a degree in hotel and restaurant management. That's a good job, but one needs to realize the busiest time as a manager of a restaurant are in the evenings and on Saturdays and Sundays. The slow times are when the children are in school.

If you'd like to raise a family and be at home to play with your children, being a restaurant manager isn't an ideal job. He worked in it for a few years and then quit to work for his dad who owned a machine shop. He's now the manager of the machine shop. Think of the money and time spent in college studying restaurant management? How much wiser it would have been if the son had studied engineering. This would have greatly benefited his career.

When you make a career choice, be wise and investigate your career choice thoroughly. Try to visit and interview those working in that field. People often are glad to speak to you. Don't hesitate to ask questions. Careful and intelligent planning can result in a fruitful and satisfying career.

Hasty Decisions

Get-rich-quick schemes are abundant. Some experts claim by reading their literature and practicing their principles you'll discover the path to financial success. However, you must first purchase their materials to gain their secrets. You'll probably discover that the road to quick riches is littered with the pockets of the experts filled with cash, but the pockets of those paying for their secrets empty.

When I was a boy, my friend challenged me, "I'll stand across the street, and I'll put you on the ground in ten seconds."

Since I was a street kid, there was no way he was going to put me on the ground in ten seconds. So I said, “I dare ya!”

I bet him a dime that he wouldn’t put me down on the ground in ten seconds if I were across the street from him. Back in the early 40s, a dime represented a lot of money. We could buy two ice cream cones, the subway was a nickel, and a large soft pretzel cost one cent.

That wise guy took a piece of chalk and wrote the letter “U” on the sidewalk! The result? I had to pay him a dime. That incident left an indelible lesson on my mind to this day, worth much more than the dime I lost. Give sufficient thought before making decisions. Don’t be gullible. Think before you act.

Finding a Job During School and Summer

There are many jobs available for teens after school and during the summer. There are stores, restaurants, parks, swimming pools, golf courses, day and summer camps, youth programs, concession firms, health care facilities, and more. Another point to remember: Not every business that is looking for an employee has a sign out.

When I was 16 years old, I wanted to find a job after school. I decided to look locally. I didn’t find any employment signs looking for help. Since I lived close to Myrtle Avenue, a major street lined with stores, I stopped at various stores asking if they had a job opening after school. I finally found employment in a luggage store.

Debt

When you earn money, learn to save and don’t go into debt. And whatever you do, don’t get a credit card and use it and

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go into debt. Accumulating debt can put a severe handicap on your future success. It's like hanging a ball and chain around your neck.

You may object, "I get great pleasure if I buy the item now. Why should I deprive myself if I can get a loan?"

That mindset can have devastating results for your future. Yes, you may buy that item now; but don't forget, you'll have to eventually pay for it with financial charges. One of the major teen problems concerning money, and also many adults, is they don't understand interest rates. Credit card companies entice new card owners with a low introductory percentage rate. The new owner doesn't realize that after six months the rate jumps to 18% and higher, especially if you're late making payments.

An 18% APR (annual percentage rate) means that you'll be paying \$.18 cents a year for every dollar you owe the credit card company. Banks are very eager for you to have credit cards so they can earn interest. Paying eighteen cents on a dollar may not seem like a lot of money, but for every \$1,000 dollars in debt, you'll be paying \$180 dollars a year!

Take someone who has accumulated \$10,000 in credit card debt, and the APR charge is 18%. If that person doesn't pay off the debt, he will be paying \$1,800 each year to the credit card company. Keeping that debt for 10 years, he would pay \$18,000. If he has \$20,000 in debt, the cost for ten years would be \$36,000. AND, he still hasn't paid off the debt! The \$36,000 is just the credit card finance charges.

Think! Be disciplined! Don't be foolish to waste your money that way. Put your money in a bank and let the bank

pay you interest rather than going into debt and paying the bank interest. A good goal is to save at least 10% of every paycheck.

U.S. News & World Report in “Learning the Tricks of Managing Money,” gives this example:

For Genette Brooks, 30, the ease with which she could take out credit cards as a college student eventually put her \$20,000 in debt. “I didn’t know what I was getting into,” says Brooks, who graduated with a degree in human resources management and lives in Buffalo. A big reason for the debt, she says, was that no one had ever taught her how credit cards work or how to use them. She says she didn’t realize that a zero percent introductory rate could later balloon to 30 percent or that making only the minimum payments can lead to a rapid pileup of debt.³

David Brooks, a columnist for the *New York Times*, in “Let’s stigmatize debt culture the way we do smoking,” stated, “Credit card companies have played a role. Instead of targeting the financially astute, who pay off their debts, they’ve found that they can make money off the young and vulnerable. Fifty-six percent of students in their final year of college carry four or more credit cards.” Brooks also pointed out:

The people who created this country built a moral structure around money. The Puritan legacy inhibited luxury and self-indulgence. Benjamin

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Franklin spread a practical gospel that emphasized hard work, temperance and frugality. Millions of parents, preachers, newspaper editors and teachers expounded the message. The result was quite remarkable.

The United States has been an affluent nation since its founding. But the country was, by and large, not corrupted by wealth. For centuries, it remained industrious, ambitious and frugal.

Over the past 30 years, much of that has been shredded. The social norms and institutions that encouraged frugality and spending what you earn have been undermined. The institutions that encourage debt and living for the moment have been strengthened....

The deterioration of financial mores has meant two things. First, it's meant an explosion of debt that inhibits social mobility and ruins lives....Second, the transformation has led to a stark financial polarization. On the one hand, there is what the report calls the investor class. It has tax-deferred savings plans, as well as an army of financial advisers. On the other hand, there is the lottery class, people with little access to 401(k)'s or financial planning but plenty of access to pay-day lenders, credit cards and lottery agents.... The agents of destruction are many. State governments have played a role. They aggressively hawk their lottery products, which some people call a tax on stupidity.⁴

Brooks speaks about the "investor class," those who have

money, and the poor “lottery class,” those who have access to “payday lenders, credit cards and lottery agents.” Which will you belong to—those who have money or to the poor “lottery class?”

Avoid Debt Like a Plague

I cannot stress this enough, if you want a bright future, avoid debt like a plague. I’m not against credit cards. They are handy because you don’t have to have cash on hand to purchase products. But my wife and I ALWAYS pay off our credit card balances every month. We’d be foolish to pay those high fees and interest rates.

Brooks also pointed out, “The social norms and institutions that encouraged frugality and spending what you earn have been undermined. The institutions that encourage debt and living for the moment have been strengthened.”⁵ We get bombarded to spend, spend, and spend. Frugality is frowned upon in today’s culture. Be wise. Don’t allow yourself to be sucked into the whirlwind of debt.

Obviously, you want to be able to live a comfortable life and not live hand to mouth. If you want to live this way, learn to save and purchase from strength. “But my friends aren’t living that way,” you may say. “They buy all sorts of nice things on credit and plan to pay for them later.”

Take for example a car, which is usually the most expensive item teens will buy. Many teens want an expensive car to impress others. But trying to impress others is a foolish way to live. Be intelligent and buy a used car with low mileage. Let me give you a tip. I’ve taught automotive for many years and bought numerous used cars both for myself and my children.

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A ten-year-old used car with 80,000 miles is nearly as good as a two-year-old car with the same mileage. If you buy the ten-year-old used car, you'll save thousands of dollars. Let the others show off their newer cars and go into debt. One day they'll pay dearly for their foolish decision. Don't fall into the debt trap.

For writing this book, I visited a buy/lease furniture store. I was shocked at what I saw. I could buy a sofa for \$432.95, or lease it for 24 months and pay \$46.96 a month. When I did the math, I asked myself, "Don't people think?" In making just 10 payments, a person leasing this sofa will have paid \$469.60. Then this person would still need to make 14 more payments! The total cost for this sofa in making 24 payments would be \$1,127.04. That's over 2½ times as much as if they had paid cash!

If the person doesn't have \$432.95 to buy the sofa, he should wait ten months and save each month \$46.96. After waiting just ten months, he could buy the sofa for cash and save \$657.44. But what do many people do, they must have the sofa today! How foolish.

Gambling

Another way to waste money is by gambling and playing the lottery. Many lotteries are sponsored by the state, and as David Brooks says, "State governments have played a role. They aggressively hawk their lottery products, which some people call a tax on stupidity."⁶

Why are lottery products called "a tax on stupidity"? It's called that because many people don't understand the law of averages. Payoffs for lottery tickets are about 55% to 65% of

the cost of the ticket. Remember, those selling the tickets must get paid, the state commission selling the tickets needs to get paid, and the state issuing the lottery tickets wants to earn about 30%. So for every dollar you spend for a ticket, according to the law of averages you lose \$.35 to \$.45. If you're lucky and win, then the U.S. Treasury comes in and taxes the amount of your winning. Think! Don't be stupid! Put your money in the bank and earn interest. Then you'll always be a sure winner.

Key Money Lessons

Here are some key money lessons:

- 1. Set Realistic Financial Goals.** Do you really need a car? If you do, what can you do to purchase a car without going into debt? Learn to distinguish between your needs and wants. Needs are something you must have, wants are something you'd like to have but you can live without.
- 2. Make a Budget.** What is a budget? A budget means to first THINK and PLAN how to spend your money. This is true also for allowances. Don't spend your money because you have it. Allocate the money you receive or earn. Set aside a predetermined amount of money for weekly expenses. Learn to set aside money for future needs. Also allow money for fun times.
- 3. Save.** Try to put away at least 10 percent of the money you earn. By all means don't be foolish and use credit card debt so you can save. If you're

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planning on going to college, try to save more than 10 percent. Dine out only for special occasions. Be creative in how to save money. Instead of using a car, consider riding a bike, using public transportation, or carpooling. Bring lunches and snacks from home. Buy used textbooks. Try to find employment, and work during the summer when you're not in school.

- 4. Be a Wise Shopper.** Don't be an impulse shopper; be a comparison shopper and look for bargains. Use the Internet to compare prices. When using the Internet, remember to include shipping charges and buy only from reputable dealers. Wait for sales. Learn to use coupons and mail-in rebates. If you're going to college, can you take classes at your local college and live at home?
- 5. Create an Emergency Fund.** An emergency fund will help you pay for unplanned expenses with cash instead of going into debt. Try to create this fund above your savings. Don't be like those who if they have money, they spend it. They aren't disciplined to save for a time of need.
- 6. Going to College.** Since attending college is expensive, you should examine ways to lower its costs. Try to take college-level classes in high school that the college you plan to attend will accept. Investigate if there are any tax credits offered by the federal government. Check if you may obtain

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a scholarship or grant. Some organizations offer tuition money and loans for service. Go to a local college and live at home, and then transfer to your college of choice for your major.

- 7. Manage Debt.** If for some reason you're in debt, what can you do to totally eliminate your debt? Look carefully at the debt charges. Compare interest rates and fees and look for ways to have them reduced. If you don't understand interest rates, seek help.
- 8. Learn to Share.** Help others who are in need. Don't just pursue a selfish lifestyle. Life is more than just making money.

Key Shopping Tips

Here are some key shopping tips:

- Do I really need the item?
- Is there a better time for me to buy?
- Will this item go on sale?
- Is the sale price really the lowest price?
- Can a less costly item be bought?
- Is it a reliable place to buy the item?
- Is there a cheaper place to buy the item?

You may get an allowance or a paycheck, but at the end of the week, you may say, "I don't know where my money goes, I'm always broke."

You're puzzled where all your money goes. Do a financial

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study. Take a 3” x 5” index card and write down every expense for the whole week, even if it cost a dime. Do this for one week. Then make a list of where you spend your money. Now take the painful steps and examine your expenses carefully with the “Key Shopping Tips.” You may be amazed on how you’re spending your money unwisely. Keep examining your spending habits until you become disciplined with your money.

In the book, *The Millionaire Next Door*,” Thomas Stanley and William Danko said there were three words that profile the rich, “FRUGAL FRUGAL FRUGAL.”⁷ In other words, those who became millionaires are very careful to save their money; they aren’t wasteful. You’ll be smart too if you learn how to manage money and pay cash instead of going into debt. Here’s the fundamental rule for debt-free living:

If You Don’t Have the Money—Don’t Buy It!

How simple a solution, but how difficult to practice in today’s permissive culture. Those who aim to have a successful future will eagerly embrace this simple prescription for debt-free living. Remember: you need money to go to college, for food, clothes, shelter, and many other necessities for living. Look around and notice those who live a restrictive lifestyle because they unwisely went into debt in their youth. Some will carry this heavy financial burden for years. You need to be aware that once you’re married and have children, it’s much more difficult to erase the debt burden. So be wise and disciplined and avoid debt. You’ll never regret it.

Dating and Marriage

One of the biggest issues that can affect your entire future is the person you'll date and one day marry. Choose the wrong person, and you can live a life of misery. Today many marriages end up in divorce. But unseen are the battles, tears, anger, and sleepless nights before the divorce. What was hoped to be a blissful future has turned into a dreaded nightmare. Some of these divorces involve children, which makes the matter even worse.

What's the solution? Choose your mate wisely. Just don't go by looks. There are handsome men and beautiful women who would make your life miserable. There are men who know how to tickle the hearts of women, but all they're interested in is fulfilling their selfish sexual lusts. They'll propose to live with you to find out if both of you are suitable for marriage. Some men's sole aim is to use you as a free maid and prostitute. For those who do end up in marriage, statistics show that those who live together before marriage have a higher divorce rate.

The secret to a happy marriage is to date someone who practices Golden Rule thinking: he or she is concerned with helping others. Check to see if this person is selfish or unselfish. If you are a woman, imagine having an unselfish husband whose great desire is to always make you happy. If you are a man, imagine having an unselfish wife whose great desire is to always make you happy. That would be utopia.

A good test to find out if the man you're dating is caring and practices Golden Rule thinking is to see how he treats his parents. The way he treats his parents is the same way he'll

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treat you. The same holds true for the girl you're dating. "But I have goose bumps running up and down my spine with the one I'm dating," you may say. "I'm deeply in love. I don't need to examine my lover."

Stop! There are many who had these goose bumps and today are living miserable lives. "Yes, I know this. But I know my lover has some flaws, but I'm certain we can iron these out when we're married."

That's what you think. If he's selfish and unkind to his parents, you can be assured he'll treat you the same. The same goes for the girl. Don't expect that your love and charm will change someone. If you want to learn more about this important topic, read my book, *Sex: If You're Scared of the Truth, Don't Read This!* It's well documented with fascinating stories. If you want a happy future, this book is a must read. Here's a story that I included from the book:

An interesting incident happened to my wife and me. Our publishing company had a booth at the American Library Association in Washington, D.C. Since our hotel was near a park close to the White House, we decided to rest awhile by sitting on a bench under a flowering crepe myrtle. I had my arm around my wife, and we were holding hands. Two women came by. Seeing us being affectionate with each other, one of the women asked with tears in her eyes, "How long have you been married?"

"We've been married 52 years," I replied.

We talked awhile, and this woman told us that she

hoped she would have a marriage like ours. Her ten-year marriage was filled with difficulties.

Here we were, an old couple just simply in an unobtrusive way showing our affection for one another. Everyone longs to be loved; it's universal. My love for my wife is not a put on. We kiss each other when we get up in the morning, when one of us leaves the home, when we return, and when we go to bed. I often tell my wife I love her. Now don't laugh, but I still call my wife sweetie, honey, sweetheart, and babe. My goal in life is to make my wife happy. That's her goal, too, to make me happy. We're not perfect, but the ideal marriage is when both husband and wife constantly aim to make each other happy.

It's a paradox, you aim only to make yourself happy; you'll be miserable. Aim to make others happy; you'll find fulfillment and joy. Try it; you'll discover it works.

Often I introduce my wife as "my sweetheart." When I mention how long we're married, the response I often get is, "Don't hear of marriages lasting that long anymore."⁸

The Resume and the Interview

You 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

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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

your resume distinct.

When looking for a job, spend time researching the company. Most companies have Web sites. Show interest by spending time looking over their Web site. If you're just interested in a low-paying job, you won't have to do this. But if you're interested in a job with great potential, then think and ask yourself, "What can I do to demonstrate it would be beneficial for this company to hire me?"

Inferiority Complex

One of the most damaging attitudes to have in seeking employment is an inferiority complex: feeling lower in value than others. Many people are plagued with this attitude. But why should they when we're all created equal?

For years you may have felt inferior and unworthy. Someone may have put you down and made fun of the way you look: your nose, hair, eyes, ears, glasses, or whatever. Stop! Don't be a dummy and go around defeated because of someone's opinion. Some things you can change. If you're overweight—be disciplined and go on a diet. If you're failing in school—take corrective action to help you succeed. But some things you can't change. You can't change the color of your skin or your nationality. You can't change the shape of your nose, ears, or eyes. I know some use plastic surgery to alter their bodies, but I think many would be a lot wiser to put their money in a bank and learn to accept themselves the way they were born.

Healthy Self-Esteem

Think positively. Lift up your chin and look straight ahead. Never be ashamed of the way you were born. Remember, change what you can change; accept what you cannot change. A healthy self-esteem is critical to success.

“I was constantly tormented by worries and fears and self-consciousness,” said Elmer Thomas, a former senator from Oklahoma. “I was extremely tall for my age and as thin as a fence rail. I stood six feet two inches and weighed only 118 pounds.”

The kids poked fun at him and called him “hatchet-face.” In recalling what happened, Thomas said, “Every day and every hour of the day, I brooded over my tall, gaunt, weak body. I could hardly think of anything else.”

His mother advised him, “Son, you ought to get an education, you ought to make your living with your mind because your body will always be a handicap.” Thomas went to college, but he still had that inferiority complex. Then something happened that turned his life around. His mother urged him to enter a speaking contest at a fair. “I didn’t have the courage to talk even to one person—let alone a crowd,” Thomas said. “But my mother’s faith...inspired me to enter the contest.”

He memorized the speech and rehearsed it a hundred times. He won first prize! He was astounded. Those boys who had ridiculed and poked fun at him said, “I knew you could do it, Elmer.”

His mother hugged him and cried. Then he said, “As I look

back in retrospect, I can see that winning that speaking contest was the turning point of my life.”

Thomas continued his education and worked. In order to pay for his educational expenses, he said, “I waited on tables, looked after furnaces, mowed lawns, kept books, worked in the wheat and cornfields during the summer, and hauled gravel on a public road construction job.”

No longer did he fear making speeches. The excitement he received from speaking made him desire to enter politics. He studied law and public speaking. He became editor-in-chief of the college annual, and the university paper. He opened a law firm, then for 13 years served in the Oklahoma senate, became a representative from Oklahoma, and then his “lifelong ambition,” became a United States senator from Oklahoma.

“I have told this story,” Thomas remarked, “not to brag about my own fleeting accomplishments, which can’t possibly interest anyone else. I have told it wholly with the hope that it may give renewed courage and confidence to some poor boy who is now suffering from the worries and shyness and feeling of inferiority that devastated my life.”¹

Endeavor to develop a healthy self-esteem. I purposely chose the word, “healthy” self-esteem. There are those who have a proud self-esteem. They think they’re better than everyone else. They’re arrogant and egotistical; they stubbornly refuse to listen to advice. They are the fount of all wisdom. That’s destructive self-esteem.

A healthy self-esteem is to accept, without reservation, the way you were created. You’re not devastated by criticism. You’re not over confident. You’re not only willing to take

advice, you earnestly seek advice. You're able to laugh at yourself. You're not intimidated by others. You accept responsibility for your actions. You're willing to take risks. You're willing to stand up for your convictions. You have a sense of purpose. If you have a healthy self-esteem, you won't be intimidated when you have to go for an interview. The first thing you'll probably do is give a handshake.

The Handshake

The way a person shakes a hand sends subtle messages. Just think of someone shaking your hand and it feels like you're shaking a dead fish tail, or someone who vigorously pumps your hand. What kind of messages do they reveal about the individual?

The *Houston Chronicle*, in "Handshake all-important," states, "A handshake done well exudes confidence. Done badly—which includes looking over the shaker's shoulder or down at the ground—it makes someone look clueless, uncomfortable, and out of place." The report went on to say:

One day Helene Cavanaugh discovered how much a poorly performed handshake can hurt a job candidate.

Cavanaugh was working as a recruiter for a staffing agency and she couldn't understand why her candidates weren't getting offers. They had the skills. They had the education. They tested well.

Yet the clients made vague references to not having a "good feeling" but couldn't explain why. Cavanaugh did some investigating and found that her

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candidates' handshakes were giving off vibes of either submissiveness or aggressiveness, strong yet subtle impressions that clouded the rest of the interviews.

The best way to shake a hand is to hold yours out so it's perpendicular to the floor—sort of like a knife slicing straight through the air, said Cavanaugh, who is now executive director of Texas Association of Personnel Consultants and the Houston Area Association of Personnel Consultants.

“It gives the subtle message you are equals,” she said. “It also says: ‘I’m confident, I’m strong, but I’m not overbearing.’”²

Your handshake often reveals your character. When you go for a job interview, look the person in the eye and give a firm handshake. But before you go for the interview, practice shaking hands so you'll be comfortable doing it the right way.

The Interview

The way you act in an interview is critical for your success in getting the job. I've interviewed many individuals for employment, both skilled and unskilled. One of the first things I look for is if the person is energetic. Sometimes within the first few seconds, the individual is rejected. Here's an example:

The secretary where I was operations manager gave the prospective employee an application to fill out. When the form was completed, she called me to the office to interview the applicant. When I saw the applicant in the office, I called him

to come. This young applicant got up so slowly that he acted like a crippled 80-year-old man. Within one second of seeing him getting out of his seat, I had already rejected him. Why? If he's that sluggish just to get out of a chair, I could just imagine the amount of energy he would put into his work.

I watch the way applicants walk. Do they have energy or not? Now I may be wrong in my judgment, but I just have a few moments to evaluate applicants. So I must make quick judgments. John H. Harvey, William John Ickes, and Robert F. Kidd, in *New Directions in Attribution Research*, tell this story about J. C. Penney:

In a radio interview some years ago, the department store tycoon suggested that a good way to spot executive potential is to observe whether an individual salts his food before tasting it. Mr. Penney reasoned that any person who salts food without determining that it in fact needed salt might not weigh all the facts before making important executive decisions.³

Joe Cirulli owns Gainesville Health & Fitness Center in Gainesville, Florida. According to an American expert, it is the best fitness business in the United States. They have five steps for applicants to be hired at the fitness club. First they give the applicant a four-page form consisting mostly of puzzles and games. Shawn Steward, the company's operations manager, says, "We eliminate most of the lazy people with that."

They check references, do group interviews, and have one on one interviews with a department head. On one occasion

Steward went to interview an applicant that had excellent reviews. The applicant was sitting in a room when Steward arrived. “They need some chairs next door,” Stewart said as he began picking up some chairs and bringing them to the room.

Stewart kept doing this until two chairs were left. The applicant didn’t move, except to take his feet off a chair. “Well,” said Stewart, “thanks for coming, but this place is really not for you.”

“But you haven’t interviewed me yet,” the applicant complained.

“Yes, I just did,” Stewart said as he led the applicant out of the room.⁴

Paul Boynton, employment director for Socony-Vacuum Oil Company has interviewed over 60,000 job applicants. He wrote the book, *6 Ways to Get a Job*. Boynton said, “The biggest mistake people make in applying for jobs is in not being themselves. Instead of taking their hair down and being completely frank, they often try to give you the answers they think you want.”⁵

The first rule for the interview: Don’t be a phony. Be energetic and show enthusiasm, interest, and ambition. Don’t be arrogant, thinking you’re doing an employer a favor if he hires you. Look the person in the eye and give a firm handshake. Demonstrate a positive attitude.

If you happen to have work experience, don’t talk against your former employer. Often I call the former employer and ask about the applicant I’m interested in hiring. Learn to build a good reputation for yourself.

Dress appropriately. It’s better to be on the neat side. Don’t

come with dirty or worn jeans, sloppy clothes, and messed up hair. That's true even for a factory job. Women, dress modestly and use makeup conservatively. Carolyn Gustafson, an image consultant, said, "We make quick decisions about people based on their appearance. Whether or not that's right, that's the reality of it."⁶

You may think tattoos and body piercings look cool, but there are employers who think otherwise. They don't want employees meeting customers with exposed body art and piercings. You may object, "I don't want anyone telling me what I can or cannot do."

You have the right to your opinion, but the employer also can say, "I don't want anyone to tell me the type of person I should hire."

In the end you may find the job you're seeking for will be elusive. Zig Ziglar, a successful salesman, motivational speaker, and businessman, tells in his book, *Top Performance*, about a student who kept looking for a job, but was constantly turned down. He went to his professor and asked why. "Are you absolutely certain you want to know why?" his professor asked.

"I am," said the student.

"You look like you've been on a six-month camping trip."

The student became indignant. "Are you referring to my hair and my beard?"

"Yes, and your clothes and your shoes, and your breath."

"That's not fair."

The professor then replied, "You didn't ask if it was fair, you simply asked why."⁷

Employers Reluctant to Hire Teens

Being a teenager, you may think that employers are eager to hire you since you're earning minimum or close to minimum wages. Many aren't. Why? It's very costly for employers to train employees. Now if you're doing a simple job that requires no training such as handing out flyers, there's no problem getting hired. But if the work requires skill, employers have to spend considerable time training. Many teens don't realize that this training is very costly and time consuming.

Teens have a tendency to be flighty. Some will quit after a few months, and all the costly training is lost to the employer. So what do employers want? They want employees who are eager to learn and are willing to stick it out. One way to get hired is to show enthusiasm for the employment you're applying for.

Extra Steps

You plan on going to college and specialize in a certain occupation. You find there's a company you'd like to work for during the summer that will help you in the field you've chosen. What could you do to get a job in that company? Here's an important tip: Show a sincere interest in that company.

Most companies have a website. Find the company's website and learn as much as you can about the company and the kind of work it does. Learn about its products and services. When you go for the interview, tell about your future plans and how you'd be eager to work for this company. Tell about your research. Remember, employers are looking for employees

who are eager to learn. Be willing to do any kind of work.

John Wanamaker pioneered the first department store in 1876 and is credited with being the father of modern advertising. A young man came to Wanamaker and asked for a job. He told the young man he didn't have a job for him. "I am willing to do anything," the young man replied.

Wanting to get rid of him, Wanamaker said, "The only job I have is a job of washing windows."

"I will take it," the young man said.

The young man became the best window washer. Eventually he became the manager of the great store. After working there for 25 years, the manager died. Afterwards Wanamaker said, "I am willing to pay as high as one hundred thousand dollars a year for a manager who can fill the place of the one I lost."⁸ That was a lot of money in those days.

That young man's enthusiasm was a hallmark of his personality, and it transferred into whatever he did. Every employer would love to hire employees like this.

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.¹

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 19th-century philosopher and political economist. He wrote the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848 and argued that capitalism

would be displaced by communism, a classless society. A popularized slogan from Karl Marx is, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” Everyone will exert their best effort according to their talent, and everyone will receive from the fruits of the production, regardless of their input. Karl Marx thought there would be such an abundance of productivity that everyone would be satisfied.

To bring their ideal of a “classless society” into reality, Joseph Stalin, dictator of Russia, killed an estimated 20 to 50 million people, and Mao Zedong, dictator of China, killed an estimated 40 million. Alan Greenspan reported about this classless society and collective ownership:

Karl Marx was wrong in his analysis of the way people can organize to successfully create value. To Marx, state ownership of the means of production was the essential fixture in a society’s ability to produce wealth and justice. The right to virtually all property in Marx’s society was thus to rest with the state, in trust for the people. Property rights granted to individuals were instruments of exploitation and could come only at the expense of the “collective,” that is, society as a whole. He argued for the collectivization of the division of labor. All working together for a single goal would be far more productive than markets collating the disparate choices of individuals. Do human beings optimize their potential in a collectivized society? The ultimate arbiter of all such paradigms is reality. Does it work as proposed? Marx’s economic model in practice-in the USSR and elsewhere-could not produce

wealth or justice, as is now generally recognized. The rationale for collective ownership failed.²

We know what the market forces eventually did to the communist empire. It collapsed. These same forces operate today. Those understanding and practicing successful economic principles survive; those who don't fail.

The fundamental flaw of communism is the failure to understand the more incentives you give individuals, the greater the productivity. People need incentives to work. It's a nice theory that everyone should work together for the common good. A serious problem arises when some in the group are diligent yet they are to share equally with those who were unproductive or lazy. Another problem arises when those who spent years sacrificing to become a doctor are paid less than one who quit school and has greater financial needs.

The fundamental flaw of capitalism is that productive work produces prosperity which without restraint produces greed. That's why it's so important to understand that America's religious foundation is critical for our nation to remain vibrant. Faith in God encourages us to love others which in turn discourages the greed of capitalism. In addition, true people of faith are honest and upright. This is critical for economic success.

There are countries where it's difficult to do business because of the corruption and bribery of public officials. For example: you take out a permit to start a business, but when you see the clerk, he/she can't find the permit. The clerk asks you to buy a raffle ticket. You buy the ticket, and suddenly the application appears. You need to get a zoning permit to

begin your business. You invite the government official to be an investor, and the zoning permit is granted. You want a foreign company to buy your product, so you slip an envelope containing \$5,000 to the buyer. You get the job. What's the solution to end corruption? Moral people. The next question is: How does a society create moral people?

Sentiments of the Founders of Our Nation

The sentiments of the founders of our nation were that faith in God was vital to create a moral and successful society. Today there is a broad movement to eliminate any discussion about faith in God and our government. Let us look at some of the principles of our great nation and what some of our leaders had to say about God and the founding of our nation. On July 4, 1776, fifty-six men were willing to sacrifice their wealth and lives for the freedom of America and sign the Declaration of Independence. An examination of the opening and closing paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence clearly reveals that they also made it a declaration of faith in God.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator

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with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are
Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. . . .

We, Therefore, the Representatives of the United
States of America, in General Congress, Assembled,
appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for
the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and
by Authority of the good People of these Colonies,
solemnly publish and declare, That these United
Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and
Independent States . . . And for the support of this
Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of
divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other
our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honour.³

Bill of Rights

The early founders of our nation did not believe in
separation of God and state. But today we are witnessing more
and more how federal officials are trying to prohibit the free
exercise of religion. What the early founders didn't want was
a national church like England and other European nations.
Today's fanatical obsession with separation of church and
state is a perversion of the Constitution. A careful reading
of the Constitution and the actions of Congress at that time
clearly reveal what our Founding Fathers believed. The First
Amendment of the Constitution, also called the Bill of Rights,
states:

Congress shall make no law respecting an
establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free
exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech,

or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.⁴

The Bill of Rights clearly shows that our founding fathers had no intentions of removing God from government or the state. It clearly states Congress shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion. The issue of God and state is important because faith in God is the most important reason why individuals act morally. It's this belief system that has been the foundation of our nation.

To produce moral people a nation should encourage the free exercise of religion, for religion promotes morality. This is what our founding fathers wanted, but courts today are trying to eradicate faith in God from our schools and public institutions. Its effect can be witnessed by the moral decline that's taking place in our nation today. What we need today is courageous youth who'll examine our foundation and boldly declare these foundational truths that made our nation great. On April 30, 1789, George Washington declared in his first inaugural address:

Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official act my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that his benediction may consecrate to the liberties

The Free Enterprise System and America's Foundation and happiness of the people of the United States a Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes, and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the Great Author of every public and private good, I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own, nor those of my fellow-citizens at large less than either. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than those of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency.⁵

On March 4, 1797, John Adams, our second president, said:

And may that Being who is supreme over all, the Patron of Order, the Fountain of Justice, and the Protector in all ages of the world of virtuous liberty, continue His blessing upon this nation and its Government and give it all possible success and duration consistent with the ends of His providence.⁶

On March 4, 1805, Thomas Jefferson, our third president, said:

I shall need, too, the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from

their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessaries and comforts of life; who has covered our infancy with His providence and our riper years with His wisdom and power, and to whose goodness I ask you to join in supplications with me that He will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils, and prosper their measures that whatsoever they do shall result in your good, and shall secure to you the peace, friendship, and approbation of all nations.⁷

On March 4, 1809, James Madison, our fourth president, said:

In these my confidence will under every difficulty be best placed, next to that which we have all been encouraged to feel in the guardianship and guidance of that Almighty Being whose power regulates the destiny of nations, whose blessings have been so conspicuously dispensed to this rising Republic, and to whom we are bound to address our devout gratitude for the past, as well as our fervent supplications and best hopes for the future.⁸

I could go on and quote many other sources from our founding fathers, and they are documented in the book I wrote, *Schools in Crisis: Training for Success or Failure?* This book is available free at our website: www.advancepublishing.com under “Free Resources.” It is clear that our founding fathers supported faith in God for the prosperity of our nation. Peter Berger, professor of sociology at Rutgers University, writing

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in the *New York Teacher*, analyzes the historic relationship
between God and state:

Unlike the French republic and other democracies modeled upon it, the American state was not conceived in a secularist mode. From the beginning there was a complex but intimate dialogue between the social contract of the republic and the sacred covenant of the churches. Thus the purpose of the First Amendment to the Constitution was to protect pluralism and religious liberty, not to insulate the state from religious influences. It is only since World War II that an overtly secularist tendency has developed in America. This new secularism has succeeded in influencing both the courts and agencies of government on various levels.⁹

Woe to America if the foundation of faith is eradicated and we become a totally secular society where the expression of faith is permitted only in houses of worship. I'll say this boldly:

THIS IS NOT HOW OUR NATION WAS FOUNDED

Our Founders also were concerned about the happiness of its people. Arthur C. Brooks, professor of business and government policy at Syracuse University, reported:

In the Declaration of Independence, the Founders didn't treat happiness as some fuzzy concept; they believed that people wanted happiness and had the right to pursue it. Along with life and liberty, happiness was

the connection between the Creator and our nation's destiny, and the ability of its citizens to pursue and achieve happiness was a measure of the effectiveness and morality of the state....

Roughly 85 percent of Americans identify with a religion, and about a third of Americans attend a house of worship every week or more....General Social Survey found that 43 percent of religious folks said they were very happy with their lives, compared with 23 percent of secularists.¹⁰

Our Founders had the insight in declaring, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” We today must uphold this important principle for a prosperous nation.

It is also critical for the future of our nation to understand that our creative free enterprise system and the promotion of faith in God produces the balance that encourages productive work which generates profit and in turn moral people use their profits to help others. The religious faith of Americans is a major reason its people are moral and charitable.

For years I've observed the deterioration of our historical value system and the attack on character that is prevalent in our nation and schools. There's a conflict between two value systems. I've written a book about it, *Character Under Attack and What You Can Do About It*. If you want to read more, it is also available free online at www.advancepublishing.com under “Free Resources.” Here are some excerpts:

The conflict was between naturalism and the traditional American value system. I came to realize that those opposing character-building materials have the same philosophical roots as naturalism. Naturalism believes that everything can be explained by natural law without any moral or spiritual significance. Values therefore are relative and situational. There are no moral absolutes. Since there are no moral absolutes and values are situational, acts that give the individual pleasure are the decisive test of whether the act is good or evil....

Once this naturalistic humanistic philosophy of moral relativism is understood, that truth and values are autonomous and situational and never absolute, it becomes clear that its teaching has permeated not only our schools but also our society. This philosophy continues to be the archenemy of our traditional value system that there are moral absolutes.

Fruits of Moral Relativism

Today many of our youth have embraced the relativistic philosophy, "If it feels good, do it." Self-expression and self-fulfillment are their aims in life. When some children fall prey to this way of thinking, it can lead to actions that are rationalized by the thought, "Might makes right," and "If I receive pleasure at your expense, so be it. So what if I stab you in the back for your new tennis shoes? I couldn't care less about your pain. I'm happy, and that's what counts."

Our society has raised a self-indulgent, hedonistic group of youth. We shouldn't wonder why sex violence is so rampant and our prisons are full. Youth are doing what they were taught—they're making themselves happy. They're not interested in anyone except themselves. "If it feels good—it's good." No value is superior to another value.

Relativists want to do whatever brings them ultimate happiness without guilt—that's utopia. Unfortunately, the belief of self-fulfillment at any cost has produced Hitler, Mao Zedong, Stalin, Pol Pot, and other ruthless dictators who killed millions to fulfill their utopian dreams. But remember, these ruthless dictators killed millions in their belief that what they did would benefit their concept of society. Shouldn't we be tolerant of them because they did what they believed would help them? This question is ridiculous, but there are those who defend this philosophy.

What is the result of a hedonistic philosophy where personal satisfaction is the end objective in life? It undermines the structure of a society. Look at some of our youth who have chosen drugs, alcohol, promiscuous sex, and a life of crime instead of work for sustenance. Sadly, what brings us to our senses is when we experience firsthand the shocking results of this indulgent lifestyle when violent gangs roam our streets and students without remorse kill students and teachers. How many of these incidents will it take to wake up Americans to see the ruinous effect of their departure from the values that made our nation

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great?¹¹

Dr. Richard Rorty had a long teaching career. Some of the places he taught were Princeton University, University of Virginia, and Stanford University. The *Washington Post* reported, “Dr. Rorty advocated a philosophy known as pragmatism, which shunned what he considered a fruitless search to answer unknowable questions: What is the meaning of life? Do other people exist? He had rejected the field of analytic philosophy on the ground that it attempts to address those questions, which he largely considered a waste of time, and had created something akin to a hunt for timeless truths, another idea he strongly criticized.

His dismissal of analytic philosophy led some of his harshest critics, including Bernard Williams of Oxford University, to write that Dr. Rorty was a relativist who believed truth was dispensable.”¹²

The *Chicago Daily Observer* stated: “Then Rorty in his book ‘Rorty and His Critics’ said to U.S. parents: ‘We are going to go right on trying to discredit you in the eyes of your children, trying to strip your fundamentalist religious community of dignity, trying to make your views seem silly rather than discussable.’”¹³

There are relativists in our universities who want to ridicule and discredit the values your parents taught you and what you believe. They don't even want to have an intellectual discussion. One of their favorite tricks is to ridicule one's faith by saying in a sarcastic manner, “You don't believe...” and then add some religious belief. This happened to me when I was taking a graduate course in Philosophy of Education at

Oswego State University. I spoke up and defended what I believed in.

Be Knowledgeable and Assertive in Your Beliefs

What should you do? Be knowledgeable and assertive in your beliefs. We are a nation that has been founded on values, and those values have come from faith in the Almighty. As the Declaration of Independence says, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

In many of our schools today atheists can say what they want and ridicule faith, but those believing in God are urged to be silent. But this is not the law of our nation. In 1995 the United States government published a paper on *Religious Expression in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles*. Concerning student prayer and religious discussion, it confirmed:

The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment does not prohibit purely private religious speech by students. Students therefore have the same right to engage in individual or group prayer and religious discussion during the school day as they do to engage in other comparable activity.¹⁴

Concerning teaching about religion the document stated:

Public schools may not provide religious

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instruction, but they may teach about religion, including the Bible or other scripture: the history of religion, comparative religion, the Bible (or other scripture)-as-literature, and the role of religion in the history of the United States and other countries all are permissible public school subjects.¹⁵

From the paper issued by the U.S. government it is clear that students may “engage in individual or group prayer and religious discussion during the school day,” and “may teach about religion, including the Bible.” Students and parents need to stand up and defend these rights.

All major religions consider destructive habits as evil or sinful. This belief is a strong motivation to abstain from destructive lifestyles. An important reason many teens abstain from bad habits is that the foundation of their moral beliefs is established from their religious faith. These teens should never let those who support destructive habits intimidate them to become silent about their faith in God. They need to be courageous and state their beliefs boldly. Teddy Roosevelt, our 26th president pointed out an important truth when he declared: “To educate a person in the mind but not in morals is to educate a menace to society.”

Miss America Boldly Stands Up

Erika Harold was honored to be selected for the top 40 college student leaders in the nation by USA Today's All USA College Academic Second Team. She graduated from the University of Illinois a Phi Beta Kappa and was accepted into Harvard University Law School. But instead of going to

Harvard in the fall, Harold won the Miss America contest and spent a year touring the nation, promoting the pageant's official platform, "Preventing Youth Violence and Bullying."

Before becoming Miss America, Erika Harold traveled and gave speeches encouraging teenagers to avoid premarital sex. To her, it was an important message. Now after winning the title of Miss America, Harold felt this was a golden opportunity to continue to spread the message of abstinence from sex until marriage. However, she encountered a problem. The official platform for Miss America did not permit the message of abstinence from premarital sex. What did Harold do? She courageously stood up for her beliefs and prevailed. Along with speaking about youth violence and bullying, she incorporated the message of abstinence from premarital sex.

There are millions of youth who will never encounter the problems of sexually transmitted diseases because they and the one they will one day marry made Harold's message of abstinence from all sexual activities until marriage their choice.

The Importance of Understanding the Free Enterprise System

Why 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."¹

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

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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.²

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.”³

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.⁴

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

present. They are menpleasers and serve their bosses with eyeservice. But bosses have four eyes, two in front and two behind their heads. We're not stupid. Don't think you can always fool us. We're looking. Abraham Lincoln said, "You can fool some of the people some of the time; but not all of the people all of the time."

Thinking of Others

If you want to advance in your job, you **MUST** begin to think of others. I was foreman of a tool and die shop when I decided to become a high school teacher. I passed the test and was hired as an industrial arts teacher at Newton High School in Queens. They assigned me five automotive classes. I'd gone to college, but I'd never taken any automotive classes. Besides, this was a class no other teacher wanted. It was a small classroom with only one car. How do you teach automotive?

Fortunately, being mechanically inclined, I had always repaired my cars. The first thing I did was seek advice from the previous teacher of this class. Then I applied the principle of edification: What can I teach these students that will benefit them. Notice my focus was on my students on how to help them, not on what *I* wanted to teach. I visualized myself sitting where the students sat and wondered, "What would I like to learn about cars if I were a student."

I want to stress this point, for it is critical to your becoming successful. My aim as a teacher was how could I help the students and make this class interesting and beneficial for them? I went on my own time to various stores and asked if they had any old lawn mowers. The school was in New York City, and

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as you can well imagine the city doesn't have many lawns. However, I found some stores that were willing to donate their used and broken lawn mowers. I packed them into my station wagon. Then I had students in my classes disassemble them. I wanted every class to have five lawn mower engines so they could take them apart and learn how a four cycle engine works. I broke up the class into five divisions, and had the students rotated as foreman, assistant foreman, and workers.

Now you would think that having up to 25 students working on small engines and having all sorts of tools in use would be bedlam collecting these tools. I had a simple solution. I organized a cabinet where I could see where every tool belonged. When I said it was time to clean up, the class was to bring back all the tools and wash their hands. The foremen couldn't clean up until I gave the final word. The final word came when I saw every tool was returned.

I also taught the students how to do tune ups and various repair jobs on cars. At the end of the term, I'd ask the students how this class could be improved. I donated a car and removed the engine. I had a running engine on a stand for demonstrations. I connected the exhaust pipe to the outside. I gave tests and homework. If students didn't do the work, they failed. Did this turn students off? Not in the least. In fact, the automotive class became the most popular industrial arts class in the school. Our school had eleven automotive 1 classes and three automotive 2 classes. Here I was an inexperienced school teacher, and because I had a sincere interest in helping students, this automotive class became the most popular industrial arts class in the school.

How to Have Friends

My success in teaching automotive was because I had a sincere interest in helping the students. It's the same with having friends. Here's a bit of advice that is critical to building friendships. You'll gain many friends if you can show a sincere interest in what the other person is saying, rather than concentrating on having the person listen to you. So if you want friends, Rule 1 is:

You must show a sincere interest in others.

How many people want friends to listen to them, but they close their minds when you speak? The consequence? These closed-minded individuals have few friends. Remember: If you want friends, you must show yourself friendly. Encourage others to talk about themselves and be a sincere listener. You'll have plenty of friends if you follow that simple rule. This is also true in building a successful business. Show a sincere interest in your customers' problems. Listen to them intently and see if you can become part of the solution.

The same holds true when you want to convince someone of your cause. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, had this to say:

It is an old and true maxim "that a drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall." So with men, if you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend. Therein is a drop of honey that catches

his heart; which, say what you will, is the great high road to his reason.⁵

How to Make People Like You

George Eastman, the founder of Eastman Kodak Company and the inventor of the roll of film, was a very wealthy and successful businessman. Eastman was building the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. The president of Superior Seating Company, James Adamson, wanted to sell theatre chairs to Eastman. He called and made an appointment through the architect. “I know you want to get this order,” he warned Adamson, “but I can tell you right now that you won’t stand a ghost of a show if you take more than five minutes of George Eastman’s time.”

When the architect and Adamson visited Eastman, he was bent over looking at a pile of papers on his desk. Eastman looked up, and the architect introduced Adamson. I want you to notice what Adamson did. It’s an important lesson in getting people to like you. Of course Adamson’s reason for being there was to sell Eastman theatre chairs, but instead of talking about selling chairs, he first showed a sincere interest in something that sparked Eastman’s interest.

This is what Adamson said, “While we have been waiting for you, Mr. Eastman, I have been admiring your office. I wouldn’t mind working myself if I had a room like this to work in. You know I am in the interior woodworking business myself, and I never saw a more beautiful office in all my life.”

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“You remind me of something I had almost forgotten,” Eastman replied. “It is beautiful, isn’t it? I enjoyed it a great deal when it was first built. But I come down here now with a lot of other things on my mind and sometimes don’t even see the room for weeks at a time.”

Adamson walked over and rubbed his hand on the wall and spoke about the wood. Then Eastman walked around the room showing him other things. Eastman walked toward the window in his room and shared how he was trying to help humanity in some of the institutions he was supporting. Adamson complimented him for using his wealth to help the suffering.

Adamson asked him about his early struggles in getting started in business. Eastman shared about the poverty of his early childhood and his widowed mother, and how he wanted to help his mother not to work herself to death. Adamson was warned not to take over five minutes, but he had already spent over two hours speaking with Eastman.

Then Eastman told him about some chairs he had bought in Japan, and how the sun peeled off the paint. He painted the chairs himself, and then said, “Would you like to see what sort of a job I can do painting chairs? All right. Come up to my home and have lunch with me and I’ll show you.”

They went to the home and Eastman showed Adamson the chairs he had painted. Guess who got the order for the theatre chairs? That’s right, Adamson did because he showed a sincere interest in what interested Eastman. From that time on, they were close friends until Eastman’s death.⁶

Putting Yourself in the Other Person's Shoes

A young advertising copywriter needed someone to clean his house. He thought it would be easy to find someone who needed some extra cash. He placed the ad, "WANTED: cleaning woman 1 day per week. Own transportation, exc. pay." He also included the telephone number and when to call. There was no response, even though the ad ran for one week. He was embarrassed and depressed, for he was supposed to know how to write an ad, being an advertising copywriter.

Then he said to himself, "Pretend you are the lady looking through the want ads. You're looking for a job, but you are no professional cleaner. What would make you want to call that number?"

Then he imagined he was that woman. This is the new ad he wrote: "WANTED: Housekeeper to take complete charge of house in the country 1 day a week. Be your own boss. Make your own decisions. Drive your own car," plus phone number and time.

He didn't even include anything about pay. Here are the results he reported: "That night the telephone began to ring at five to six, and before an hour was up I had NINE women who want to be interviewed for that job."

He hired one who was great, and she worked for him for years. Later that week his boss came into his office and said, "Your stuff is awfully good lately."

"Thanks," he said. "It turns out I can write better ads if I put myself in the other guy's shoes."

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“Actually, it’s something you’ve heard before,” his boss said. “It’s quite an old piece of copy, as a matter of fact.”

The copy editor was puzzled, so he asked what he meant. “Putting yourself in the other guy’s shoes,” said the boss, “is another way of saying the Golden Rule.”⁷

Pleasing Customers

Since in a free enterprise system the means of production aren’t centrally controlled but privately owned, customers determine whether to purchase the means of production. In reality, the customer is the ultimate boss. When companies quit focusing on pleasing customers, they’ll eventually be forced to shut their doors. The secret of building a successful company is applying the Golden Rule: “In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.” In other words, think of how you can please others, especially your customers.

Successful companies aim to make their customers “Number One.” No business will ever succeed without pleasing or loving its customers. Speaking of love may sound mushy; nevertheless, love is life’s most important principle. Everyone craves it—children, friends, employees, customers, and when you get married, your mate. But many never find that elusive dream of love. The reason so many fail to find love is that they’re only focused on themselves. True love is found by giving. It’s not a egocentric love affair with oneself, but a love affair with others. By giving love, we discover true love. Master the concept of loving others, and you’ll discover life’s richest rewards. Be selfish and unloving, and you’ll suffer the consequences.

Starting a New Company

At the age of 57, I took a risk and started my own company, Reliable EDM (Electrical Discharge Machining), with my two sons. I could have chosen the name, Sommer EDM. But I wanted to think big, so I choose the name Reliable EDM. I bought three used wire EDM machines. We bought two very old machines with a computer system at a very low price. We managed to get one of the old EDM machines running, but it was so slow that my son, a mechanical engineer, said we shouldn't bother using it.

So with one operating wire EDM machine, I began a study on what makes companies successful. The key I discovered was following the Golden Rule. I asked myself, "If I were a customer, how would I want to be treated?"

Since we deal mostly with machining companies, I reasoned that my customers would first want a quality product. Does the part we machine meet or exceed the specifications of the blueprint that the customer provided? Quality is always *Number One* in importance. Next was to provide good service. Can I deliver the product when the customer requires it? Delivering a quality product one or two weeks late was unsatisfactory. Finally, have a competitive price, or keep our prices low.

In a nutshell: Produce a quality product that customers want in a timely manner at a competitive price. I said if we could do that, customers would beat a path to our doors. With that as our guiding philosophy, we are today the largest wire EDM job shop west of the Mississippi River. Today we have over 50 EDMs, and we also have a plant in Broussard, Louisiana.

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Before we opened our business, an employee who had managed the EDM shop where I was operations manager purchased a new EDM machine and started his own company. Shortly after starting his company, he went out of business. No doubt to him, Houston was a terrible market for an EDM company. Two and a half years later when we started our business, we discovered an excellent market for an EDM company. What made the difference?

I was operations manager when this employee started doing EDM work for our company. As operations manager, I tried to instruct this employee, but he was stubborn and wouldn't listen. He also lacked the skills for using the mathematical capabilities of the computer. Finally, I told the president of the company to replace him for his unteachable attitude. The president resisted for he had sent him to school to learn this equipment. Finally, after a year of low performance, the president reassigned him to the tool room. He soon quit and started his own business.

Secrets of Success

What were the secrets of our success?

1. Experience: I had many years of experience in the machine shop and in the tool and die making trade; and my son, a mechanical engineer and a tool and die maker, had managed a wire EDM shop for two years.

2. Educating the Customers: I called machine shops and educated them about the advantages of EDM. My son and I have coauthored the book, *Wire*

EDM Handbook, and then we came out with a later edition, *The Complete EDM Handbook*.

3. Applying the Golden Rule: Above all, we aimed to follow the Golden Rule by being honest with our customers and aiming to please them. In essence, applying the Golden Rule is loving our customers. My attitude was, “I’m not the boss; my customers are the boss. The minute I stop pleasing or loving them, we’ll be out of business.” That’s the free enterprise system. It’s a customer-driven business philosophy.

When you live by the Golden Rule, you listen to correction. If you want to become a successful entrepreneur, you shouldn’t gather “Yes” individuals around you. “Yes” individuals are those who always agree with you. Instead, you should want employees and customers to always have the freedom to share ideas and problems with you. The other entrepreneur who opened an EDM company before us wasn’t a listener. He did things his way, and when he went into business he failed. The reason we have listening ears is we want to provide our customers with the best product, when they need it, at a competitive price. We know that’s what customers want.

When I was operations manager, we had one company which manufactured pellitizer blades for plastic extruders. The president of the company told me about two different pellitizer manufacturers. One plant used one set of blades every 12 hours; the other plant with the same machine used a set of blades every 22 days! What’s the difference?

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The manager of the efficient plant has a room filled with scientific studies on how to run his equipment, even to the temperature of the water. He's performed many experiments to increase efficiency. These two plants are two different companies that are only 200 yards apart from each other.

When the president of our company introduced to the manager of the efficient plant newly acquired technology of coated pellitizer blades, he immediately tried them. The president told me how difficult it was in some plants to introduce change. In one meeting one manager said these famous words, "We've been doing it this way for twenty-five years and it worked." Yes his plant was working, but it was very inefficient. Successful individuals are always willing to listen to new ideas and implement them.

Loving Your Customers

It may seem strange to you to speak about "loving your customer," but it's essential if you want to be successful. Joseph Boyett and Jimmie Boyett, in *The Guru Guide*, wrote about "The Best Ideas of the Top Management Thinkers." They compared those who were just managers and those who were leaders. They report:

Another way to distinguish between leaders and managers is to examine the language our gurus use in talking about leaders. When speaking of them, our gurus say things that most tradition-minded managers find strange, to say the least.

Leadership requires love.
The best leaders are servants.
You lead by giving to others.

As strange as it may seem to say that leadership requires love or that leaders must be servants and gift givers, such statements reflect the thinking of many of our gurus about what is required of today's leader.⁸

Tom Hopkins in *How to Master the Art of Selling* related one of his points for successful selling: "The top people we train get emotionally involved with the people they serve. Champions really care about their clients, and this true feeling comes through loud and clear to the people they're selling."⁹

If you want to be a success, show a sincere interest in others, be pleasant and polite, be a good listener, encourage others to speak about themselves, respect the opinions of others, and make the other person feel important.

Advancing On the Job

You'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.”¹

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

their methods. I've learned many things repairing dies and seeing how they were built. I also observed tool and die makers as they worked.

Just the other day I had the company that installed our sprinkler system repair three sprinklers that were damaged when a hurricane broke our fence and tore off these sprinkler heads. I could have repaired the sprinklers. I would have dug up to the pipe and repaired the damaged fittings. But this experienced owner had a much simpler solution. He put on the water to locate the damaged sprinkler fittings. Then with a tool he removed the broken threads, and then rethreaded the three sprinklers and put them back. Within 15 minutes he had repaired the damage. If I would have done it, I probably would have spent hours. I'm always amazed at the "tricks of the trade" that skilled workers use.

Never be so smart that you can't learn from others. At one company I was instructed to train an employee on the surface grinder. I had been working many years on surface grinders, but after a few days of training, this employee wanted to teach me instead of looking and learning how to grind. I detected he was unteachable, so I asked to train another worker because he was teachable.

The key to becoming successful is to be eager to learn. Use your eyes to read books and to observe successful workers. A young man once came to Socrates, the Greek philosopher, and said he wanted knowledge. Socrates took the young man down to the sea and walked into the water until it came to their shoulders. Then Socrates put his hands on the young man's head and held him under water for 30 seconds.

Advancing On the Job

When he came up, Socrates asked him what he wanted. “Knowledge, O great one.”

Socrates put his head into the water again, but this time a little longer. After repeated dunkings, the young man finally said, “Air. I want air.”

“Good,” exclaimed Socrates. “When you want knowledge as much as you wanted air, you will find it.”

Shut Up

You have two ears, two eyes, and one mouth. So be eager to hear, eager to see, and eager to keep your mouth shut and learn. Once you have experience, there’ll be plenty of opportunities to speak and share. But as a beginning employee, learn to listen, look, and learn. I can’t stress enough the importance of being an eager listener and learner if you want to be successful. Remember, an open mouth keeps the ears from listening

Let’s say the supervisor gave you the instructions to do a job as Step 1, Step 2, Step 3, and Step 4. But you in your wisdom thought you could do it faster by combining Steps 3 and 4. You did it your way, and the job was done wrong. Whose fault would it be? Obviously, it would be yours because you didn’t follow instructions. If you had followed the supervisor’s instructions carefully, and the job was done wrong, whose fault would it be? It would be the supervisor’s. It is critical for beginning employees to learn to keep quiet and follow instructions carefully. Of course if you see something you perceive as incorrect, then tell the supervisor.

We hired a high school dropout who earned his GED.

We gave him a math test, which he passed. He was an eager learner and listened to whatever we taught him. He became one of our most valuable employees. He even learned to do sophisticated programming on the computer for our NC (numerically controlled) machines that required him to know algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. Later on we learned he had been a member of a Mexican gang and served time in prison. What made him a success on the job was his eagerness to listen and learn. These are dream employees.

When Wrong, Admit It

Some people are so proud that they have the hardest time admitting when they do things wrong. They choke saying the words, “I am wrong.” Some refuse to ever admit they made a mistake; they’re always right. They’ll always try to dig up some excuse to justify what they did.

If you make a mistake, be humble and admit it. Steve Jobs of Apple fame said, “Sometimes when you innovate, you make mistakes. It is best to admit them quickly, and get on with improving your other innovations.”²

Dale Carnegie tells an interesting story in *How to Win Friends and Influence People* about when he took his little Boston bulldog to the park and let him run free. A mounted police came and said, “What do you mean by letting that dog run loose in the park without a muzzle and leash? Don’t you know it’s against the law?”

“Yes, I know it is,” Carnegie replied softly, “but I didn’t think he would do any harm out here.”

“You didn’t think! You didn’t think!” the officer replied.

“That dog might kill a squirrel or bite a child. Now, I’m going to let you off this time, but if I catch this dog out here again without a muzzle and leash, you’ll have to tell it to the judge.”

Carnegie meekly promised the policeman he’d obey. He did obey for a few times, but the dog didn’t like the muzzle, so he took a chance and let his dog run free again. Then to his dismay, there was that officer again. I’ll let him tell what happened.

I was in for it. I knew it. So I didn’t wait until the policeman started talking. I beat him to it. I said: “Officer, you’ve caught me red-handed. I’m guilty. I have no alibis, no excuses. You warned me last week that if I brought this dog out here again without a muzzle you would fine me.”

“Well, now,” the policeman responded in a soft tone. “I know it’s a temptation to let a little dog like that have a run out here when nobody is around.”

“Sure it’s a temptation,” I replied, “but it is against the law.”

“Well, a little dog like that isn’t going to harm anybody,” the policeman remonstrated.

“No, but he may kill squirrels,” I said.

“Well, now, I think you are taking this a bit too seriously,” he told me. “I’ll tell you what you do. You just let him run over the hill there where I can’t see him—and we’ll forget all about it.”³

Carnegie was humble and admitted he was wrong, and the policeman let him go. It's human nature. It repulses common sense people when individuals know what they're doing is wrong, yet they defend themselves.

A great virtue is to be humble. Great minds are humble and teachable. They readily admit their faults. Such minds are even willing to alter their views when confronted with facts even in the midst of a heated debate. But some people are so proud in their ignorance that no one can help them. I've met individuals like that. You would love to help them, but you know they'll refuse to listen. They are the source of all wisdom. When they speak they never say words like, "I think so," or "Maybe." Oh no, when they recall situations, they have perfect memories. These proud individuals show no interest in others and never take advice. The fruit of their behavior is they have few friends and live an unhappy and defeated lives.

Don't be so proud that you can't give credit where credit is due. It's like the story of the flea and the elephant crossing a swinging bridge. While they were crossing the bridge, the flea said to the elephant, "Let's swing the bridge."

The bridge began to sway. When they reached the other side, the flea said, "We really shook that bridge."

Enthusiasm

One of the most important characteristics of those who are successful is enthusiasm. Andrew Carnegie said, "A man can succeed at almost anything for which he has unlimited enthusiasm."

Zig Ziglar quotes Lonnie Shealey on the subject of

enthusiasm. “Whatever we call it—enthusiasm, motivation, ambition, drive, desire, or energy—it’s a quality which plays a major role in success. *People who are unable to motivate themselves must be content with mediocrity, no matter how impressive their other talents.*”⁴ [Italics in the original.]

There’s much truth in that statement. I’ve seen youth with great talents and gifts, but they never achieve. Why? They fail to have the enthusiasm or drive to make something out of themselves.

A number of years ago, I was teaching an American Junior Achievement course to English speaking Czechoslovakian high school and university students at Prague University. The class project was for students to make 100 T-shirts with silk-screen designs and sell them. After a few days of selling on their own, they were extremely depressed.

I decided to help the students. I met them and told them to follow me. I took them to a place I thought would be good, but after 15 minutes of seeing few tourists and no sales, I said, “Let’s go.” Then I took them to an area I knew had many tourists. It was a narrow street between two famous tourist places.

They began their selling pitch, “Quality T-shirts. One hundred percent cotton. Made by Junior Achievement. Made by student company.” After a short time a man, his wife, and three children came by and were looking at them selling the T-shirts. I nudged one of the girls and said, “Go to them.”

She walked over and began her sales pitch. Other students joined her. The man decided to buy T-shirts for his children. I walked by and told another student, “Try to sell T-shirts for the

man and his wife.” They sold five T-shirts to this one family. And while they were selling this family T-shirts, they sold another T-shirt to a couple. Within that short time they sold six T-shirts.

After these two sales, there was a dramatic transformation. The students were now energized and enthused. They were so enthusiastic, that I told one of the girls not to yell so loud so she could save her voice for the next day. When I suggested they should leave, they wanted to keep on selling. The next day they sold even more T-shirts than the day before.

What happened? What changed was the attitude of the students. At first they were extremely depressed, but when they began to sell, they became enthusiastic. There’s a lesson for all of us. Don’t let your failures drag you down. Be enthusiastic in what you’re doing. Yes, you’ll encounter many depressing situations, but those who become successful refuse to dwell on these situations. They seek to find ways to overcome them.

The Attire

If you want to advance in your company, the way you dress is important. Samantha Thompson Smith, in “Is What You Wear Hanging Up Your Promotion?” said:

“You definitely have to put forward your best image,” said Cynthia Nellis, a style expert at the About.com women’s fashion Web site. “Even if you’re allowed to wear jeans and T-shirts to the office, it’s not going to project an image to get you promoted. You need to take it a notch above the company policy.”

Advancing On the Job

Just look around the office on a Monday morning. You can easily spot the office slob, with his coffee-stained tie and wrinkled shirts, or the workplace flasher, the woman who thinks it's OK to show ample cleavage or plenty of leg.

They are the obvious rule breakers who will have trouble getting ahead.

Smith also pointed out, "How someone is dressed was the third most important attribute in getting a new job, according to a study by Syracuse University and Total Executive of 300 executive recruiters, chief executives and directors of personnel. That's behind communication and presentation skills."⁵

It seems rather strange that the way someone dresses is so important to those doing the hiring. Image consultant, Carolyn Gustafson, owner of Image Strategy for Men & Women, said on this issue, "It shows you know the rules. It says, 'I play by the rules.'" Then she pointed out, "The decision is almost always made in the first few minutes. If you look the part, you'll likely get the part."⁶

Deborah Fernandez, vice president of career transition consulting at Right Management presses the point further. "People need to dress appropriately for the position they're aspiring to." Then she added, "So they need to take cues from the people they're aspiring to be."⁷

Many places have casual dress. Casual dress, however, doesn't mean sloppy dress. Then there's the opposite position of someone being the only one with a dark suit and white shirt.

This makes him look rigid. The ideal is to look professional without being too formal.

Interpersonal Skills

If you want to advance in your employment, there's more than just having sufficient knowledge and technical abilities. An important issue is interpersonal skills. How do you get along with people? Are you sensitive to others? Do you possess empathy and friendship skills? Do you always act in a professional manner?

In an article at The National Honor Society in Psychology website it stated”

A number of recent studies (Appleby, 2000; Johanson & Fried, 2002; Yancey, 2001) have found that the most critical job skill a new employee needs to possess is good interpersonal skills. Drew Appleby asked 39 employers what job skills were most important in making hiring decisions. Social skills ranked first. George Yancey asked 76 recent BA psychology graduates and 44 recent master's psychology graduates what job skills were most useful to them in their current jobs. Interpersonal skills ranked first. John Johanson and Carrie Fried asked 144 psychology graduates what job skills were most useful to them in their current jobs. Again, interpersonal skills ranked first.⁸

The American Management Association stated in

“Interpersonal Skills for Managers”:

It’s a whole new world of work, and interpersonal skills are key! Organizational change, diversity and electronic communications have changed the face of the workplace. Today, more than ever, success depends upon the combined cooperation, commitment and action of people—both face-to-face and across electronic and cyber channels. That’s why your interpersonal skills are so critical to your own effectiveness as a manager.⁹

Interpersonal skills are important. For instance, you don’t go to a supervisor and interrupt him with a question when he is busy talking with someone. You’ll wait until there is an appropriate time. An angry customer comes to you with a complaint. Do you reply with angry words, or do you patiently listen and try to calm the individual with kind and understanding words? Here are ten tips to help you improve your interpersonal skills:

1. Smile. People don’t want to be around those who are in the dumps. Be friendly and cheerful. Learn to develop an optimistic spirit.

2. Show appreciation. When something kind is done to you, be thankful. Be generous with your praise, even with your coworkers.

3. Sensitive to other people’s feelings. You feel for other people when they have problems. You don’t

want to irritate others.

4. Proper etiquette. You have proper table manners, and you're not crude in your behavior.

5. Not intimidated by others. You know how to behave before others. You have a healthy self-esteem. When speaking to others you maintain eye contact.

6. Conflict resolver. You're able to bring opposing parties together. Your calm demeanor is able to see through problems and offer reasonable solutions. You're a problem solver.

7. Polite. You readily say "Thank you," and offer compliments to others.

8. Avoid gossip and complaining. If you don't have anything positive to say, you rather say nothing. If there is a legitimate complaint, you go to the proper authorities.

9. Listening skills. You actively listen to what others say. You sincerely try to fully understand the other person's position.

10. Sense of humor. You're able to laugh and make others laugh. You have a merry disposition. People like to be around you.

Management That's Fair, Firm, and Loving

The three principles for successful management are: be fair, firm, and loving. For successful management you must be willing to confront problems, but you should do it in a fair, firm, and loving manner.

Advancing On the Job

I decided to make one of our black employees a supervisor of the stamping department where I was operations manager. A Hispanic employee, who was one of our best workers, said he wouldn't listen to a black man telling him what to do. I told him if he didn't listen to him, he'd be fired. After a number of defiant incidents, I fired him.

I had another employee, I'll call him Bill, who worked many years in the company. Bill was a very slow worker and a trouble-maker. My aim as operations manager was to help employees, not get rid of them. Bill refused to change. I found out Bill said he was a donkey. His motto was, "I only work when I have to."

He certainly acted the part. I began to write Bill up for his lack of productivity and defiant attitude. The final straw came when I put another employee on the job Bill was doing, and this employee did the job nearly three times faster.

You may object that firing people isn't being kind and considerate. I live also by another principle, "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat." If you're too lazy to work, don't expect me to support you.

Permissive Management

Some business owners take a permissive approach by refusing to correct their employees when they do wrong. While working as a tool and die maker in Long Island City, New York, I saw how this company went from a three-man shop to a twenty-four man shop, and then failed. One of the major reasons was the manager of the company never corrected the employees. He believed if you treated employees right, they'd

work right.

The downfall began when the foreman of the shop fired a machinist, and the manager rehired him. From then on, the foreman didn't care about the shop or how the employees performed. The company continued going downhill, and shortly after I left, it went out of business. The problem I saw was the manager wouldn't confront his problems and correct his employees. To run a successful company, owners must be willing to confront problems and take corrective measures. Such action may be painful, but it's necessary for success.

Permissiveness destroys. I've seen it in homes, schools, and teenagers' lives. If you want to be successful, learn to confront your problems and take intelligent action to solve them. Taking the path of least resistance will never lead you to success.

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

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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.”¹

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

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- A supportive spouse
- Hard work—more than most people²

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.”³ 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.⁴

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

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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.⁵

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

started my business, I determined I'd pay all my taxes. Don't get me wrong, I don't want to pay any more taxes than I have to, but I'm determined to keep my integrity. Yes, there are thousands of ways to cheat the government—but integrity to me is much more valuable than dollars in the bank.

Compassion

What is compassion? It's a deep feeling that wants to help others who are in need. It's one of the critical keys for living a successful life. Unfortunately, many teens have only a love affair with themselves. They want the world to spin around their axis. They don't care the least bit about their parents, friends, or others. The constant cry of these egocentric teens is, "Me! Me! Me!"

Their parents may be in agony over their behavior, but they don't care. These selfish teens leave their room in a mess, they leave things lying around in the house, they refuse to do any work around the house, and they always complain if they are asked to do anything. They want their parents to be their slaves and give them lots of money.

I've got news for you, if that's you, you'll be unhappy. A selfish life will always be miserable. But not all teenagers are selfish. The *Marin Independent Journal* told a story about one who had compassion:

THE AMOUNT of money Tiburon teen A.J. Casella can raise for his favorite charity seems to be limitless.

Four years ago, the 17-year-old Branson School

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junior started a fishing tournament to benefit the San Francisco-based Greater Bay Area Make-A-Wish Foundation, a philanthropy that grants the wishes of children with life-threatening illnesses.

That year, he raised about \$14,000. This year, the “Fish For a Wish” benefit at his family’s resort marina property at Lake Almanor brought in close to \$42,000. The Aug. 2 event drew more than 300 people.

In all, he has raised cash and in-kind donations totaling more than \$108,000.

He was inspired to help the group after it sent one of his friends, who had leukemia, to Fenway Park to see Major League Baseball’s All-Star game. “I just saw what Make-A-Wish did for him,” Casella said. “It was just amazing. If he needed to think of some happy thought to get through, he could think of Fenway Park.”⁶

Senator John McCain graduated from Annapolis as a naval aviator. He was shot down over North Vietnam and for five years was a prisoner of war. A soldier in the communist army took a great risk to show compassion to McCain. Here’s McCain’s story from National Public Radio:

Years later, I saw an example of honor in the most surprising of places. As a scared American prisoner of war in Vietnam, I was tied in torture ropes by my tormentors and left alone in an empty room to suffer through the night. Later in the evening, a guard I had

never spoken to entered the room and silently loosened the ropes to relieve my suffering. Just before morning, that same guard came back and re-tightened the ropes before his less humanitarian comrades returned. He never said a word to me. Some months later on a Christmas morning, as I stood alone in the prison courtyard, that same guard walked up to me and stood next to me for a few moments. Then with his sandal, the guard drew a cross in the dirt. We stood wordlessly there for a minute or two, venerating the cross, until the guard rubbed it out and walked away.

To me, that was faith: a faith that unites and never divides, a faith that bridges unbridgeable gaps in humanity. It is the faith that we are all equal and endowed by our Creator with inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is the faith I would die to defend.

My determination to act with honor and integrity impels me to work in service to my country. I have believed that the means to real happiness and the true worth of a person is measured by how faithfully we serve a cause greater than our self-interest.⁷

On National Public Radio, Colin Powell, in “The America I Believe In,” spoke about how his immigrant parents arrived from Jamaica. They worked hard and instilled in their children and grandchildren a love of America and optimism. As Powell travelled he met anti-American sentiment, but underneath there was still respect. People still wanted to come to America.

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Then Powell said:

An America that each day gives new immigrants the same gift that my parents received. An America that lives by a Constitution that inspires freedom and democracy around the world. An America with a big, open, charitable heart that reaches out to people in need around the world. An America that sometimes seems confused and is always noisy. That noise has a name, it's called democracy and we use it to work through our confusion.

An America that is still the beacon of light to the darkest corner of the world.

Last year I met with a group of Brazilian exchange students who had spent a few weeks in America. I asked them to tell me about their experience here. One young girl told me about the night the 12 students went to a fast food restaurant in Chicago. They ate and then realized they did not have enough money to pay the bill. They were way short. Frightened, they finally told the waitress of their problem. She went away and she came back in a little while saying, "I talked to the manager and he said, 'It's ok.'" The students were still concerned because they thought the waitress might have to pay for it out of her salary. She smiled and she said, "No, the manager said he is glad you are here in the United States. He hopes you are having a good time, he hopes you are learning all about us. He said it's on him."

It is a story that those young Brazilian kids have told over and over about America. That's the America I believe in, that's the America the world wants to believe in.⁸

That teenager spent much time raising money for "Make-A-Wish Foundation." The prison guard took a great risk to help McCain. The restaurant manager could have demanded payment from those Brazilian students, but all of them demonstrated compassion. This is the American spirit. Unfortunately, many today are living in the "me" generation. If "I" can't benefit, don't bother me.

Peer Pressure

Thankfully, there are teens with high ideals, but sticking to them isn't easy. Many teens are dragged down by peer pressure. Peer pressure occurs when a person or group wants you to change your attitude or behavior to conform to that person or group. People of character are self-disciplined; they don't yield to peer pressure. Let's say you're at your friend's house and someone pulls out a bottle of liquor. The bottle is passed around and everyone takes a sip. The bottle is passed to you. You don't drink, and you don't want to start. Do you stand by your convictions, pass the bottle, and risk being ridiculed?

Maybe it's another situation where your friends are urging you to smoke, take a pill to get high, do drugs, cheat on a test, skip school, or engage in sexual activities. You don't want to be isolated from friends, but you also don't want to end up doing things that deep inside you know are wrong. It's a

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battle everyone faces. Many take the easy road and imitate those around them. They want to be cool and fit in. In reality, those yielding to peer pressure are weaklings, crowd-pleasers, without backbone. They lack the inner courage and strength to say, “No.” *Houston Chronicle* reported:

The words of an old proverb—“Tell me who you walk with, and I’ll tell you who you are”—gained new meaning on Thursday with the release of a national study showing that teenagers whose friends were sexually active were more likely to smoke, drink or use illegal drugs.

Teenagers who reported that at least half of their friends were sexually active were 31 times likelier to get drunk, 5½ times likelier to smoke and 22½ times likelier to have tried marijuana, according to the study, released by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.⁹

The type of friends you choose can have a serious effect on your future. One of the facts about great leaders is that they are willing to be loners. They don’t yield to peer pressure. Alan Loy McGinnis, in *Bringing Out the Best in People*, stated:

In fact, one could make a case for the proposition that all great leaders are loners. Contrary to what some think, the outstanding motivators are not necessarily the gregarious, backslapping types at all. Rather, they often spend a great deal of time alone, thinking and planning.

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In order to lead, it is simply imperative to have independence. Psychologist Nathaniel Branden has said:

Innovators and creators are persons who can to a higher degree than average accept the condition of aloneness. They are more willing to follow their own vision even when it takes them far from the mainland of the human community. Unexplored spaces do not frighten them—or as much as they frighten those around them. This is one of the secrets of their power. That which we call “genius” has a great deal to do with courage and daring, a great deal to do with *nerve*.

So it is a mistake to attempt to be “one of the boys” in order to lead. If we examine the personalities of people like Florence Nightingale, Churchill, Napoleon, de Gaulle, Martin Luther, and Mother Teresa, we cannot escape the conclusion that these people have been quite eccentric. And to some extent, this very eccentricity helps get them recognized as leaders.¹⁰

Eccentricity, the willingness to be different from others, is what makes great leaders. They aren’t crowd pleasers; they don’t do things just because others are doing them. These individuals have character; they’re willing to stand up for their convictions.

Sexual Peer Pressure

One of the biggest battles teens face is sexual peer pressure. It's such a big issue that I wrote the book, *Sex: If You're Scared of the Truth—Don't Read This!* I report about a survey where “hundreds of sixth-to-ninth-graders were asked why they were having sex. Over seventy-five percent said to ‘fit in or to be cool.’ Only one student said, ‘Because I’m in love.’”

The excuse the sixth-to-ninth-graders gave for having sex was “to fit in or to be cool.” It's just another way of saying, “I yielded to peer pressure.” What many teens don't realize is the severe risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that can result in a lifetime of suffering and even lead to an early death. The intelligent decision is to be firmly committed to sexual abstinence until marriage. Here's a quote from the book:

Is it rational for an individual to choose a path of abstinence because he or she is afraid of getting an STD? Is a boy or girl who practices abstinence from all sexual activity stupid because he or she realizes that there are over 25 STDs they can be infected with? And if they get HIV, it may be irreversible and last a lifetime. If a girl gets Human Papillomavirus (HPV), she may develop cancer; if she gets chlamydia, she may become infertile. Her dreams for a happy future can be shattered with just one sexual encounter. If anyone cares about their future, it's a very intelligent decision to be fearful of getting an STD....

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When a female dog is in heat, you can be certain any male dogs in the vicinity will try to mount her. We don't fault the dogs when they see a dog in heat and want to mount her. But youth aren't animals who must follow every instinct. We should have higher expectations for today's youth. They're human beings who can control their behavior. . . .

"But we live in a new age." We certainly do. But that's no excuse to follow the crowd. We need young people with backbones who will stand up and say, "Don't count me in when it comes to casual sex. My future is too important to be sacrificed for temporary pleasure."

Don't mistake infatuation for love. You may feel like you're walking on clouds and the sun is shining full force on your life—but when thunderstorms arise, your dreams will be shattered. True love will take you through storms. Infatuation is fleeting emotional love. Sadly, many youth make choices because of infatuation and suffer bitter consequences for their decisions.

The intelligent and simple solution: NO SEX UNTIL MARRIAGE! Sound too simplistic? It's the solution that will guarantee you'll never pass on syphilis, genital warts, chlamydia, genital herpes, gonorrhea, trichomoniasis, or HIV/AIDS to your future marriage partner.¹¹

Another advantage of avoiding premarital sex is it will guarantee you'll never get pregnant. Speaking about young

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mothers, Rosemary C. Salomone, Professor of Law at St. John's University School of Law, disclosed these facts: "Only seven out of 10 teenage mothers complete high school. Meanwhile, their offspring are more likely to have low birth weight and other medical problems, and to be victims of abuse and neglect. Like their mothers, these children are twice as likely to drop out of school, twice as likely to have a child themselves in their teens, and one and a half times as likely to be out of work and school in their late teens and early 20s. And so the cycle continues."¹²

But mention abstinence, and many want to attack it as an old-fashioned and unrealistic lifestyle for today. But abstinence until marriage produces healthy families. If one day you want to have a happy healthy family and to save yourself for the person you'll marry, be determined to keep yourself pure.

"But everyone's having sex." It's not true. Over 50% of high school students claim they have never had sex. Remember, you're not an animal; you can control your passions.

To be successful, you need short- and long-term goals for your life. Do you want to graduate from high school and go to college? Do you want to have a career, be healthy, have a happy marriage, and raise a family? What must you do to achieve your goals? Plan your actions and write them down. Take a wrong turn, and you may have a head-on collision that will shatter all your goals.

We'll first examine the power of bad habits. Then we'll discuss how you may develop the courage to stand up for your beliefs and say with a loud clear voice, "No," when you know that's the decision you want to make.

The Power of Bad Habits

People of character also know to avoid bad habits. Many teens think they can quit a habit anytime they want. They're young and strong. They're wrong. Think how much money adults spend trying to break habits they started as teens. Let's look at smoking. It may seem like a little habit that can easily be stopped. I typed "quit smoking" with quotes in Google and received over 11 million websites. This is what the American Lung Association said on its website:

Smoking-related diseases claim an estimated 430,700 American lives each year. Smoking costs the United States approximately \$97.2 billion each year in health-care costs and lost productivity. It is directly responsible for 87 percent of lung cancer cases and causes most cases of emphysema and chronic bronchitis.¹³

One wonders how anyone would take up such a foolish habit when it causes such devastating results. When I was operations manager, the foreman of our tool and die department smoked. I'd warn him about smoking those coffin nails, but was ignored. About ten years later he visited me in the foyer of my company, a dying sick man. He had started his own company, but now he had lung cancer. A few months later he died. Think about it! He died an early death just because of the stupid habit of smoking cigarettes!

Once in a while when I see my employees smoking, I warn

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them about its dangers. It's a costly habit, and many have been doing it for years. One worker who smoked quit. He was 32 years old. He quit after the doctors made an eight-inch cut into his chest for open heart surgery and warned him to stop smoking. It took open heart surgery to finally convince him to stop smoking.

Some people listen only when a sledge hammer hits them. Parents, teachers, clergy, and friends warn them; but they refuse to change. Some have the habit of smoking marijuana, others sniffing glue, drinking alcohol, popping pills, or taking drugs. Some young superstar actors and singers are popping pills, so why not do the same? Some teens have "pharming parties," where they get together and barter for their prescription drugs from their home, such as attention-deficit-disorder drugs, painkillers, antidepressants, or prescription drugs. Some mix these drugs with alcohol. Because these chemicals cause a sensation of well-being, many become addicted because their body craves these experiences. Some of these drugs can cause liver failures, seizures, brain bleeding, memory loss, depression, insomnia, anxiety, suicidal behaviors or attempts, and even death from overdose.

Some teens steal prescription drugs from home, others buy drugs from drug pushers. How do drug pushers get teens to buy their drugs? Drug pushers understand the laws of habit. Sell drugs to teens cheap, or even offer them at first for free. Get them hooked on the drugs and then sell them at regular price.

What do many teens do? They go for the quick high and take the drug. Remember, they're teens. They're strong. They can

quit any time they want. The trouble is teens don't understand the power of habits. Established habits are extremely difficult to overcome.

Taylor Hooton smiled a lot, was popular with girls, and had many friends. He dreamed of being the starting pitcher for Plano West Senior High School. "He always came to the field in good spirits," his baseball coach said.

A junior varsity coach suggested to six-foot, one-inch Taylor he should get bigger. Taylor listened and began taking steroids. He added 30 pounds to his weight, and now weighed 205 pounds. But something happened to this normal upbeat kid, he became irritable, flew into rages, stole several hundred dollars from his parents, pounded the floor with his fists, and one time punched a wall injuring his pitching hand.

His behavior became worse. "I'll just take a knife and end it now," he once told his mother. His parents sent him to a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist said because of his low self-esteem he believed he had to be bigger to measure up. The doctor prescribed an antidepressant to fight the depression he would have on withdrawal from steroids.

After a trip to England with his parents, Taylor came home. The parents found that he had stolen two digital cameras and a laptop computer from the hotel where they had stayed. They grounded him. He asked his mother to reconsider, but she refused. The next day, a month after his 17th birthday, he took his belt, made a noose, and hanged himself from a door. When his father and police searched the room, they found steroids hidden behind a radio on his desk. When they did an autopsy, they found he had steroids in his system.¹⁴

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Readers Digest in “The Dangerous New High,” said, “Teenagers are stealing pills from your medicine cabinet and sharing them with friends—sometimes with deadly consequences.” At some of these pharming parties teenagers throw their pills into a bowl and grab an assortment. Other times they barter their pills. Often they take pills with alcohol.

Roger Stone, a fire captain in Olympia, Washington, lost his son when he combined beer and methadone. Their 18-year-old son, Tyler, called his parents that he was staying with his friends. The next morning his friends found him unconscious.

The article pointed out, “Even worse, kids rarely take just one pill. Many of the drugs at pharming parties are depressants, which slow down brain function, says Glen Hanson, PhD, a professor of pharmacology and toxicology at the University of Utah and former acting director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Now add alcohol, another depressant, to the mix. ‘All decrease brain activity, and they enhance one another.’ So a Vicodin-Ambien-Xanax-booze combination can be extremely dangerous. ‘It can do more than put you to sleep,’ says Hanson. ‘You can be put to sleep *permanently*.’”¹⁵

The magazine *Time* in, “Balding, Wrinkled and Stoned,” pointed out:

Of the more than 75 million baby boomers who came of age in the 1960s and '70s, millions experimented with drugs during their impressionable teenage years, and millions went on to enter middle age—and are now headed into their senior years—with decades-long addictions....

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What makes the problem especially hard for seniors is that the wages of drug abuse are cumulative. A lifetime of recreational chemistry also means a lifetime of neglect of overall health—as a recent morning meeting at Odyssey House illustrated. There were too many canes in evidence for a group so comparatively young—the legacy of joints wrecked by years of undertreated diabetes—and too many bad hearts and bum livers and vascular systems fighting hypertension. “This is the first generation to have a high incidence of using recreational drugs,” says SAMHSA epidemiologist Joseph Gfroerer. “All this puts them at risk for problems.”¹⁶

I know those who are reading this are teens, but let me warn you, chickens come home to roost. If you think you can abuse your body as a teen and there are no future affects, you have an illusion. Would you like to join those in middle age who now have to walk around with the aid of a cane with bad hearts, bum livers, and vascular systems fighting hypertension because of some foolish things you started as a teenager? Or would you like to join millions of others who refused to be pressured into following a destructive lifestyle and today have healthy bodies?

How to Say, “NO!”

1. Be firmly committed. “Peer pressure will not influence or control me!”

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2. Understand the serious consequences of: smoking, drugs, alcohol, pills, and premarital sex. Be determined you will never do anything that would put your body at risk.

3. Refuse to be embarrassed or intimidated by those who are smoking, drinking, taking drugs, or sexually active.

4. Be more concerned about having a successful future than some temporary joy ride that can result in a lifetime of suffering.

5. Don't let your mind and heart become a garbage dump. As an intelligent being, you want to protect your body. Why not include the mind and heart? Refuse to look at soft and hard-core pornography on cable, Internet, magazines, and videos. Avoid sexually suggestive music, television shows promoting sex, drugs, and alcohol. Be careful about spending time alone in cars or the privacy of a bedroom. Never allow yourself to be fondled.

6. Be bold and let your commitments be known. Obey your conscience: the moral code that tells you what's right and wrong.

7. Avoid tempting situations like parties where alcohol and drugs are present to break down your resistance.

8. Make decisions to build healthy relationships. Don't pursue the motto: "I'm young only once." One bad decision can result in a lifetime of remorse.

9. Be mature enough not to feel lonely and left out

when others participate in activities you don't believe in.

10. Find out where teens who share your convictions meet and join them. Make it your aim to associate with like-minded individuals. If you hang around with the loose crowd, what can you expect?

Courage

If you want to sum up these ten principles of “How to Say, ‘No!’” to peer pressure, it's one word—courage. Courage that's not afraid to stand up for your beliefs. Courage that's willing to be different and ridiculed. Courage that's willing to stand alone.

Is it easy? No! You wouldn't need courage if it were a simple thing to do. But courageous individuals are willing to stand up tall and straight for what's right. The reward? They'll reap a lifetime of benefits. In contrast, many will pay a high price for their foolish decisions to yield themselves to alcohol, drugs, and sex. The key to not getting into destructive habits is to not take the first step.

Quitting a Bad Habit

There are other types of teens: they recognize they have made wrong choices and want to quit. They recognize the habit or habits they have are unhealthy and can lead to a path of destruction. They know it won't be easy, but they are determined to succeed. The problem with habits is there are two forces within us: the force that wants to quit the bad habit

The Importance of Character for Success

and the force that enjoys the bad habit. To break the bad habit, there must be a stronger determination within that wants to quit rather than yield to the good feeling from the habit.

The best thing is to be courageous and unashamedly speak out that you're forsaking your destructive lifestyle. You may be ridiculed, but don't let it phase you. Expect it. Brush all oppositions aside. You're now in the driver's seat of your life, not those around you. A great help in overcoming bad habits is to find new friends who aren't following the destructive lifestyle you're trying to overcome.

There's another type of individual who realizes that the best time to pluck weeds is when they first appear; the longer the delay the more difficult it becomes. Benjamin Franklin was one of the Founding Fathers of our nation, a noted author, politician, scientist, inventor, statesman, and diplomat. Dale Carnegie, in *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, pointed out what Ben Franklin did to overcome his bad habits:

He gave himself a severe going-over *every* night. He discovered that he had thirteen serious faults. Here are three of them: wasting time, stewing around over trifles, arguing and contradicting people. Wise old Ben Franklin realized that, unless he eliminated these handicaps, he wasn't going to get very far. So he battled with one of his shortcomings every day for a week, and kept a record of who had won each day's slugging match. The next week, he would pick out another bad habit, put on the gloves, and when the bell rang he would come out of his corner fighting. Franklin kept

up this battle with his faults every week for more than two years.¹⁷

Is it any wonder that Ben Franklin became so successful and one of the most influential men our nation has ever produced? What would happen if you would look in the mirror, take a serious look at yourself, and ask, “What are my faults?” Then seriously think on this question, put on your boxing gloves, and be determined to fight every one of your faults, regardless how long it takes. You welcome corrections. You want to be disciplined. You want the best life. You won’t give up until you’re victorious.

You’re willing to go through the painful process of self-examination. Is it easy? Absolutely not! But those with courage to quit bad habits and those desirous of sterling character will do everything possible to change.

There’s no one who knows you better than your parents. If you really want to know your faults and eliminate them, go to your parents and ask them, “How can I be a better son or daughter? Please be very frank. I really want to do what’s right.”

Proceed with caution when you do this. Your parents may have a heart attack. By doing this is one of the quickest ways to discover your flaws.

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 CONVINCe THEM THAT WHAT YOU OFFER WILL SATISFY THE WANT, AND PLACE YOUR PROPOSITION WITHIN THEIR REACH. [Capitals in original.]¹

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.²

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.”³

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.]⁴

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.⁵

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.⁶

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

Golden Rule Thinking

wasn't a single table available, so I sat at the bar. A waiter rushed by with a tray full of dirty dishes. He saw me and said, "I'll be right with you." He came back and told me, "This isn't my section, but I don't want to keep you waiting." He took my order, which included a Diet Coke. "We don't carry that, sir," he said.

I told him that a glass of water would be just fine.

Minutes later he appeared with my food, then rushed back to his section.

He showed up again with a surprise. An ice-cold bottle of Diet Coke! "Where did this come from?" I asked.

"There's a grocery store around the corner," he told me.

"But you're running around like crazy. How did you find the time to go get it?"

"I didn't, sir," he said. "I asked my manager to go!"

What terrific service! It would have been easy for him to grumble and think, *Why do I have to do everything around here?* But he hadn't.

I went back to that same restaurant two months later. I asked for my favorite server. "He doesn't wait tables anymore," I was told. "They promoted him to management." I wasn't surprised. He'd been willing to do the small things that often lead to big results.⁷

Praising People to Success

Mary Kay Ash had considerable success as a salesperson and trainer. After spending 25 years in direct selling, she became frustrated because as a national training director the person she had trained received a promotion and earned twice her salary. She resigned and decided to write a book that would help women succeed. Mary Kay said:

I envisioned a company in which any woman could become just as successful as she wanted to be. The doors would be wide open to opportunity for women who were willing to pay the price and had the courage to dream.⁸

Mary Kay decided to start her own company with \$5,000 from her savings. She considered the Golden Rule the founding principle for her company and supported the idea of: “Praising people to success.” She advocated placing faith first, family second, and career third.” She became so successful that PBS named her as one of the 24 most influential business leaders of the last 25 years, and Baylor University said she was the greatest female entrepreneur in American history.⁹

Auto Salesman—Sold Twice as Many Cars as Any Other Human Being

Joe Girard, an auto salesman, has sold twice as many cars as any other human being for 11 years in a row. In fact, he sold twice as many cars as anyone in second place! What’s the secret

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of his success? Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman in their book, *In Search of Excellence*, tell this interesting story about this super salesman:

In explaining his secret of success, Joe said: “I send out over thirteen thousand cards every month.”

Why start with Joe? Because his magic is the magic of IBM and many of the rest of the excellent companies. It is simply service, overpowering service, especially after-sales service. Joe noted, “There’s one thing that I do that a lot of salesmen don’t, and that’s believe the sale really begins *after* the sale—not before....The customer ain’t out the door, and my son has made up a thank-you note.” Joe would intercede personally, a year later, with the service manager on behalf of his customer. Meanwhile he would keep the communications flowing:

Joe’s customers won’t forget him once they buy a car from him; he won’t let them! Every month throughout the year they get a letter from him. It arrives in a plain envelope, always a different size or color. “It doesn’t look like that junk mail which is thrown out before it is even opened,” Joe confides. And they open it up and the front of it reads, ‘I LIKE YOU.’ Inside it says ‘Happy New Year from Joe Girard.’” He sends a card in February wishing the customers a “Happy George Washington’s Birthday.” In March it’s “Happy St. Patrick’s Day.” They love the cards. Joe boasts, “You should hear the comments I get on them.”

Out of context, Joe's 13,000 cards sounds like just another sales gimmick. But like the top companies, Joe seems genuinely *to care*... Joe's sense of caring continued to shine through after the sale: "When [the customer] comes back for service, I fight for him all the way to get him the best."¹⁰

What's the secret of Joe's success? Notice he sincerely cares about his customers. It's not trickery or a sales ploy. His caring is shown not just when he sells a car, but also after selling the car. Joe said, "You've got to be like a doctor. Something's wrong with his car, so feel hurt for him."¹¹ Joe acts like a caring doctor and feels for his customers. No wonder he's so successful.

Thread of Caring

Did you notice a thread that runs through all these success stories—it's the thread of caring. It's Golden Rule thinking: always aiming to help others. In dealing with people, it's important to understand this important truth: People aren't interested in how much you know; they're interested in how much you care.

William James, noted psychologist and philosopher, stated: "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated."¹² People yearn to be loved and appreciated. It's the secret to building a business, having a happy marriage, raising contented children, or having a successful career.

Choose to Learn and Help Others

You may wonder where I got all this information and quotes. Early in my life, I made the choice to learn and help others. While in college I heard the college president say something that I never forgot. It has been a guiding principle of mine for many years. I urge you to memorize it and make it one of your aims also:

Seize the moment of awakened curiosity for the acquisition of knowledge.

What does it mean? If you're in bed and an idea jumps into your mind, jump out of bed and write it down. If you wait until the morning, you'll have forgotten it. If you don't know a word, look it up. Always be ready to acquire knowledge. I always carry a pen and 3 x 5 cards so when ideas come I can write them down. I subscribe to various magazines, and when I see articles of interest, I tear them out and put them into my filing system. When I read a book I own, I mark the pages I find interesting. I've also made copies of these pages and put them into my filing system.

I started my filing system over 50 years ago. First I clipped articles and put them and my comments in 3-inch loose leaf binders. Then I began to file my articles. Today I have three filing cabinets with four drawers each filled with articles. That's where I received much of the material for this book. I wanted to write a book one day on success that would help others, and I've been saving materials on this subject for many years.

As you can see, applying Golden Rule thinking is applicable

for all areas of your life. If you want a happy and fulfilled life, make helping others one of the prime objectives for your life. Glenn Cunningham, who was thought to be a hopeless cripple, overcame great obstacles and ran the world's fastest mile. He won the prestigious Sullivan Award as the nation's top amateur athlete and was inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame. When his track career was finished, he founded Cunningham Youth Ranch where for 30 years he and his wife helped over 9,000 troubled young people.¹³

Andrew Carnegie, founder of U.S. Steel, was a major catalyst in the Industrial Revolution to produce steel to make machinery and transportation possible. With the fortune he made, he founded libraries and donated to thousands of them in the U.S. and around the world. Carnegie said, "No man becomes rich unless he enriches others."¹⁴

Empathy, the ability to have a shared experience of how others think and feel, is critical for becoming successful. Those with empathy live a rich life because they aim to make others happy. It's one of the greatest paradoxes of life: If you save your life, you'll lose it; if you lose your life, you'll find it. An egocentric lifestyle leads only to misery; a life that aims to help others leads to happiness and fulfillment. But *you* must make the choice of what lifestyle you want to live.

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

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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.¹ 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.²

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.

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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*

Financial Times labeled him “the professor who established leadership as a respectable academic field.” Joseph Boyett and Jimmie Boyett in “*The Guru Guide*” list Warren Bennis’s basic Ingredients of Leadership:

Guiding Vision: You have a clear idea of what you want to do—professionally and personally—and the strength to persist in the face of setbacks, even failures.

Passion: You have an underlying passion for the promises of life, combined with a very particular passion for a vocation, a profession, a course of action. You love what you do.

Integrity: Your integrity is derived from self-knowledge, candor, and maturity. You know your strengths and weaknesses, are true to your principles, and have learned from experience how to learn from and work with others.

Trust: You have earned people’s trust.

Curiosity: You wonder about everything and want to learn as much as you can.

Daring: You are willing to take risks, experiment, and try new things.³

Read and study these six principles. What is your vision and passion? Do you have integrity and have you earned people’s trust? Are you curious and willing to step out even if you fail? These principles make great and successful leaders.

Practical Ideas for Teen Success

Listed below are 30 practical ideas for teen success. I encourage you to study and meditate on these principles. Be

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like Benjamin Franklin who spent over two years examining his flaws to overcome them. These practical ideas can become a major influence for your future.

1. Be a person of character—respectful, responsible, open-minded, humble, fair, compassionate, friendly, cooperative, diligent, and self-disciplined.

2. Don't be a liar; for once you're caught lying, who can trust you?

3. Avoid living a destructive lifestyle: don't smoke, drink, do drugs, gamble, or have premarital sex.

4. Be careful in your dating life. Don't just go for looks, but be committed to choose only those with character.

5. Be willing to resist peer pressure and to be firm in your values.

6. Choose your friends carefully. Aim to find where good people meet and join them.

7. Don't be a pessimist and go around complaining. If you have nothing good to say, keep quiet. Don't become known as a griper.

8. Don't defend your mistakes; learn to apologize quickly.

9. Don't just aim to make lots of money; learn to help others and to smell the roses.

10. Learn from other people's experience. Experience is the best teacher, but a wiser way to learn is from other people's experiences.

11. Get enough rest. You can't be a good student or employee if you're always tired.

12. Don't be a goof off. Give your employer an

honest day's work, even if you're the only one doing so.

13. If you run out of work, ask for more. Don't make a two hour project an all-day affair. You may get away with it, but in the long run, you'll get the reputation as a slacker. There's plenty of them around—don't become one of them.

14. Make it a habit to always be on time.

15. When working, learn to double and triple check your work. Mistakes can be costly for a company.

16. Put yourself in your employer's shoes. How would you want an employee to work if you were the employer?

17. Think like an owner by being skilled and efficient. Such employees advance and earn top wages

18. Become an expert in your field of work. Read books and trade magazines. Stay abreast of technology.

19. Be vigilant about your occupation and skills. If you see your occupation is changing, accept it and change with it.

20. Do you see a problem? Aim to become a solution.

21. Be teachable and welcome correction. Make it a practice to seek advice and counsel.

22. Become an employee that employers dream of hiring. Because such employees are rare, there's always a demand for them.

23. Be an enthusiastic learner. Be willing to go to school to further your education.

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24. Don't try to achieve success without working hard. That's an idle dream.

25. If you leave a job—don't burn your bridges. Build a reputation as a good employee. Your reputation follows you.

26. Be prepared for trouble. Don't fall apart when trouble strikes. Sometimes layoffs do occur.

27. Avoid debt. Don't live a life trying to impress others. Learn to live within your means.

28. Don't be just a talker or a dreamer. Success comes only to diligent workers who are willing to work hard and learn.

29. Be thankful and learn to appreciate what you have.

30. Live the Golden Rule by being a lover of people. It's the key for successful living.

Free Will to Choose

The decision to have a successful life hinges on you. You have free will. You can choose either to listen and learn, or to be proud and stubborn. You must decide. Remember, you reap what you sow. Reject counsel and wisdom: you'll suffer the consequences. Obey counsel and wisdom: you'll reap the rewards. There's an old saying, "You may lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."

I did something that had a major impact on my life. I've heard people say, "If I had to live my life over, I'd do things differently." That's wishful thinking. You can't live your life over. You have only one chance to live your life. But as a young person I envisioned myself lying in a coffin. Then I

said, “I’m going to live my life so when I’m older I won’t have any regrets.”

I can truthfully say, if I had the opportunity to live my life over, I’d do the same things that I have done. Life has led me into various careers: tool and die maker, foreman, tool designer, operations manager, teacher, assistant dean of boys, owner and president of three companies, and author. As a teenager, I never dreamed of any of these occupations. But life presented these choices to me, and because of these multiple careers, I’m able to write this book, trying to help teens become successful. If you look at our website, you’ll see my desire is to help everyone, both young and old, to become successful; and to restore the foundational principles that made our nation great. To me, it’s a fool’s dream to see how much money I can take to the grave with me.

A New Generation of Teens

Some of you reading this book will lay it aside; others will be so passionate for success that you’ll purchase your own copy. You’ll use a highlighter and mark every important truth that you want to master. You’ll read it not just once, but you’ll read and study this book over and over until the truths for success become part of your life. You might not be the brightest in the class, but you have made the choice to have a successful life.

You’re young and the future lies before you. You want also to make this world a better place for others. America needs a new generation of teens with sterling character to stand up, put their shoulders back, and be determined to make our nation the best in the world. It won’t be easy, but you’re determined to answer that challenge. I wish you my very best.

Questions

1. The Challenge

1. What was the author's aim for writing, *Teen Success: If You Don't Want the Truth, Don't Read This?*
2. How did the author get a job in the career of his choice?
3. What is Lesson #1 when looking for employment?
4. a. What is one of the first things that is taught in the Marine Corps?
b. Why is it so important in the military to learn that lesson?
5. a. What did the author do to investigate the schools?
b. What kind of teens did he find in some of these schools?
6. What happened to the author after working six months as a tool designer?
7. List the three companies the author started.
8. How successful did his electrical discharge machining become? (You may view it at www.ReliableEDM.com)
9. Describe Henry Ford's dream.

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10. Describe Walt Disney's dream for Disneyland.

11. Describe Sir Winston Churchill's dream.

12. Describe Martin Luther King's dream.

13. What did McGinnis say was the secret for an average person to become successful?

14. What's your dream?

2. The Importance of Education

1. Why is education so important in today's changing world?

2. Describe the printing process of a book before and after the computer.

3. What transpired in our economy from 1800 to 2000?

4. Why is the chart showing how the U.S. evolved from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy to a service economy so important for teens to understand?

5. What major cause created such a difference in today's economy?

6. What has become so important in a modern economy?

7. What percentage of the U.S. population works in agriculture?

8. Why does agriculture today require so few workers?

Questions

9. How does a global positioning system aid farmers?
10. How much higher is the median wage of a college graduate than that of a high school graduate?
11. Why would an employer rather hire a high school graduate than a dropout?
12. What are the earning statistics between dropouts and high school graduates?
13. How much less does a high school dropout earn compared to a college graduate with a bachelor's degree?
14. What is likely to happen to dropouts?
15. Why were algebra, geometry, and trigonometry important to the author?
16. Why is having proper English skills so important today?
17. What are the two options for failing students?
18. How important are friends in the pursuit of success?

3. Educational Success

1. List the handicaps and the successes of George Washington Carver.
2. List the handicaps and the successes of Benjamin Franklin.

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3. List the handicaps and the successes of Helen Keller.
4. List the handicaps and the successes of Abraham Lincoln.
5. How would Albert Einstein probably be diagnosed today?
6. How would Thomas Edison probably be diagnosed today?
7. What can a person learn by going to a nursery?
8. What did Mrs. Wilbur Steele do when she ordered 50 baby chicks and they sent her 500?
9. What do Joseph Boyett and Jimmie Boyett in “*The Guru Guide*,” say failure does?
10. In spite of his severe handicaps, why did Glenn Cunningham become so successful?
11. What does John C. Maxwell, in *Developing the Leader Within You*, say about 300 highly successful people?
12. What excuse do some low achievers give for their failures?
13. Why is bitterness so destructive to teen success?
14. What characteristics do employers look for when hiring?

4. The Secret to Educational Success

1. What is the secret to educational success?
2. What are Denis Waitley's three precepts in "What Makes a Winner?"
3. What did Joe Sorrentino do that changed his life?
4. What is discipline?
5. What makes athletes successful?
6. What did *Fortune* magazine reveal in the article, "What it takes to be great"?
7. According to the book, *The Millionaire Next Door*, how did the millionaires become wealthy?
8. What was the result of the author's decision to exercise and eat healthy?
9. If you owned a thoroughbred horse worth five million dollars, how would you take care of it?
10. What is delayed reward?
11. What percentage of firms requires a basic skills test for job applicants?
12. List some of the ways for continual education.

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13. What attitude did the president of Colgate-Palmolive have when he first started working at the company?
14. Tom Hopkins provides seminars on how to master the art of selling. What did the top salesman say to Hopkins about other salesmen in his company?
15. Tom Hopkins has trained nearly a million salespeople. What did he say was the characteristics of great sales people?
16. Why have the author's children's books won so many awards?
17. What is one of the best sources for teens to get advice?
18. What did Henry Ford say was one of the secrets of success?
19. Why does listening to parents help someone avoid problems?
20. Why is empathy one of the critical attributes for success?
21. What was the first question that Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant asked his football players?
22. What did Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant tell his new football players to do?
23. How do other cultures treat their elderly?

5. Choosing and Preparing for the Right Career

1. What is the ideal job?
2. Why should people be careful about seeking employment in playing professional sports?
3. What kinds of tests are available to show your strengths and weaknesses?
4. What four things should you ask yourself concerning your career?
5. Before making a career choice, what are some of the things you should do?
6. What has happened because of globalization and automation concerning agriculture and service employment?
7. What are some of the high-paying jobs in industry?
8. What are some of the high-paying jobs in service?
9. What does the *Occupational Handbook* for the U.S. Department of Labor provide?
10. Where on the web can one find free information about this handbook?
11. What information is available free from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for choosing a career?
12. What are some advantages to establishing your career

choice early?

13. List some summer jobs available for teens.

14. Why should you avoid debt like the plague?

15. What is APR?

16. If your debt is \$1,000 for the entire year and the APR is 19%, how much interest will you have to pay every year if you don't pay off the debt?

17. According to David Brooks, what has happened to the United States during the past 30 years?

18. Why do some people call the lottery a tax on stupidity?

19. What are the seven key money lessons?

20. What are the eight shopping tips?

21. What did Thomas Stanley and William Danko say were three words that profile the rich?

22. If you don't have the money to buy something, what should you do?

23. How important is the issue of dating and marriage for your future success?

24. Explain why it is important to date someone who practices Golden Rule thinking.

Questions

25. What is a good test to discover if the one you are dating practices Golden Rule thinking?

6 The Resume and the Interview

1. What should be included about educational experience for those just entering the job market?
2. What should be included about activities for those just entering the job market?
3. What should be included about skills for those just entering the job market?
4. What should be included about work experience for those just entering the job market?
5. Why is having an inferiority complex damaging in seeking employment?
6. What should you do if you're failing your classes?
7. What should you do with things you cannot change?
8. What caused Elmer Thomas, a former senator from Oklahoma, to forsake his inferiority complex?
9. Describe an unhealthy self-esteem.
10. Describe a healthy self-esteem.
11. What does a handshake convey?

12. What does Helene Cavanaugh recommend when shaking hands?

13. What is one of the first things the author looks for when hiring an employee?

14. What did J. C. Penney consider a person who salts his food before tasting it?

15. What did Paul Boynton say is the biggest mistake people make when applying for jobs?

16. What is the best way to dress for a job interview?

17. Why are employers reluctant to hire teens?

18. What extra steps can you take if you want a job at a specific company?

19. John Wanamaker said, “I am willing to pay as high as one hundred thousand dollars a year for a manager who can fill the place of the one I lost.” What was the outstanding quality of that employee?

7. The Free Enterprise System and America’s Foundation

1. What are the two basic types of economic systems?

2. Describe operating a farm under the communist economic system?

3. Describe operating a farm under the free enterprise system?

Questions

4. What did Alan Greenspan report that caused China to change from its centrally planned agrarian economy?
5. What did Karl Marx say would happen to capitalism?
6. What did Alan Greenspan say why Karl Marx was wrong about the way people organize and create value?
7. What is the fundamental flaw of communism?
8. Why does America's free enterprise system and the promotion of faith in God produce the needed balance for its economy?
9. What is the solution for ending corruption?
10. What does an examination of the opening and closing paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence clearly reveal?
11. What did the Bill of Rights say concerning religion?
12. What's the solution to produce moral people?
13. What did Peter Berger say about the historic relationship between God and state?
14. Why is faith in God an important tenant for our nation's future?
15. What does naturalism believe?

16. What is moral relativism?

17. What are the fruits of moral relativism?

18. List three points from the government's paper on *Religious Expression in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles*.

19. What did Teddy Roosevelt say would happen if we just educate a person in the mind but not in morals?

20. What did Erika Harold do when she won the Miss America contest?

8. The Importance of Understanding the Free Enterprise System

1. Why is the free enterprise system important for teens to know?

2. What is the Golden Rule?

3. How did the author use the Golden Rule to build his successful company?

4. What did Zig Ziglar say you must do if you want everything in life?

5. What was Malcolm Mclean's idea that revolutionized shipping?

6. Why did the cleaning woman advance to become a

Questions

manager of a Holiday Inn?

7. What principle did the author use to teach his five automotive classes that proved to be so successful?

8. What is the secret to having friends?

9. What did Abraham Lincoln say was the secret to winning a man to your cause?

10. What was the secret of James Adamson in selling theatre chairs to George Eastman, founder of the Kodak Company?

11. What did the young advertising copywriter discover to make his ads more appealing?

12. What will happen to companies that quit focusing on pleasing customers?

13. What are the three things the author believed were essential in having his company become successful?

14. Another individual opened an EDM company shortly before the author did. Why did that company fail?

15. What are the three principles the author says were the reasons for his success?

16. What did Joseph Boyett and Jimmie Boyett in “*The Guru Guide*,” say were the three things that distinguish

leaders and managers?

9. Advancing On the Job

1. Give a short summary of “Elephant ears, eagle eyes, and a pinhole mouth.”

2. Why did the author refuse to go with the publicist of his new book?

3. What did George Berkley say was the number one guideline in “Getting Along With Your Boss”?

4. Why is it so important to have eagle eyes while working?

5. What was Socrates’ answer to the young man on finding knowledge?

6. Why should new employees learn to keep quiet and learn?

7. How did Dale Carnegie manage to avoid getting a ticket even after being warned by a policeman?

8. Why do some people refuse sound advice?

9. Define enthusiasm.

10. How critical is enthusiasm for success?

11. Why is attire so important on the job?

12. What are some things to be avoided concerning attire

on the job?

13. What are the three principles for successful management?

14. What is the failure of permissive management?

10. The Importance of Character for Success

1. List the characteristics of people of character.

2. What is the result when someone lies?

3. What is the normal reaction if someone comes late several times in a row without an excuse?

4. In *Bringing Out the Best in People*, what did Alan Loy McGinnis say was the reason 21 executives were derailed while 20 made it to the top?

5. In *The Millionaire Mind*, what five factors does Thomas J. Stanley say millionaires mention the most for their success?

6. What human quality did 1,300 senior executives say was necessary for business success?

7. In an in-depth study of 341 salespeople, what was the major difference between the top and average salespeople?

8. What is compassion?

9. What did a teenager do for the “Make-A-Wish Foundation”?

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10. What was the reason the prison guard showed compassion to John McCain when he was a prisoner of war in Vietnam?
11. What is peer pressure?
12. Describe a scene where peer pressure may be applied by an individual or a group.
13. What kind of people yield to peer pressure?
14. What did Alan Loy McGinnis say about great leaders?
15. List at least six sexually transmitted diseases.
16. List some of the advantages of not engaging in premarital sex.
17. What percentage of high school students have never had sex?
18. What do many teens think they can do about habits?
19. What are some of the diseases the American Lung Association says you can get from smoking?
20. What drastic measure causes some people to change bad habits?
21. What is one method drug pushers use to entice teens to take drugs?
22. List five ways on, “How to Say, ‘NO’”
23. What is the one word to describe the ten principles of

Questions

“How to say ‘No!’” to peer pressure?

24. What did Benjamin Franklin do to overcome his bad habits?

25. Who is a good source to go to if you want to know your faults and eliminate them?

11. Golden Rule Thinking

1. What is the main idea for Golden Rule thinking?

2. What did James H. Worsham say was the simple secret of persuasion?

3. What was the secret the pump manufacturer used to increase the sales of its pumps?

4. What is the personal philosophy of Jim McIngvale who has more sales per square foot than any other competitor?

5. George Testar had a new rival for his department store. What did he do to stay competitive?

6. What did Doug Hall say was the key to effective marketing?

7. What does Morton Hunt say a skilled persuader does when someone objects to his proposal?

8. What secret allowed Joe Girard to sell twice as many cars as anyone else?

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9. What does Girard do when a customer requires auto service?
10. What is the thread that runs through all these success stories?
11. What did William James say was the deepest principle in human nature?
12. Give a practical application for seizing the moment of awakened curiosity for the acquisition of knowledge.
13. After winning the prestigious Sullivan Award as the nation's top amateur athlete and being inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame, what did Glenn Cunningham do?

12. The Choice

1. List two positive views of success.
2. List two negative views of success.
3. How do selfish and proud individuals often define success?
4. Who was Eddie Rickenbacker?
5. How did the men survive on the Pacific Ocean for 24 days?
6. What did Rickenbacker do to motivate the men so they wouldn't give up hope?

Questions

7. What was the biggest lesson Rickenbacker learned from being hopelessly lost in the Pacific Ocean?
8. What is success?
9. What should people remove in order to fulfill their dreams?
10. What is guiding vision?
11. What is passion?
12. What is integrity?
13. What is trust?
14. What is curiosity?
15. What is daring?
16. What is a person of character?
17. List some destructive habits.
18. What's a good standard for dating?
19. What's a good standard for friends?
20. What are some habits of good employees?
21. What should you aim to do when you see a problem?
22. How should you handle debt?

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23. What is the key to successful living?

24. What is free will?

25. America needs a new generation of teens. What are the characteristics of these teens?

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February, 1986.

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¹¹ Tom Hopkins, *How to Master the Art of Selling*, Warner Books, 1980, pp. 14-15.

¹² Ibid. p. 14.

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⁵ Ibid.

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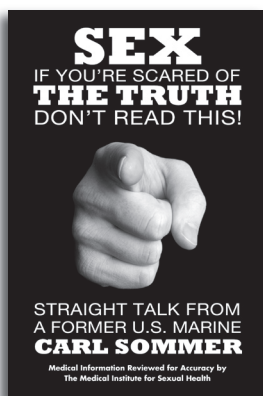
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