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## Learn How to Become Rich

*“When your desires are strong enough, you will appear to possess superhuman powers to achieve.”*

—Napoleon Hill

If someone with limited abilities can become rich, why is it that so few people become wealthy? Even though we live in the most affluent country in the world, where most people earn and spend a fortune in the course of their working lifetimes, why is it that the majority end up dependent on Social Security, pensions and relatives when they retire?

If a person earning \$25,000 per year would just save \$2,500 per year, 10 percent of his income, and invest it carefully to earn a return of 10 percent compounded over the course of his working lifetime—the years from age 21 to age 65 (44 years)—it would grow to \$1,794,762 through the miracle of compound interest.

If a mentally retarded young man without a single advantage in the world can become wealthy (see Introduction), and a person earning \$25,000 a year, saving 10 percent of his income, can become a millionaire or a multimillionaire, then almost anyone can become rich who wants it badly enough.

## Why People Don't Become Rich

The question I began to ask was, "Why is it that people don't become wealthy?" In a country like ours, with the opportunities that we have, why is it that so few people retire financially independent? And I eventually found the answers. Here are what I consider to be the five reasons why people don't become wealthy.

### Who, Me?

First, at the top of the list, is that it never *occurs* to them. The average person has grown up in a family where he has never met or known anyone who was wealthy. He goes to school and socializes with people who are not wealthy. He works with people who are not wealthy. He has a *reference group* or a social circle outside of work who are not wealthy. He has no role models who are wealthy. If this has happened to you throughout your formative years, up to the age of 20, you can grow up and become a fully mature adult in our society without it ever occurring to you that it's just as possible for you to become wealthy as for anyone else.

This is why people who grow up in homes where their parents are wealthy are much more likely to become wealthy as adults than people who grew up in homes where their parents are not wealthy. Wealth achievement is part of the worldview of children of wealthy parents.

Therefore, the first reason why people don't become wealthy is it never occurs to them that it is possible for them. And of course, if it never occurs to them, then they will never take any of the steps necessary to make it a reality.

### Make a Decision!

Another reason that people don't become wealthy is that they never *decide* to. Even if a person reads a book, attends a seminar, or associates with people who are financially successful, nothing changes until she makes a decision to do something different. Even if it occurs to a person that she could become wealthy if she just did certain things in a specific way, if she doesn't decide to take the first step, she ends up staying as she is. *If you continue to do what you've always done, you'll continue to get what you've always got.*

The primary reason for underachievement and failure is that the great majority of people don't decide to be successful. They never make a firm, unequivocal commitment or definite decision that they are going to become wealthy. They mean to, and they intend to, and they hope to, and they're going to, *someday*. They wish and hope and pray that they will make a lot of money, but they never decide, "I am going to do it!" This decision is an essential first step to becoming financially independent.

### Maybe Tomorrow

*Procrastination* can prevent people from becoming wealthy. People always have a good reason not to begin doing what they know they need to do to achieve financial independence. It is always the wrong month, the wrong season, or the wrong year. Business conditions in their industry are no good, or they may be too good. The market isn't right. They may have to take a risk, or give up their security. Maybe next year.

There always seems to be a reason to procrastinate. As a result, they keep putting it off, month by month, year by year, until it's too late. Even if it has occurred to a person that he can become wealthy, and he has made a decision to change, procrastination will push all his plans into the indefinite future. *Procrastination is the thief of time, and of life.*

### Pay the Price

What economists refer to as the *inability to delay gratification* is another reason that people retire poor. The great majority of people have an irresistible compulsion to spend every single penny they make and whatever else they can borrow or buy on credit. If you cannot delay gratification and discipline yourself to refrain from spending everything you make, you cannot become wealthy. If you cannot practice frugality as a lifelong habit, it will be impossible for you to achieve financial independence. As W. Clement Stone, founder of Combined Insurance Company of America and one of the richest men in the world, said, "If you cannot save money, the seeds of greatness are not in you."

### Take the Long View

The last reason that people retire poor is perhaps as important as, if not more important than, all the others. It is *lack of time perspective*. In a longitudinal study conducted in the 1950s and published in 1964 as

*The Unheavenly City*, Dr. Edward Banfield of Harvard University studied the reasons for upward socioeconomic mobility in the United States. He wanted to know how you could predict whether an individual or a family was going to move upward one or more socioeconomic groupings and be wealthier in the next generation than they were this generation.

Banfield studied and compared his findings against the most common explanations for economic success in the United States and in other countries. Was it education? No. Many people with good educations actually moved *down* economically. Was it intelligence? No. A lot of very intelligent people were poor and unable to earn a living. Was it being born into the right family? No. Many people born into affluent families did poorly as adults, while many people with poor educations became very successful. Was it being in the right part of the country? Was it being in the right industry? Was it luck? What factors were best at predicting that a person would move up economically over the years?

### ***Project into the Future***

All Banfield's research brought him to a single factor that he concluded was more accurate than any other in predicting success in the United States—*time perspective*, defined as “the amount of time that you take into consideration when planning your day-to-day activities, and when making important decisions in your life.” Time perspective referred to how far you projected into the future when you decided what you were going to do or not do in the present.

An example of a long time perspective is the common habit of upper class families in England to register their children at Oxford or Cambridge as soon as the children are born, even though the youngsters will not be attending for 18 or 19 years. This long-term thinking is what causes parents to open savings accounts for their young children to assure that they will be able to attend good colleges when they graduate from high school.

Saving and planning for the future is *long time perspective in action*. The young couple who begins putting \$50 a month aside in an education fund so that their newborn child can go to the college or university of his or her choice is a couple with long time perspective. They are willing to sacrifice in the short term to assure better results and outcomes in the long term. People with long time perspectives almost invariably move up economically in the course of their lifetimes.

***Pay the Price in Advance***

A person who graduates from high school, goes on to university, attends medical school, earns an M.D. degree, perseveres through internship and residency, and then after 10 or more years of training becomes a licensed physician, has a long time perspective. He has earned the right, through years of sacrifice and delayed gratification, to prestige, status, and a high standard of living. That 10 to 12 years of work and study is an investment in his career for the rest of his life. His long time perspective will also assure a higher standard of living for his children, as well as better schools, and more opportunities for them. His children will very likely marry better, have higher social and economic aspirations, and live better lives.

The time perspective of a doctor investing 10 or more years in education at the beginning of his career may be the lifetimes of one or two generations, 50 to 70 years. We intuitively sense that a doctor, someone who has dedicated so many years to learn his craft so that he can attend to us and our families when he is most needed, is a person who has earned our respect and esteem. This appreciation for long-term thinking may be why the family doctor is usually at the top when surveys of the most respected people in society are compiled.

***Attitude Is Everything***

Time perspective is an essential measure of *social class*. A wealthy family or a good education will help, but ultimately your level of status and prestige will be determined by how far you think and plan into the future as you go about your day-to-day work and life.

If an immigrant couple comes to the United States with nothing and goes to work at menial jobs, sacrificing so that their children can go to school and attend university, that immigrant couple is demonstrating class, no matter how well or poorly they are doing in the present. They are virtually guaranteeing upward social mobility for themselves and their offspring.

The opposite of a long time perspective is no time perspective at all. The average professional person has a time perspective of 10, 15, or 20 years, perhaps longer. The average laborer has a time perspective of about two pay periods. The derelict, the hopeless drug addict, or the alcoholic at the bottom of the social pyramid has a time perspective of hours, or even minutes. He does not think about the future at all, only the next drink or shot. Each person's position and direction in life, from the top to the bottom of society, are determined by the length of their time perspective.

***Think about the Future***

The very act of *lengthening* your time perspective, of thinking far into the future, changes your attitude and your personality. You begin the process of getting rich your own way by thinking ahead 10 or 20 years. As you do, you become more capable of setting bigger, longer-term goals and making long-term plans for their accomplishment. You become more thoughtful about your decisions, and more sensitive to the long-term consequences of the ways that you invest your time or money. You develop greater patience and perseverance. You actually become a better and more positive person.

From this day forward, practice lengthening your time perspective. Begin to see that everything that you are doing today is part of a long process that is moving you inexorably toward becoming financially independent, if not rich, over the course of your career. This is the mind-set of people who move continually upward and onward throughout their lives.

***Commit to Your Career***

Many people begin work or start careers and it never occurs to them they may be doing the same job for 20 or 25 years. It doesn't occur to them that they should invest any amount of time, money, and energy to learn how to do their jobs very, very well.

You should be prepared to make any sacrifice to excel at what you do. This enables you to earn the very most that it is possible to earn in that field. Even if it takes years of hard work to get to the top, with a long time perspective you will persevere. You will realize that *the time is going to pass anyway*. The only question is, how much will you be earning five years from today?

## Five Ways to Stay Poor

Once again, here are the five reasons why people retire poor: One, it never occurs to them that they, too, can become wealthy. Two, if it does occur to them, they never *decide* to become wealthy. Three, if they do decide to do something to improve their financial lives, they *procrastinate*, sometimes all their lives. Four, they cannot discipline themselves to *delay gratification*, to resist spending everything they earn and a little bit more besides. Five, they operate with a *short time perspective*. They think and act day to day and month to month instead of planning 10 and 20 years into the future.

## Five Ways to Become Rich

If you are really serious about becoming wealthy, there are five primary ways that fortunes are made.

### Become an Entrepreneur

The number one road to riches, at the head of the list and on the top of the hit parade throughout U.S. history, is *entrepreneurship*, starting and building a successful business. Entrepreneurship includes every kind of business, from farming and trucking to real estate and computers.

Seventy-four percent of self-made millionaires in the United States, going back 200 years, come from self-owned businesses. An individual starts with an idea for a product or service, turns it into a business, builds it up from the ground floor, and as a result becomes wealthy. Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie, John Jacob Astor, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Ross Perot, Sam Walton, Bill Gates, Michael Dell, and Larry Ellison are all people who started with little or nothing and built their own successful businesses. And there are millions of others.

### Work Your Way Up

Another way to become rich is as a highly paid *executive* of a successful company, or as an employee of a company that awards stock options that become valuable. Ten percent of self-made millionaires in the United States are men or women who have joined large corporations, or companies that became large, and worked for these companies for many years. They usually worked hard; were promoted and paid well; earned stock options, bonuses, and profit sharing; and as a result of holding on to that money, became millionaires and multimillionaires.

Paul Allen started Microsoft with Bill Gates, sold out when he became ill, took much of his share of the company in stock, and is now a multibillionaire. The Seattle area is famous for having so many “Microsoft millionaires,” people who went to work for Microsoft in the 1970s and 1980s, sometimes as secretaries and programmers, received stock options, and became wealthy when they exercised them. Many senior executives receive bonuses and profit sharing worth many millions in a single year. Working for a large company that grows, pays well, and shares its profits is a major source of wealth.

Many executives have stayed with their corporations for many years; have risen to positions of seniority; are paid extremely well; are given stock options, profit sharing, and bonuses; and as a result of holding on to the money, they became millionaires. Not so long ago, Lee Iacocca, the chairman of Chrysler Corporation, was paid \$26.7 million for one year. Michael Eisner of Disney earned a \$150 million bonus. It's not too hard to become a self-made millionaire if you're making that kind of money in a year.

Become a Professional

A major source of self-made millionaires consists of *professional people*—doctors, dentists, lawyers, architects, engineers, and others with advanced degrees who can charge high fees for their services. These people earn their degrees, dedicate themselves to becoming very good at what they do, rise to the top of their professions, earn high incomes, and then hold on to the money. Ten percent of self-made millionaires in the United States fall into this category.

Get into Sales

An important source of self-made millionaires is *salespeople* and sales consultants. Five percent of self-made millionaires in the United States are men and women who are experts and at the top of their fields in selling. They never started their own businesses. Few of them went to college or earned professional degrees. Instead, they became very good at selling a product or service, and were paid well for doing it. In addition, they managed their money well, invested it intelligently, and made it grow until they were millionaires or better.

Fully 99 percent of self-made millionaires in America come from these four categories:

1. Self-owned businesses	74%
2. Senior executive positions	10%
3. Doctors, lawyers, and other professionals	10%
4. Salespeople and sales consultants	5%
Total	<u>99%</u>



## All the Others

The final 1 percent of self-made millionaires includes all the people who have made their money in the stock market, with inventions, in show business, through the authorship of books and songs, as lottery winners, and all other sources. Unfortunately, because this group gets so much publicity, many people think that they are typical of the people who get rich. The fact is that they are quite rare.

In this book, we'll concentrate on teaching you how to become a *money magnet* and how to achieve financial independence by starting your own business, investing intelligently, getting onto the fast track in your current job, moving to the top of your field, and a combination of two or more of these. You'll learn how to spot opportunities and how to get started. You will learn how to get the money you need, how to maximize your talents and abilities, and how to gain the knowledge you need in order to succeed financially in whatever field you choose.

## Definition of Wealth

Let's start off with the best definition of wealth. Wealth is *cash flow from other sources*. You may earn a lot of money, but you are wealthy only when your money works for you. To become wealthy, your job is to acquire money and then put it to work making more money. The key to wealth building is simple. It is called *adding value*. Successful people are those who find ways to add value in some way to a person or business, a product, or a service.

Here is an example of adding value: Domino's Pizza. Domino's added value to pizza by rapid delivery and as a result created a multimillion-dollar success story. Delivering something faster increases the perceived value of the product and lowers the price sensitivity.

You can add value by buying something in one place at one price and making it available in another place at a higher price. For example, buying a product or service manufactured in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, or Germany, importing it and selling it at a higher price in the United States is a way of adding value. All importation and distribution is based on this principle.

You can add value with services. You can perform a service that enhances the life or work of another person or that enables someone to

achieve a goal faster, more easily, more cheaply, or more conveniently. This is another way to add value. A dentist who takes away pain is adding value. An accountant who saves a client money on taxes is adding value. A salesperson who introduces a new product or service to a customer is adding value. Most fortunes in the United States begin with the sale of personal services.

## Find a Need and Fill It

All financial success, especially business success, is based on the old adage *find a need and fill it*. The subjective theory of value says that all value is in the eye of the beholder. Something is worth only what someone else will pay for it. People decide what price they will pay based on their feeling of need for the product or service, and the alternatives available.

Successful business is based on someone bringing together the factors of production—land, labor, capital, raw materials, and management—and creating a product or service that a customer will pay for at a price that is greater than the total cost of producing it. This is how the entrepreneur adds value to the combination of ingredients that go into creating a product or service. This difference between what it costs to produce and deliver and the price a customer is willing to pay for it is called profit, or added value.

Profit is the stuff out of which fortunes are made. Whenever you see an opportunity to give people what they want at a price greater than it costs you to produce it, you see an opportunity to make a profit. If you can create a way of making profits, you can build a business and begin moving toward financial success. Almost any profitable business or occupation can make you financially independent if you manage it intelligently.

## Big Fortunes from Small Ideas

Surprisingly enough, the businesses owned by self-made millionaires are usually quite ordinary. People become rich in construction and in subtrades like drywalling and roofing. They become rich running dry cleaning establishments and cafés. Some of them are truck drivers and

auctioneers, farmers and crane operators, computer software designers, and machine tool manufacturers. Virtually any field that offers an opportunity to excel and earn profits can serve as a springboard to riches. The key is for you to do the work better and more efficiently than others, and then to hold on to the profits and excess cash that you earn as a result.

People often ask me what field they should go into if they want to make a lot of money. The answer to this question is constantly changing, just as the wants, needs, demands, and desires of consumers are constantly changing. During the 1990s boom in technology and the explosion of the Internet-based companies, millionaires were being created at the rate of 10,000 per week! When these stock option-fueled companies collapsed, most of this new wealth disappeared, only to reemerge in the booming home and real estate markets nationwide. No one knows for sure where the rapid growth opportunities of tomorrow will occur, but they will continue to rise and fall as long as customer wants continue to change, creating opportunities for ambitious, entrepreneurial-minded people.

## One Idea Is All You Need

Tom Fatjo, who built Browning Ferris Industries, is a famous success story. He started off as an accountant. Because no one else would haul the weekly trash for his family and his neighbors, he bought a truck and started hauling the trash himself after work. Soon other unserved neighborhoods and municipalities asked him if he would haul their trash as well.

He became wealthy by standardizing the trash hauling industry locally, and then nationwide, something that had never been done before. By introducing mass-production methods and new efficiencies, he made trash hauling an extremely profitable business and became one of the richest entrepreneurs in the country.

Colonel Harland Sanders, starting at age 65, became wealthy selling a fried chicken recipe. Debbie Fields, with four children at home, started with a small shop and became wealthy selling cookies, as did Famous Amos. In each case, the entrepreneur took an existing need or desire and figured out a way to offer the product or service at high quality, combined with efficient operations that enabled the company to generate high profits.

## Maximize Your Assets

The logical question then comes up: “What do wealthy people do or have that enables them to accomplish so much more than the average?” I believe that people become rich as a result of developing what I call *leverage*. Leverage is the key to maximizing and multiplying your potential for success and financial achievement. Leverage enables you to accomplish vastly more than you could if you just relied on your own physical and mental efforts, as most people do. Leverage is the key to getting rich.

Here are 10 examples of leverage that you can develop and use to achieve financial independence.

### Specialized Knowledge

The first type of leverage is *knowledge*. Specialized knowledge gives you leverage because it makes you worth more, and makes your contribution more valuable. Doctors, lawyers, accountants, experienced salespeople, all have practical knowledge that is of value to others. This superior knowledge enables them to get better results faster. As a result, people prefer to use their services and are willing to pay them more.

There are three ways to develop leverage through knowledge: become an expert, specialize in high-value activities, and know your product well.

#### *Become an Expert*

Resolve to become an expert in your chosen field. Make a decision today to join the top 10 percent. Set it as a goal, make a plan, and work on becoming better every day. Read the best books in your field, and take every course and seminar you can find that will help you, even if you have to travel to attend. Listen to audio programs in your car. Become an ongoing do-it-yourself project.

#### *Specialize in High-Value Activities*

Specialize in those areas that are of greatest importance and value to your company or to your customers. Apply the 80/20 Rule, which says that 80 percent of your results come from 20 percent of your activities. Focus on the 20 percent of activities in your work that contribute the most value to yourself and to other people. Specialize in

excelling at those areas of specialized knowledge that customers care about the most.

### ***Know Your Product Well***

Know your product or service inside out. Aim to be recognized as the industry expert in your field. Remember that the person who has expert knowledge can make a far more valuable contribution than the person whose knowledge is just average. As a result, experts are paid much more for what they do.

### **Master Your Craft**

*Skill* is a type of leverage. The better you are at your job, the more you will be paid. The top 20 percent of salespeople earn as much as 15 times the average earnings of the bottom 80 percent. The top doctors, mechanics, lawyers, technical specialists, and leaders in every field earn vastly more than the average performer.

The keys to developing the leverage of skill are: be the best, never stop learning, and exceed expectations.

### ***Be the Best***

First, make a decision to be the best at what you do. Pay any price. Make any sacrifice. Go any distance to become excellent in your field. Even if it takes you several years to master your craft, the time is going to pass anyway.

### ***Never Stop Learning***

Dedicate yourself to continuous personal and professional improvement. Never allow yourself to become satisfied or complacent at your current level of skill. As Pat Riley, the basketball coach, once said, "If you're not getting better, you're getting worse!" There is a race on and you are in it. Resolve to win by learning and applying more and faster than your competitors.

### ***Exceed Expectations***

Always strive to exceed the expectations of your customers, your boss, and the people you serve. Make it a habit to always do more than you are paid for and do it better. If you commit yourself to doing more than you're paid for, you will always end up being paid more than you're getting today.

## Money Is Power

The third type of leverage you can develop is *money*. Money is a powerful source of leverage and usually follows naturally from the development of knowledge and skill in your field.

You have heard the saying, “It takes money to make money.” The main reason that it takes money to make money is that your ability to save and accumulate funds is an essential step in the development of the personal qualities and character that you must possess if you sincerely want to achieve financial independence. In other words, you become a person capable of becoming wealthy by disciplining yourself to save the money that is necessary for you to achieve wealth.

There are three things you can do to develop the leverage of money: save regularly, get out of debt, and build a cash reserve.

### *Save Regularly*

Begin a systematic savings plan, putting away at least 10 percent of your gross income each month. This is the starting point of riches. Ideally, you should have a specific amount automatically deducted and invested from your pay before you get it.

### *Get out of Debt*

Pay off your debts, starting with those carrying the highest interest rates such as credit cards and finance companies. Set a goal to live largely debt free aside from your home mortgage and your car payments.

### *Build a Cash Reserve*

Resolve to build up a cash reserve so that you are ready when the opportunity arises. Most people stay broke all their lives because even if a wonderful moneymaking idea comes their way, they have no money to invest. As Earl Nightingale, the motivational radio personality, once said, “If a man is not prepared when his opportunity comes, it will only make him appear foolish.”

## The People You Know

The fourth form of leverage is *contacts*. Knowing the right people, and being known by them, can open doors for you that will save you years of hard work. The quality and quantity of your contacts and your relationships will have more to do with your success than perhaps any other fac-

tor. Knowing one person at the right time and place can change the course of your life.

Here are three things you can do to expand your list of contacts: make a list, network regularly, and get involved in your community.

### ***Make a List***

First, make a list of the best 25 people, locally or nationally, you feel it would be most useful for you to get to know. Develop a strategy to meet each one of them over the next 12 months. Then make a list of 25 more.

List the people who head up the major corporations who would be useful for you to know. List the mayor, your congressperson, and your senator. List the important people that it would be helpful for you to know and then make a plan to get to meet them.

### ***Network Regularly***

Network at every opportunity. Join your business and trade associations. Attend meetings. Get involved. Volunteer for service on a key committee. This action alone has cut years off the career path of many people, including myself.

Once when I was giving a presentation for the chamber of commerce, I was noticed by a senior executive who sat on one of the key committees. He approached me later and hired me away from the company I was working for at triple the salary. As a result, I jumped ahead in my career by five years. It is very important that you network at every opportunity.

### ***Get Involved in Your Community***

Another way to expand your contacts is to get involved in community service organizations. The best people in every community, the people you should know and who should know you, are usually involved in public service in some way. Start with the United Way in your own city, or get involved in any charity that you care about or that you're interested in. Get involved with your church or your political party. You'll be amazed at the quality of people whom you'll meet doing volunteer work.

## **You Are a Genius**

*Creativity* is a form of leverage. Remember, one new idea is all you need to start a fortune. Everyone has the ability to come up with creative

ideas and solutions if they look for them. All great fortunes begin with an idea. This aspect of getting rich is so important that we'll devote a whole chapter (Chapter 8) to showing you how to unlock your inborn creativity.

### Get the Job Done

*Good work habits* are a form of leverage that can help you. Good work habits give you an edge over others in your field. They help you stand out and bring you to the attention of people who can help you.

In every study, it appears that good work habits will open more doors for you faster than almost any other qualities you can develop. In the final analysis, you will always be paid in direct proportion to the results you get for your employer. If you develop a reputation for being the person who gets the job done fast, the one who consistently and predictably gets the results required, that alone can put you onto the fast track in your career.

### A Positive Mental Attitude

Another form of leverage you can develop is a *positive personality*. Every study of successful people shows that the more people there are who like you, the more doors they will open for you, and the more opportunities you will have to get ahead. If they like you, people will do everything possible to help you succeed. Your ability to get along with others, to communicate effectively, to be a positive and cheerful person, will cause people to want to help you wherever you go.

Writer and researcher Daniel Goleman has become famous for his work on "emotional intelligence." He concludes that your ability to get along well with others is more central to your success than IQ or graduation from a top university. He concludes that most successful people reach the top by developing their ability to influence, communicate, persuade, and sell people on their ideas.

Peter Drucker says that the three key tools of the executive are the meeting, the presentation, and the written work. Excellence in each of these areas is learnable through practice and application. Resolve today to become an excellent communicator. Take a course in public speaking. Study and practice the art of negotiating. As much as 85 percent of your success will be determined by how well you communicate with others, so resolve today to become an expert in human relations.



## The Luck Factor

Another element of success that is mentioned repeatedly in the stories of wealthy men and women is the factor of *luck*. Luck is a form of leverage and it is part of every great success. Fortunately, luck is largely predictable and happens to people for specific reasons. In many respects, you actually create your own luck by the things you do, or fail to do.

Luck is largely a matter of *probabilities*. There is a probability that virtually anything can happen, and these probabilities can be calculated with considerable accuracy. In almost every case, you can increase or decrease the likelihood of something happening or not happening. This is the central theme of my book *Create Your Own Future* (John Wiley & Sons, 2003).

For example, there is a certain probability that you will be killed in a traffic accident. But you can reduce this probability by staying sober, driving more carefully, and wearing a seatbelt. Some people drive all their lives and never have an accident or a speeding ticket.

## *Make a Million?*

There is a 5 percent probability that you will become a millionaire in the course of your working lifetime. This also means that there is a 95 percent probability that you will not save a million dollars. You may even work all your life and retire poor or dependent on others. One of the main purposes of this book is to help you increase the likelihood of achieving financial independence by giving you the knowledge and tools practiced by the top 5 percent.

One thing we know, for example, is that luck is a function of *activity*. The more things you try and the faster you try them, the more likely it is that you will try the right thing at the right time that will bring you the success you desire. Bill Gates is the richest man in the world, but Microsoft has about 1,600 different projects in various stages of development at any given time. He is continually working to increase the probability that his company will come up with something new and highly profitable.

Many of the things Bill Gates attempts will fail. The fact is that most things don't work the first time, and often they don't work the first 10 times. Nonetheless, if you keep trying new things and learning from every setback, you will inevitably develop the skills and experience you need to succeed.

### *Continually Study and Prepare*

There is a saying, “Luck is when preparation meets opportunity.” The more time you take to learn, study, and prepare yourself in your chosen field, the more luck you will seem to have. The better prepared you are, the more often you will both recognize opportunity and be capable of taking advantage of opportunity when it arises.

Most importantly, luck seems to happen to people with clear goals and detailed plans of action. When you know exactly what you want and you are working diligently to achieve it every day, all kinds of wonderful things happen to you to move you more rapidly toward your goals, and your goals toward you.

When you are clear about your goals, you trigger the *law of attraction* and begin to attract into your life people, ideas, circumstances, and resources that help you to achieve them. Happy coincidences and serendipitous events occur that help you in ways that you cannot now explain. I will say more about becoming a money magnet and attracting luck in the next chapter.

### Developing Personal Power

*Energy* is a form of leverage you can develop to get rich your own way. Most successful people have higher energy levels than the average. Because of this, they can work longer, harder hours with greater enthusiasm and persistence. They are more resilient and can bounce back from the inevitable problems and difficulties that occur on the road to success.

It is therefore essential for great success that you organize your lifestyle around proper diet, proper exercise and proper rest. For example, one common habit of virtually all successful people is that they watch very little television and they go to bed early. “Early to bed, early to rise” does seem to make people “healthy, wealthy, and wise.” Successful people organize their time and lifestyle so that they can get up early and plan their days while the average person is still sleeping. This habit alone can give you an edge over the competition.

### Choose the Right Job

Another form of leverage you can develop on your quest for riches is the correct choice of occupation. Choosing the right job is perhaps the most important form of leverage. The one common denominator of success-

ful, wealthy men and women, aside from self-discipline, is that *they do what they love to do*. The most important decision you ever make in your career is choosing the right kind of work for you.

It is possible to work hard, overcome obstacles, and persist through to success only when you are working at something that you care about, something that interests you and absorbs you completely. In fact, if you don't love your job enough to want to be the very best at it, you should find something else that you can become passionate about. If you stay at a job that doesn't excite you, you are in danger of wasting your time and your life.

### ***The Million-Dollar Question***

Here is a question for you: *If you won a million dollars in the lottery tomorrow, would you continue to work at your current job?* If the answer is "no," then your first responsibility to yourself is to admit that you are on the wrong road. Your goal must be to begin seeking your ideal job or position. You must dedicate yourself to finding something you love to do, where you have the potential to excel, no matter what that may require in terms of change or sacrifice.

Once you have found the right job, the work that is perfectly suited for your unique combination of talents, interests, abilities, and temperament, then you are ready to start getting rich your own way.

## **Become a No-Limit Person**

If you sincerely desire to be rich, there is nothing *outside* of you that can stop you. Every type of person with every imaginable handicap, limitation, and obstacle has found a way to overcome their difficulties and go on to great success.

No matter how many obstacles you face, someone else has faced 10 times as many and been successful in spite of it. If you sincerely desire to be rich, there is no miracle to it. Becoming wealthy requires a goal, a plan, self-discipline, and hard, hard work for a long, long time. These are all qualities that you can learn and develop.

If you are willing to pay the price of success in advance and keep on paying it over and over until you achieve your goals, you will surely succeed. The only real question you have to answer is, *how badly do you want it?*

## Action Exercises

- 1.** Make a decision today that you are going to achieve financial independence in the years ahead. Determine a specific financial goal, set a deadline, make a plan, and take action on it today.
- 2.** Go to the bank and open a “financial accumulation” account where you are going to begin building your “financial fortress” in the months and years ahead.
- 3.** Project forward 10 to 20 years and begin imagining your perfect life. What would it look like? What steps could you take immediately to begin making it a reality?
- 4.** Commit to excellence in your chosen field. Identify the one skill that, if you did it excellently all the time, would help you the most to make a more valuable contribution.
- 5.** Pick up the pace. Resolve to do more than you are paid for each day, do it fast, and do it dependably. Become action-oriented.
- 6.** Refuse to play it safe. Don’t worry about temporary failure. Concentrate on increasing the probabilities of success by trying more things and persisting longer.
- 7.** Resolve to remain positive and optimistic no matter what happens. Look for the good in every situation, and in every person. Enjoy the process of getting rich your own way.

*“The way to wealth, if you desire it, is as plain as the way to market. It depends chiefly on two words, industry and frugality. Waste neither time nor money but make the best use of both.”*

—Benjamin Franklin