Part One

If I Knew This Before, I'd Be a Millionaire . . .

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Chapter 1

The Company of One

Glenn Hutchins talks really fast. He's also really tall.

The combination of the two means he's good at making a deal and he could have played basketball.

So when Glenn made his riches in private equity, he bought a stake in a basketball team, the Boston Celtics. Glenn graduated from Harvard and began his career on Wall Street as a junior analyst at Chemical Bank, working—literally—in the basement. It wasn't long before he catapulted up the food chain and built a $13 billion private equity firm.

On the day I went to visit him in his office, he was his usual amused and amusing self, padding around the place in his socks (he said he'd just been to the dentist which, at least to him, explained why he was shoeless). In the hallway were the remnants of a buffet lunch, which made me feel as if I'd arrived at the party just a little too late. Glenn being in socks only added to that.

"We do this everyday for our associates," Glenn said, pointing to the salmon swimming in cooling mango salsa juices.

"That's a nice touch," I replied, grabbing a plate of the leftovers and heading to the private dining room adjoining Glenn's office.

For some reason, giving employees free food is an instant morale booster. Perhaps because the profit margin for a person is 100 percent. As in, this is *free*, so I have 100 percent gotten my value out of this product, whatever it may be. There's a familiar saying in journalism that if you want reporters to show up at a press conference, just lay out free food and even better, some free alcohol.

Before long, Glenn and I began talking about his career and like many of the people in this book, he was absolutely confident in his belief on what makes a successful career.

"You can choose one of two career journeys. One resembles a canyon where you coast downhill in your early years and then spend your midlife, when tuition and mortgage payments come due, trudging out. The other is more like a mountain, which is a steep and arduous climb in your thirties and forties but which then frees you later in life to have time for family, philanthropy, and service."

He then went on to tell me about his early years at Chemical Bank and how the traders on the floors above him snubbed their noses at the geeky analyst.

"I suppose I was a bit of a nerd, and as a result, I was relegated to the unglamorous credit department," he said.

"So what did you do?" I asked.

"Though I learned an enormous amount . . . I couldn't get promoted because I was in the back office. So I went instead to Harvard, did my JD and MBA . . . it strikes me as better for all involved to harness the talents of young people rather than restrain and discourage them."

Many people would describe someone like Glenn as a Wall Street guy. But I see something else—I see an entrepreneur. Yes, he did eventually start his own business. But even before starting his firm, Silver Lake Partners, Glenn already thought of himself as his own entity. His own company of *one*. Others didn't get the value of this company, but he did and he grew it to success.

This is something I found to be one of the biggest distinguishing factors between the leaders and the followers, the CEO and the rest of us. Most of the people who are successful are either entrepreneurs

or have an entrepreneurial mindset, even if they worked at the same company for decades. There were exceptions to the rule, but not a lot. Being a "company of one" is not a selfish mindset, but rather a healthy one. People who have this mindset are optimists, they're more productive, feel more confident because they know their own value and it can't be taken away.

What exactly is this mindset? Quite literally at the basic level, being a company of one is striking out on your own. For example, company X doesn't get who you really are, everybody around you has blinders on and you would do a much better job just building your own company than to stay at company X for another 5, 10, 15 years. In other words, you're like Glenn. Or in another example, you're bored with being a corporate lawyer and the midlife crisis hits, which means six months later, you're baking cupcakes at your own shop and you're 10 times happier than when you were pushing papers charging $500 an hour. That's easily being the company of one.

But more often than not, the company-of-one mindset is about freeing yourself from the idea that your job is your career. Your job is your avenue to a career, so long as the job and the career match. Sadly, it often doesn't. But people who have this mindset are easy to spot. They always have a few projects going on. This person may be a marketing executive by day, but at night she's writing a book. Or he's working at IBM, but in his spare time, loves producing how-to videos on YouTube. They're creative people.

Jeff Hayzlett literally was a marketing executive by day. He was the chief marketing officer at Kodak when he decided to leave and pursue his own projects. When I told him about this company-of-one mindset, he immediately got it.

"Brand of one," he said over lunch at the Manhattan eatery, Tao.

He said he had about 40-plus projects going on at the same time, including a gig at Bloomberg Television as a contributing editor. He'd been a judge on NBC's *Celebrity Apprentice*. He consults and advises companies on marketing and public relations but his biggest business is himself.

"I make the most from the speaking," he said.

When I ask him what his brand is, he says he's unabashedly one of the best marketers out there and a cowboy to boot. He advised me

social media was most important in developing your own brand. He grabbed his iPad and showed me all the tweets he'd scheduled later in the afternoon, tomorrow, next week, and even next *year*.

"Whatever you have, put it out there and let it echo," he said. And as if to drive home the point, he tweeted out to me after our lunch. I barely had a chance to figure out how to make my way back to the office and he'd already tweeted a note saying thanks for the lunch for all the twittersphere to see.

Sam Zell, the self-made billionaire real estate investor, said his entrepreneurial zeal might have been because he was "born 90 days after my parents' arrival in the United States [from Poland]."

"I had the opportunity to watch my parents, as immigrants, deal with significant changes and challenges," Sam says, relaxing in his Manhattan apartment. "And as I watched that, and I think about it, among the things that have made my career so unique are those common denominators of change and challenge.

"The ultimate definition of an entrepreneur is someone who is always thinking he can do things a different, better way. If he walks down the street and sees a painter on a ladder, he thinks, 'Gee, if he'd moved the ladder to the middle of the wall, then he could paint both sides without having to go up and down the ladder as many times,'" he said. "I can't tell you why I think that way, but that's literally the way I think all the time. It's always been that way. I look at things and see them differently than other people do.

"In my career, I've been industry agnostic. There aren't a lot of investors who have been in rail car leasing, container leasing, electrical distribution, waste energy, bicycles, natural gas, food additive manufacturing, logistics, and myriad other industries. I'm very much like a private equity guy is today except that I've always been a private equity guy—with my own private equity."

Later, I thought about what Sam said. My parents did not come from Poland but from China. My father may have chosen a safe profession as a doctor but he pursued it with the same kind of risk that entrepreneurs do. My relatives all thought he was crazy to move to a country whose language he did not know, to try to practice medicine in a system that did not recognize his medical training, and to do all this with barely any savings to his name and three people—my mother,

my sister, and myself—to support. At age 40, he arrived in the United States with $30 in his pocket, no job, and a fierce determination to make things work.

Martin Sorrell also waited until he was a 40 to start his own business. Martin is a punchy, outspoken advertising executive who founded WPP, one of the world's largest advertising agencies, which earned him a knighthood in his native Britain. On his shield he has inscribed in Latin his motto: *Celeritas et Perseverantia* (Persistence and Speed).

"I probably could have [started my company] at thirty-five," he tells me. "There are people who are good at running companies but not starting companies and I wanted to do both . . . I didn't want to start a rinky-dink company. I only own two percent of the company or a little bit under two percent which, to me, is a lot of money, but to some others, they think that's chicken poop. But rather than owning, say eighty percent of something smaller, I'm quite happy to have two percent of something that's much, much bigger."

When I looked up later the public information on WPP, I learned Martin is worth about $350 million just on his shares alone in the company he founded.

On the entrepreneurial mindset, Martin said: "Founders have different, I think, emotional connections to what they do. I mean, if you're a hired hand or a turnaround expert, your loyalty and emotional commitment to the company that you're running is different than if you started it . . . you just think differently. There was a famous football manager in the UK called Bill Shankly who was the manager of the Liverpool football club . . . this was when they were very successful. And he said, 'Football is not a matter of life and death. It's more important than that.' So WPP is not a matter of life and death—it's more important than that. So just like Berkshire Hathaway for Warren Buffett or JPMorgan for Jamie Dimon, it's as much a part of them, you could argue, as their family. Their family probably comes first, but it's as much a part of them as their family."

When I looked up the quote later, the official line from Shankly went more like: "Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that."

"I wear this jersey and I *bleed* this blood," Jamie Dimon told me a few months later at his headquarters in midtown Manhattan. "I feel

responsible for our 250,000-plus employees. I wouldn't leave here and do something else at another corporation . . . I'm very proud of our company and I want every employee to be proud of it."

If there is a bank CEO who has his own brand of one, Jamie Dimon does. He was revered during the 2007-2008 financial crisis as the one leader who did not come under fire for bad management. While fellow CEOs were succumbing to their own bad decisions, Jamie looked like the smartest guy in the room. *Time* magazine named him to the world's 100 most influential people list in 2008, 2009, and 2011. He was called CEO of the year by *Institutional Investor*, a finance-focused magazine, in 2011.

When I met him, he had just been through one of the toughest years of his career at JPMorgan. Regulators, the press, and critics were all hounding him over the so-called London Whale trading scandal where some bad trades at a London office cost the firm more than $6 billion. The event even has its own Wikipedia page. I could tell the situation really hit Jamie personally. He said he spent a weekend writing out his annual letter to shareholders to give his final thoughts on the scandal. He told me he wrote the letter by himself with no edits—it was a letter from him personally to everyone.

Even though he didn't start JPMorgan—the bank says it was founded in 1799 as The Manhattan Company and at one point in its complicated history, it was called Chemical Bank (yes, the same Chemical Bank that did not promote Glenn Hutchins)—Jamie helped build the firm after its 2004 merger with Bank One, where he was chief executive. In other words, the JPMorgan of today is largely Jamie Dimon's vision.

"I see our executives, they get in the elevators, I always say hi. I have administrative town halls, they all call me Jamie. They all know me. They'll pat me on the back, 'Hey you!' The mailroom guys will say hi to me.

"There are some companies where executives have their own elevator. You cannot send that message to your people. I remember getting into an elevator once and the employees were talking about me. I said, 'I'm back here!'"

"That really happened?" I asked.

"Yeah, they didn't know I was in the back. I don't know if what they were saying about me was good or bad. I just wanted to give them a heads up."

The way Jamie talked about his company was with the same affection I heard from Martin and Sam, and would later hear from Warren Buffett. All had a solid foundation of who they were, their own companies and brands, and that translated into their companies. When you start something that is your own, when you control and own your own destiny, it's not just life and death. It's more important than that.

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The fact is, most people would love to be like Sam—their own boss. According to an Edward Jones survey in 2012, 70 percent of workers liked the idea of being entrepreneurs at work. But only a puny 15 percent thought they had what it takes to be one. The biggest fear preventing people from pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams was the loss of their savings. The second biggest fear is essentially the same thing: a lack of support or safety net if they failed. None of this is surprising but then again, it's not surprising that many people feel they're stuck in a career rut.

Graham Weston is another billionaire entrepreneur (eventually in my world of business news, billionaires pop up like weeds) who recently co-authored a book called *Unstoppables*. The book is about creating more self-made business owners in the country and in the foreword, Graham recalls how he went back to his alma mater of Texas A&M University to give a talk.

"After offering a few remarks, I asked the students 'How many of you would like to start your own businesses one day, or work for a young business?' Practically every hand shot up," Graham writes. "Then I asked 'And how many of you will be doing that as soon as you graduate from A&M?' There were a few chuckles around the room, and nearly all the hands came down. It seems there was a huge gap between the dream of entrepreneurship and the real-life plans most students had created."

I have never owned or run my own business, but any profession, including journalism, can have entrepreneurial aspects to it. I create things and that means finding my own stories and creating my own show. I have always worked for myself even though I have never once worked on my own. In television news, it's important to be part of a large network with the resources and the distribution to be seen by the widest possible audience. But even that may change as journalists

begin to think more like entrepreneurs. And entrepreneurs like Reed Hastings of Netflix, Jeff Bezos of Amazon, and others begin to change the way television is delivered, period.

What's the driving force behind entrepreneurial tendencies? Jay Samit, a serial entrepreneur who has created ooVoo, one of the fastest-growing apps rivaling Skype, joked: "Maybe because my mother never hugged me enough when I was a kid. I'm always seeking approval from others." No surprise that I learned later Jay studied to be a journalist at UCLA.

Jay is a slim, boyish-looking guy in his fifties who shoots back and forth from New York to Los Angeles, where he not only runs his company but also teaches at the University of Southern California. Jay has both worked for himself and also rose up the senior ranks as a music executive at Universal, Sony, and EMI. He described back to me the company of one concept.

"What a person should do is realize that they have to be a brand of one. They're going to have to reinvent themselves and their skill set nonstop. Think of a doctor that's my age. That means they got out of medical school twenty-five years ago. The majority of drugs, treatments, machines—everything is completely different, right? There's nothing that's done the same as when they got out of school. So if a doctor didn't keep on being a lifelong learner, they couldn't be a doctor. Well, that's the same for a cook, a graphic artist, and an advertising executive—name your field. Journalists that thought they would get a lifelong thing writing for a newspaper—they're gone."

"What's your brand?" I ask.

"My brand is 'you've got a problem and I can help solve it.' No one ever hired me for my looks, right?" he said, chuckling.

Jay told me he has two rules for his managers to encourage entrepreneurial thinking.

"Every direct report that I've had for at least the past fifteen years I give the following two rules to, okay? You don't work for me, I work for you. My job is to give you the resources that you need to do your job."

"Do they believe you?" I ask.

"Sometimes yes and sometimes no. Rule number two makes it very clear. If you work for me for a year and you do not make a mistake, I will fire you."

I look a little surprised. "And you've done that?"

"Oh yeah, I do. [Being] an entrepreneur is not for the faint of heart. The perfect kid that stayed up all through school and got the perfect grade and has the stomach in knots is not cut out for this. They can't handle failing and the humiliation."

I make a mental note to myself about how many nights I tossed and turned, worried about getting straight A's on my report cards. I'm pretty sure if Jay and I had been classmates he would have been the bad ass in the back while I was the uptight, Little Miss Perfect A's in the front.

Other managers may not go to such extremes as Jay, but you get the point.

Do Entrepreneurs Perform Better Than Outsiders?

When you start investing in yourself and your own business, chances are you'll do a much better job.

Yes, there are plenty of stories where entrepreneurs almost destroyed their own companies. Not because they didn't love their own creations, but because they just stunk at being business leaders. A few names come to mind: Andrew Mason, who founded Groupon, and Mark Pincus, who built Zynga, the online gaming company. For a while, it seemed Mark Zuckerberg might be Facebook's own worst enemy until he grew up and started acting more like a CEO.

The *Harvard Business Review* released a survey in 2013 that calculated who were the best performing CEOs during their tenures. No surprise, two entrepreneurs topped the list.

Steve Jobs.

Jeff Bezos.

Jeff is his own company of one. He went left when others went right. Not many people remember, but Jeff started off as a banker. But he always loved building and dismantling things and that's what led him to eventually start Amazon. He began the company while he was literally moving—driving across the country. When others told him his idea couldn't be done, he did it, starting off 24/7 in his garage.

The editor-in-chief of the *Harvard Business Review*, Adi Ignatius, did a rare interview with Jeff for the survey issue. And one of the best examples about what it takes to be a company of one was in this answer: "Inventing and pioneering require a willingness to be misunderstood for long periods of time. One of the early examples of this was the customer reviews. One wrote to me and said, 'You don't understand your business. You make money when you sell things. Why do you allow these negative customer reviews?'

"And when I read that letter, I thought, 'We don't make money when we sell things. We make money when we help customers make purchase decisions.'"

It was a cold-cock simple idea that, today, almost every single online retailer has copied.

As I mentioned, there's usually two ways a person finally discovers their company of one. In the first, there is such a burning desire to do something, you can't ignore it. You're miserable until you satisfy this inner yearning. Jim Reynolds, the CEO of a boutique investment bank, told me that he was the best bond salesman in the Midwest for Merrill Lynch before he left it all to start his own firm. He was good at his job and making a lot of money. But instead of being happy about the future, it looked frightful.

"I really began to get a little bit afraid that I would sit there on the desk, stay on the bond desk, move up to head of fixed income, but still not accomplish the things I knew I was capable of," he said. "I got really scared. I said, 'Jim you could do so many more things, but you're scared to leave here, but you should do those things, they're inside of you.' Eventually, the fear reversed itself—I developed a larger fear of staying there not realizing my potential than the fear I had of walking away from my career. Once that happened, I was off to the races."

He left with half a million dollars from Merrill Lynch to start his own firm, which sounds like a lot of money except when you are trying to compete with companies that have billions of dollars and thousands of bankers. As luck would have it, an old friend of his from

decades ago heard he wanted to start his own business. His friend was now the vice chairman of First Chicago Bank.

"I needed a line of credit and he said, 'Okay' and approved me for a two-and-a-half million dollar credit line just on a business plan. Every one of his lending officers and senior people in the bank said do not lend this man the money. We did not have any revenue, I didn't even have a business. I barely had an office, there was nothing but a business plan. He said to his team, 'Give Jim Reynolds the money.' They kept saying 'Jim can take that dough and not do anything with it and just move to Jamaica.' But he said, 'Give Jim that money.'"

Today, Jim has offices all over the country and over 200 employees. He's even helped a president get elected from Chicago as one of the first fundraisers and financial advisors to Barack Obama.

The second way you discover your inner entrepreneur is not exactly the way you want to do it. You get fired. You have a falling out with the company. You're forced to retire. Suddenly you ask yourself, what am I going to do? Essentially, the safety net is taken away and your darkest fears are now sunning themselves in a lounge chair in front of you. Holy crap it's all about *me* and what *I'm* going to do about the future.

Many people do well eventually. They get back on their feet. Either they really do strike out on their own or they join a company again with the experience of knowing what it means to have things taken away. Sometimes that makes people stronger.

Other times, it makes them more afraid. The times that it makes people more afraid is when they had tied up their own value in their jobs and not in themselves—their own company of one. They don't believe in the value of their own company. I've seen it too many times and I'm sure you have too.

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So how does an entrepreneur—a person who believes in his or her own brand—really think?

Successful entrepreneurs look at the world a little differently than the rest of us.

Where others see roadblocks, *they* see opportunities. When someone says you can't, they say why not. When they have $10 to their name, they double down.

Short of getting directly inside their heads, a few of the entrepreneurs I talked to revealed their strategic thinking.

Sam Zell, as I mentioned, earned his reputation in many businesses but he became a business legend during the peak of the real estate boom. At that time, in February 2007, he sold a group of office buildings for almost $40 billion. Two years later, several of those buildings were underwater from the recession, meaning they were worth less than the loans. Sam sniffed that something in the air wasn't right and he timed his exit perfectly.

Sam said to me: "I virtually codified the phrase: Buying below replacement cost. When I started buying distressed real estate in 1974, I realized I was buying an apartment project for $10,000 a unit, which it cost $14,000 to build each unit originally and it cost about $17,000 to build it in 1974. So I was going to be competing with a developer next door with a building that costs half of what his new building would cost, which meant I could charge lower rents, and get the same, if not better, returns. And if he didn't build that new building, then I was even better off because there would be less supply and the same demand. Buying below replacement cost is a basic, simple premise. There's nothing esoteric about it."

From that thinking—buy below replacement cost—Sam got rich. He called the concept "cold-cock simple." It's a terrifically valuable lesson to learn. Know the value of the thing you're buying. Maybe you can only apply Sam's view in real estate but imagine if you went into every real estate transaction thinking the same thing: How much would it cost to replace this apartment unit or house? If the cost is much more, then you know you have a good deal on your hands. If not, then you need to do some more investigating to make sure it's the right purchase.

Elon Musk described another way of thinking, but it was very similar to Sam's view. Elon is the head of two companies—electric-car maker Tesla and rocket-ship manufacturer SpaceX. He's one of the few CEOs you could also legitimately call an inventor. Borrowing from his physics degree, Elon said he "reasons by first principles."

"It's where you take the most fundamental truths in an area or the things that seem to be the fundamental truths, and you reason up from there to a conclusion. You don't reason by analogy. Most people reason by analogy."

I asked him to give me an example.

"Okay, so reasoning by analogy, like in the rocket business, you would say: So how much have rockets cost? Well, on average they've cost, let's say, $100 million. So, therefore, your rocket will cost $100 million. Now, reasoning from first principles, you would say: What is a rocket made of? What are the engines made of? How are they constructed? The materials, manufacturing processes, all that, and you build that up to say, 'Okay, well, what could a rocket cost if it was done right?' And then you find, 'Oh, wow, a rocket could cost like one-tenth of that.' . . . The problem is that people are putting rockets together in really dumb ways. And then you just have to be a detective and get rid of the dumb ways and then it's much better.

"It's very difficult to make inroads into a new area when reasoning by analogy, because analogies are referencing the past . . . reasoning by analogy is basically copying what others do with very minor incremental changes, and not actually understanding why that thing was even successful in the first place. Most of our life is reasoning by analogy."

"Almost every part?" I ask.

"Yes. You wouldn't be able to get through the day if you try to reason from first principles with everything. It would be just total gridlock. You'd be stuck. You apply it only where it's really important, like if you're trying to create a company or product and then you just have to apply your maximum critical thinking."

To put it in its simplest terms, reasoning by first principles is about defying conventional thinking. Being the annoying little kid who asks "Why?" when parents just want to shut you up and say, "That's just the way it is."

As both Elon and Sam could agree, conventional thinking is the death of any business and entrepreneur. When you start thinking of yourself as a brand and exercising your entrepreneurial thoughts, conventional wisdom is necessarily thrown out the window.

"I think conventional wisdom is one of the greatest horrors of all time," Sam said.

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That real estate deal in 2007 helped make Sam one of the wealthiest people in this country. According to *Forbes*, he is the 103rd richest man in America.

As an entrepreneur, he has a lot of company on these lists of billionaires. I noticed that among the richest in the world, many are founders of their own businesses. For example, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index:

#5 Ingvar Kamprad: The founder of the furniture retailer Ikea. Net worth: $48.5 billion.
#16 Jeff Bezos: The founder of Amazon. Net worth: $26.6 billion.
#40 Phil Knight: The co-founder of Nike. Net worth: $16.7 billion.
#98 Azim Premji: The co-founder of Wipro, India's third-biggest software exporter. Net worth: $10.6 billion (and apparently he also flies coach 60 to 65 times a year).
Note: These numbers are through July 2013.

Out of the top 100 billionaires ranked by Bloomberg, 27 inherited their wealth. The rest were all self-made.

Out of all who made their own money, 30 were American. That means 43 people outside the United States also created their wealth from nothing—billionaires from India to China to Spain to Mexico. If there's one thing people like to emulate about us, it's the American dream of building something up from nothing.

One who consistently ranks atop these lists is the man Martin mentioned earlier: Warren Buffett. He is always either the second or third richest man, behind his best friend and fellow entrepreneur, Bill Gates.

I've been interviewing Buffett for a few years and attending his massive Berkshire Hathaway shareholders meetings. More than 35,000 people attend and the entire weekend is a festival for investors. There are parties at night, special events during the day, with the highlight being the daylong meeting where Buffett and his longtime partner, Charlie Munger, sit on a stage answering questions ranging from where he expects gold to trade to why taxes should be raised. I've never seen a CEO have as much fun as Buffett does on the day of his shareholders meeting. In 2013, with the song blaring rock-concert loud, he *Y-M-C-A*'ed his way to the stage.

"Why do I love what I'm doing? Well, it's a game that I've spent my life playing and I enjoy it just like a pro golfer would who's been

playing golf all his life," Buffett told me. "I'm on my back and I'm Michelangelo painting the Sistine Chapel ceiling or something. And maybe nobody else does, but I get to paint my own painting. And if the board of directors said to me, 'You're using too much red paint, why don't you use more blue paint?' I would probably hand them the brush and tell them what they could do with it anatomically."

Since the 1960s, his company has served as an incubator for other entrepreneurs. He buys companies—like Dairy Queen, See's Candies, Fruit of the Loom, NetJets—and brings them into his fold where they get both advice and money to grow. Every time I talk with a Berkshire CEO, he or she says the best thing about working for Buffett is that he leaves them alone.

"They've got to be in love with the business. When I hand somebody $100 million, or a billion, or $5 billion, and then they hand me the stock certificate, I'm counting on them to run it," he said.

"We never rely on contracts. It wouldn't mean anything. You know, six months later the guy's getting up at six in the morning, and his wife says, 'You know, what the hell are you doing?' He says, 'Oh, I'm getting up to work for some company in Omaha,' and she says, 'I thought the last thirty years we've been building this thing, and now we've got billions of dollars, why aren't we out on a boat, or taking trips to Europe or whatever?' And unless his answer is, 'I'm doing this because I love it,' but he says, 'I'm doing this because I signed an agreement,' you know, it isn't going to work over time. But if he says, 'I'm doing this because I'd rather do it than anything else in the world,' then we're going to have a wonderful leader. . . . I try to buy companies where the managers of them feel that way about their company, and then it's up to me not to destroy that feeling. I can't put it in somebody that it's not in already, but I can destroy it if it's not in there."

Buffett is known for keeping things simple. He has spent the last several decades telling the investing public that the simplest way to get rich in stocks is buying what you like and stick to it. When he announced he was helping candy company Mars fund the acquisition of Wm. Wrigley, the chewing gum company, for $23 billion in 2008, Buffett said he'd been taste-testing the product since he was seven years old and liked it. At the time he said, "I understand a Wrigley or a Mars a whole lot better than I understand the balance sheet of some of

the big banks. I know what I'm getting in this, and some of the larger financial institutions, I really don't know what's there."

Sam also keeps it simple.

"Guts and instinct are all simplicity," Sam said. "I went to Harvard Business School in 1988, and I spoke to three hundred of them and I just beat the sh*t out of them, and I said, 'You guys have been sitting here and listening to this concept that everything has a formula, that there's a numeric solution for everything, that as long as you knew that X plus Y. . . . *Bullsh*t!* It's all about what's simple. What's the shortest distance between two points? It's a straight line.'

"That afternoon, to make my point, I said, 'Let me tell you a story and it's a story about Avi and Sarah. And Avi and Sarah were both sixty years old. And on their sixtieth birthdays they decided they were going to take separate vacations. And so Avi, he went to Miami Beach, and Sarah, she went to San Diego. And after about three weeks comes a postcard from Avi. He says, 'Dear Sarah, I'm having a wonderful time. The sun, the surf, the hotel, it's really terrific. And as a matter of fact, I was sitting by the pool today and a twenty-year-old girl walked by. I said hello. She said hello. I asked her to sit down. She sat down. We talked. We swam. We had lunch together. And tonight, she's coming to my suite for a candlelight dinner. Who knows? I may get lucky. Love, Avi.'

"So about three weeks later comes back a postcard from Sarah. 'Dear Avi, I, too, am having a wonderful time. The sun, the surf, the hotel, it's really terrific. As a matter of fact, I was sitting by the pool today when a twenty-year-old guy walked by. I said hello. He said hello. I asked him to sit down. He sat down. We talked. We swam. We had lunch. And tonight he's coming to my suite for a candlelight dinner. Who knows? I may get lucky. Love, Sarah.' And then at the bottom she put a P.S., and she said, 'Avi, you shouldn't forget that twenty goes into sixty a lot more times than sixty goes into twenty.' [*laughing*] Now, the numbers are the same, but what they mean is drastically different!"

"What kind of reaction did you get?" I asked.

"Oh, they fell over. I mean, you know, the girls all got embarrassed. Nobody goes to Harvard and gives a serious speech, and then hits them between the eyes like that. But it's all about thou shall not take oneself seriously. Does that make the point?"

And it did—*keep it simple* and don't overthink. Sometimes the best strategies are the simplest ones.

★★★★★★★★

"Keep it simple" is what Graham Weston would call a *micro-script* that you keep in your head every time you confront a challenge. So if you have a great idea and want to pursue it, you keep chanting in your head "keep it simple, keep it simple, keep it simple" so you don't overcomplicate your overall goal.

As Graham points out in his book, we all have these micro-scripts in our head.

"Don't drink and drive."

"There's no substitute for hard work."

"Every no gets me closer to a yes."

In 1992, David Mamet brought us probably one of the best micro-scripts to hit the big screen in *Glengarry Glen Ross*. Alec Baldwin as the "I-made-$970,000-last-year" Blake, flipping the white board and spitting out:

Always
Be
Closing

Who could forget the famous line? "Nice guy? I don't give a sh*t. Good father? F*ck you! Go home and play with your kids. You wanna work here? *Close*!"

Now, while that micro-script turned the office into a seed of deception and debauchery, a similar one is what turns people into hard-driving, successful entrepreneurs.

Always
Be
Moving

Time and again, entrepreneurs told me that to get from what Sam Zell described as "A to B" is to keep moving. Graham and his co-author Bill Schley wrote about their 80/20 rule: "Spend 20 percent or less of your time pondering and preparing, and 80 percent or more

doing—repeatedly." In describing the Law of Motion, they quote Isaac Newton's first law which states an object in motion stays in motion.

Three hundred years later, baseball great Yogi Berra said, "If you come to a fork in the road, take it."

"What I usually share with women is, why is it on a weekend we wait to have the kitchen spotless and perfect and dishes put away before we enjoy the day?" Sheila Marcelo, the founder of Care.com, the fastest-growing caregiving company in the country tells me. "Guys, on the other hand, would just say 'Let's go for it. I don't care if the bed's not made. Let's get out of here.' There's this sense that everything has to be in place and orderly and it's the same in our careers. We think that we *have* to have all the experience. We need to know this and that and everything before we jump in and run something."

Always **B**e **M**oving, but not, as General Colin Powell wrote in his book, *It Worked for Me*, where you're moving around like a "busy bastard." There are plenty of people who are busy. They fill their schedules up with busy things, they stay late in the office doing lots of busy things, their weekends are filled up with busy activities, but the problem is none of those activities get them anywhere. Often, people are busy when they have no idea where they are truly going. Or they are busy because they don't really want to face what they want to do.

I have encountered many people like this and I'm sure you have, too. It may be clear to you that they should be moving, but instead they are moving in all the wrong directions. One person I know has been talking so long about his desire to move into another profession but every year passes and he still has not done anything about it. Instead, he jumps from job to job in his existing profession, hoping that the next job is going to bring the satisfaction that he seeks. And of course, it never does. I keep hearing, "After this, I plan to make the leap" but I feel sorry that it may never happen and 10 years down the road, it will be too late.

Another person I know has always wanted to open up her own business. She has the training for it and the right experience. But she continues to work for other people, piling on more and more hours because she keeps spending beyond her means. She bought a big house. She buys gifts for everyone, including for people who will likely never buy her a gift back. She goes on fancy vacations. She's spending all her

money, which is keeping her busy and exhausted, but doing nothing for what she really wants. Not surprisingly, she is unhappy with her state in life and can't figure how to get out of it.

When I lived in Atlanta, one year I put all my energy into writing a book about the South. I spent six weeks traveling around the region, recording how the area was developing. One Mississippi woman let me stay at her house for a few days to get to know her family. Another person—a musician—spent a few days in Louisiana immersing me in Zydeco music. In Selma, Alabama, I became a fixture for a week, staying at a bed and breakfast, talking ghost stories with the bartender. I was doing what I thought was real, narrative journalism. I asked for six months off from *the Financial Times* and they graciously gave it to me to write it all out.

And then I sat down to write it. And write. I spent six months in my little home office staring at the computer screen. I went to the coffee shop and instead of writing, I read lots of magazines. There were days I said, "Today I will write" and it wasn't until 10 P.M. that I would trundle off to my office to write. And by then, I was too tired.

I did manage to write about 35,000 words but I knew the book wasn't very good. There were parts I liked about it, but overall, it was weighed down by all my insecurities. The writing was not very confident. Instead of enjoying the process, it was like I was putting myself through water torture. To my full expectation, every literary agent rejected the manuscript. Truth be told, I wasn't very disappointed by the rejection letters. I was just disappointed in the whole process and myself. I still have all the notes, recordings, manuscript in—where else—my parent's basement.

I describe the above as an example of when fear, which everyone has, keeps you from moving in the right direction. I had a fear the manuscript wouldn't be very good and so . . . it wasn't very good. I couldn't stop that nagging voice telling me I had no right to write about this subject. The other people I mentioned are all snagged by a similar fear—a fear of failing—which prevents them from moving forward.

Always **B**e **M**oving is about moving forward in every direction that gets you to your goal. It doesn't matter if you fail. It doesn't matter if your idea gets stolen. It only matters that you continually work

towards what you want, whether it's starting your own business or moving up in your own company.

"So many people think it's about having a brilliant idea. Nothing could be further than the truth. The idea is not to take your idea and nurture it and save it and savor it and water it. The idea is to kill your idea," Jay Samit says.

"What?" I ask.

"*Kill* your idea. What can you do to destroy this idea? This idea will fail. This idea is the worst idea, and here's why, and as you keep on knocking and attacking that idea, what survives, what comes out of that furnace is hardened and can survive competition and defend itself.

"At the end of the day," Jay says. "As [Thomas] Edison said, 'It's one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration.'"

★★★★★★★★

Rachael Ray is the lively, effusive cooking star and daytime talk show host who made famous in kitchens across America the acronym, EVOO (extra virgin olive oil). When I first began to seriously learn how to cook, I remember tuning into Rachael's *30 Minute Meals* Food Network show and thinking, who is this woman? I loved watching how easy she made two or three dishes in 30 minutes. And she always had a big, girly sense of humor about it.

Years later when I started doing television, I appreciated how hard it is to make things look easy on television. The amount of work that goes into a half-hour cooking program is enormous. I joke that in television, everyone works hard so you—the viewer—can relax.

In the spring of 2013, I met Rachael at a taping of one of our primetime programs, *Titans at the Table*. In fact, the whole entourage of Food Network stars were there, including Bobby Flay and Mario Batali. What we ate was decidedly un-gourmet—fried fish, burgers, fries, hummus, and other pub fare. Bobby kept asking me if I knew where the fish came from on my plate, which instantly made me paranoid. He later explained from a chef's point of view, you should never order fish when you don't know the name of it. Lesson learned.

It was fun to see the chefs out of their kitchens. Rather than exchange recipes and cooking tips, the conversation turned to what made them all big brands. How did they go from essentially kitchen cooks to their own companies of one?

At one point, I turned to Rachael and asked her what was a breakthrough moment.

"There was no breakthrough," she replied. "My life has been a series of happy accidents. And I think that the thing that has made those accidents successful is that I enjoy working really, *really* hard. I enjoy a long day. I enjoy many plates in the air . . . I think you should always get up with the intent to make yourself better and to grow and to learn."

I point this out because this is the last part of what I found most in common amongst entrepreneurs and what is key to a company of one mindset.

You have to work hard.

It sounds obvious but it may surprise you how many people believe others rise to the top for so many reasons other than putting in the time. There may be cases where some lazy jerk gets ahead but who wants to put in the effort to discover why. The most surefire way to get what you want is to work hard at it.

Warren Buffett says he wants his CEOs to have a fire burning in them for the business. Every entrepreneur's war stories begin with sleepless nights in a parents' basement or at the office, working nonstop on an idea.

Elon Musk says he was born with such drive to do everything it took to succeed that when he was five, he walked for "ten, fifteen miles" to his cousin's house, which his mother had forbade him to do.

"Ten, fifteen miles?" I asked, somewhat doubtful.

"Yes, four hours, walking at top speed. And anyway, I got there and my mom freaked out and I climbed up a tree. I refused to come down . . . I was just really driven from a young age."

Bob Knight, the legendary college basketball coach, sees a lot of kids with drive but it's the ones who put in the hard work who succeed. Around the time Bob was promoting his latest book, *The Power of Negative Thinking*, he said to me, "I would tell the parent and the kids that I will be the most demanding coach that you can play for. And if this is going to be a problem for you, you shouldn't even think about coming with us because among other things, you're going to attend every class every day, you're going to be punctual, you're going to have to be on time. You've been a good high school player but you've got a long way really to be a very big college player and that's what we're

going to do to develop you . . . I will be very demanding in the classroom and on the basketball floor; in fact, [you] will not have encountered anybody at this point as demanding as I am."

It all goes back to one of the micro-scripts that Graham talked about: "There's just no substitute for hard work."

It got me thinking about what Coach Knight would say about working hard. How would he get *you* to believe in your brand and test you out? What if Coach Knight was your ultimate life coach? I asked him to give me a few pointers.

"The most important thing is this is going to be tougher than you really think it's going to be," he said. "You're a nice looking gal, smart, but I'm going to knock you down a bit, see how you react to it. Are you going to be able to accomplish what I want? If you can't, you won't last very long. Do you realize what it's going to be like when you're here competing with everybody that probably has as good an educational background as you? Smart as you? In the business world, that's what it's all about. What I expect from you—*A*, *B*, *C*—if you're not going to be able to do that, deliver in that regard, then you're not going to win."

Learn the *A*-*B*-*C* and do the *A*-*B*-*M*.