

# Chapter 1

## Be Strategic; Always Think Ahead

**“In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity.”**

—*Sun Tzu, military general, philosopher,  
and author of The Art of War*

### **Strategic Intelligence**

A skilled investor senses shifts in the market and makes their moves before the masses catch on. The most strategic people I've ever known weren't rich. They weren't famous. They were quiet, humble, and country smart. They couldn't read a book, let alone a stock chart or financial statements, but could predict a weather trend. They predicted droughts months before, anticipated land price drops by conversation overheard in the town square, and planted early by watching birds. They could predict the future with uncanny precision, all from just a small amount of information.

That was my grandfather. We called him *Big Daddy*.

He could tell which couple was headed for divorce based on an awkward smile, and who was going to jail next just from a shifty

glance. Before credit scores existed, he could judge whether someone would likely not repay a loan simply by observing how they walked, talked, or ate. He was a pillar in his small community in Clarksville, Tennessee, in the early 1900s. And people came to him when they didn't know what to do. Not because he had wealth, but because he had wisdom.

Watching him, I noticed how he moved, how he listened, and how he connected the dots before the rest. Watching him laid the foundation for who I became. Before I even considered becoming a futurist, I was just a kid learning to observe from a man who could see the ending before the story began.

My grandfather's stories were lessons wrapped in narrative. Simple, powerful, and unforgettable.

He once told me about a moment from his childhood, when he was just eight years old, growing up in Tennessee. One day, he was walking with his mother when they saw a man crossing the road. She looked at him, pointed, and said without hesitation, "That's a dead man right there."

My grandfather said he was confused. "How can he be dead?" he asked. "He's walking down the street. He looks alive to me!" It didn't make sense at the time. But years later, it hit him. That man wasn't dead in body. The man was dead in name, which was just as devastating. He had no honor. He lied. He didn't pay his debts. He didn't work or help the community; back then, that was everything. Your word was your credit. Your name was your currency.

And his was worthless.

Nobody would trust him. Nobody would hire him. Nobody would loan him money. He was alive but dead for all intents and purposes, a walking ghost.

"Dead" is a final state. That's what made the comparison so real. Once your reputation is gone, once your name loses its weight, there is no turning back. That's why reputation matters. In a small town, just like in business, your name either opens or closes doors for good.

One of the first strategic lessons I ever heard was to make sure to do the following: protect your name, play the long game, build a reputation that opens doors, and more than anything, think ahead. Strategy starts when you have nothing, are broke, and are hungry. When your name is the only thing you've got.

## **The Strategic Investor**

In 2011, I bought my first two Bitcoins for \$150. I was a graduate student at the time, struggling financially. I didn't fully understand Bitcoin, but I kept hearing people talk about it in the halls between classes. It sounded interesting enough to learn more about. After conducting some research, I met a Bitcoin exchanger online and then met him in person at a dog track. I entered the poker room, waited for him to play his hand, and then purchased two Bitcoins from him. I returned home. Now, what to do with them? I went back online and discovered a forum discussing cryptocurrency. I met another person on the forum who promised he could double my Bitcoin overnight. All I had to do was send him my two coins. He'd send back four. He said he created a program that made it work. He'd take a small fee.

I knew better.

Something told me it was a scam. Something seriously felt off. I had just gotten married, had a newborn, and was running empty. I had almost no money, and I was exhausted and desperate. I needed the money, and that need led me to overlook the obvious.

Despite all my reservations, desperation made me send him the coins anyway.

Of course, he stole it. I let my emotion, my desire to make a few extra dollars, override my common sense.

Looking back, it cost me a lot, with the price of Bitcoin exploding over the following years. But it showed me something. It must have significant value if people were willing to go through so much trouble to steal Bitcoin.

The experience taught me some essential lessons. First, it taught me to control my emotions. But most important, it forced me to learn more about how Bitcoin and, in turn, finance worked so that no one could ever trick me in the same way again.

I've come a long way since then. I've made millions, taken care of my family, and created a life I once only imagined because I chose to truly understand how money works and where it's going next.

I lost small. But I won big.

Then, I didn't just study markets. I studied the future. I dove into emerging tech, digital assets, systems, and technology shaping tomorrow. But I also learned the past, the patterns and cycles that repeat, the psychology that drives human behavior, and the biases that cloud our decision-making.

To live without a strategy in this era is to be vulnerable. Vulnerable to a system that quietly erodes your wealth every single year. The world your parents and grandparents built on no longer exists. A single dollar today buys only a fraction of what it once could. In the 1970s, one income could support a home, a car, and a family. Today, despite having two incomes, many families still struggle and live paycheck to paycheck. Inflation is rising rapidly, and it's the silent tax on every paycheck, every savings account, every uninvested dollar. Inflation, if left unchecked, can leave you and your finances powerless to its relentless attack.

However, you become powerful when you recognize market cycles, understand timing, manage risk effectively, and build wealth with intention. This book is your foundation. It contains seven laws that have guided me through every market shift, every crash, every technological leap. Law 1 focuses on identifying trends early, before the masses catch up. Law 2 teaches you to remove emotion from decision-making, because fear and greed cloud judgment and destroy wealth. Law 3 pushes you to learn to love risk, because avoiding risk is the fastest way to stay average. Law 4 is about adopting strategic thinking. Law 5 challenges you to manage those

around you. Law 6 reminds you to prioritize high-value actions and avoid the trap of small thinking. Law 7 is about surrounding yourself with the right people.

These laws are not just about personal finance; they are about personal evolution. They form the operating system for a world where adaptability is the most valuable currency, and where those who master themselves—and the patterns around them—will lead the future.

