CHAPTER ONE

Is a Million Dollar Practice Right for You?

As a pioneer and leader in my industry, I am often approached by practitioners for advice on building their business. And I'm glad to help. I'm passionate about making the world a better place and we can't do so as helping professionals if we can't get clients.

Many of the private practice professionals who approach me are struggling and hungry. They want to make the quantum leap to a six- or seven-figure practice, which is great and absolutely possible. However, many are just starting their practice and have stars in their eyes. They want to hit the big time—like Deepak Chopra and Anthony Robbins—though they are unaware of how to get there or what awaits them if they decide to venture down that path.

The Litmus Test

When I conduct my practice-building programs, I start by addressing the need to "embrace your inner entrepreneur." As a way of helping participants understand this concept and tap into the proper mind-set, I designed a litmus test question. It's a question that strikes at the heart of your current willingness to pursue—and your compatibility with—the model of the Million Dollar Practice.

The yes-or-no question of which I speak was not designed to discourage or dismiss you from the pool of potential Million Dollar Practitioners, nor was it designed to give you the impression that you may not be able to cut it. My intention was quite the opposite. The litmus test question was specifically designed to inspire you and help you address any internal elements that may be preventing you from reaching your goals.

So here's the question:

> *If you were offered a job, making a comfortable living, doing exactly what you wanted to do, with whom you wanted to do it, would you take it?*

Now I have put this question to my clients many times. And while the results can't be considered a scientific sampling, since I've never officially measured them, they are nevertheless quite revealing. I'd estimate that 80% of the respondents say "Yes," they would take the job. They would take it with relief: "Oh my gosh, I wouldn't have to worry about how to pay my bills anymore, I wouldn't have to market or stress about building my own business anymore."

So why are these answers so revealing?

First, they corroborate what many people already know deep down but what is often hidden or suppressed:

> *People who enter a helping profession have a genuine desire to help, but also have a significant level of resistance to being in business for themselves.*

Still, please know that if after pondering the litmus test question you feel that you would really rather have a job, it doesn't mean that you are incapable of one day building a Million Dollar Practice. It just means that you currently have some internal resistance to identify and overcome.

> *Where you are is not where you will always be. And it doesn't matter where you've been, what matters is where you're going and how you'll get there.*

The Hero's Journey

Building a successful practice is a hero's journey. And what makes it a hero's journey is that it's not easy. But while many people believe the difficult obstacles come from external factors—they don't know how to market, they don't know how to choose a niche, they don't know how to build a Web site—the truth is that most things that prevent it from being easy are inside us. That's right. That's the secret: The biggest obstacles to building a Million Dollar Practice come from within. External factors are merely details, and they are relatively easy to resolve.

The world offers countless possibilities for what your Web site can look like, infinite ways to start a business, a broad range of strategies and tactics that you can employ to thrive in life—so much so that for all practical purposes it doesn't really matter. There is no one right answer. Strategies and tactics for building a successful business are relatively simple to identify and put into place, as will be demonstrated in this book.

Internal obstacles, on the other hand, can be debilitating. It takes courage and will to embrace both the destination and the journey to get there and to confront and slay the dragons that crop up along the way. Practitioners identify with this because they constantly see it in their clients. They get in their own way. The most serious things holding them back are inside them, not outside of them. And it's the same with each of us as builder of a Million Dollar Practice.

When you are just starting out and you don't know what you don't know (which will be addressed in more detail later in this book), you can't possibly recognize or comprehend all of your options. And if you're anything like I was when I was starting out, it can be hard to even imagine that little old you can build a successful practice, reach a lot of people, and make a lot of money, because you simply don't know how.

In addition to introducing you to a lot of the "how," this book gives you much more, because knowing the "how" doesn't make building a Million Dollar Practice happen by itself. You still have to adopt the right mind-set. And you have to be willing to step up and take the necessary action, because, as we've pointed out, it's the internal obstacles—fear of failure, fear of success, and other issues—that get in the way of your goals. My job in this book, in part, is to act as your cheerleader, to provide you with the practical tools and strategies, but also to provide you with hope and inspiration to help you overcome that internal resistance. I want to see you realize your professional potential and get where you want to go.

Processing the litmus test question can bring a wide range of thoughts and emotions to the forefront. And again, if you are leaning toward an answer of "Yes, I would take the job," it doesn't mean that you should give up on your dream of creating a Million Dollar Practice, or any other goal. It just means that you must identify what might get in your way and do something about it. The litmus test question helps you start identifying what factors might get in your way, such as procrastination, distraction, falling back into your comfort zone, or your fundamental belief in yourself. To quote Henry Ford: "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you're right." And so begins your hero's journey.

Leap of Faith

There is a scene in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* where Indiana Jones, in pursuit of the Holy Grail to save his father, comes to a huge chasm. It is so far across that there is no way he can jump it, no way he can use his whip to swing across. Matching a clue on the cavern wall—a lion's head—and a passage from his father's Grail Diary—"Only in the leap from the lion's head will he prove his worth"—he realizes what's needed to reach his goal: "It's a leap of faith." Agonizing over what he knows he must do, and with no guarantee of success, Indy steps off the ledge . . . and to his great surprise and relief, he touches solid ground. There is a bridge, a pathway across the chasm, that he couldn't see before he was willing to take that leap of faith. But once he took that step, he could see it, and he made his way across.

This scene is one of the best metaphors I have ever seen for the hero's journey. It completely embodies the necessity to have faith, take a risk, and be willing to go all in. All of us can build Million

Dollar Practices; we just have to be willing to embrace our hero's journey. We have to believe.

The world of sports is another way of looking at your journey. Whether it's chess, ice skating, swimming, soccer, or any other sport, you will find talented people for whom it comes naturally and easy, but who don't go the distance at it. Maybe they don't have the self-discipline or the family support, or maybe they don't have the economic ability to sustain their participation because they have to focus more on survival. There are many reasons why somebody might be highly talented at something and still not excel at it, follow through with it, or reach the elite level.

And there is another category of people who are highly talented at a particular sport, do follow through with it, and shine. It comes easily for them. They are just blessed. We all know people like that.

Then there are the rest of us . . . those who have a passion for the sport, and can only wish we had half the talent of other people. But we don't. We may have a long, more-challenging road ahead of us, but we can absolutely excel at that sport. We can get the gold medal; we can win the championship. It's just going to be a longer, harder road than for the people to whom it comes easily. This, too, makes our dedication to our profession a hero's journey.

The Inner Game and the Outer Game

You have probably heard the concepts of an "inner game" and an "outer game," but probably haven't considered that they might apply to you. You have the talents and temperament that you were born with, and then you have the accomplishments that result from what you choose to take on. We can all choose to make a difference in the world and build a highly successful practice doing so. But we must master our inner game and be willing to embrace and play the outer game. We can absolutely do it. And for most of us it's going to be a hero's journey. For most of us it's not going to be that fast rise to the top. But it doesn't have to be hard.

One of the most effective ways to make the journey easier is to adopt the proper mind-set and habits early on. To help you start with a strong foundation on your road to the top, I have crafted what I call the Seven Habits of Million Dollar Practitioners.

Seven Habits of Million Dollar Practitioners

A small percentage of practitioners reach their financial goals with a full-time private practice. Most, however, struggle to make it by keeping their day jobs, accepting part-time employment, working pro bono or for discounted fees—you don't have to be one of them. You can achieve your goals by doing what other Million Dollar Practitioners do.

In my experience mentoring practitioners to build their practices, I have found that Million Dollar Practitioners share all of the following characteristics:

1. Passionate

Million Dollar Practitioners love their work. They are living out their life purpose and are so excited by it that they would do it for free and have no thought or intention of retirement. They truly could not imagine doing anything else, and consider themselves lucky to have the best job in the world. Their passion is easily expressed and very attractive to their potential clients.

2. Positive

Million Dollar Practitioners have "can-do" attitudes. They believe in themselves and trust that they will find a way around obstacles in order to survive and thrive. Thus, they are able to effectively empower their clients to be positive as well. Million Dollar Practitioners assume abundance instead of scarcity. While they may experience fear and doubt, they never view them as reasons for "No."

3. Entrepreneurial

Million Dollar Practitioners have entrepreneurial attitudes, consider their practice a business, and take the trouble to learn and apply the business skills needed to be successful. While most private practice professionals understandably wish to focus on serving their clients and resist the business and marketing aspects of their practice, Million Dollar Practitioners enjoy the challenge of pioneering successful businesses that are expressions of their gifts, mission, and purpose.

4. Playing Large

Million Dollar Practitioners are always expanding by growing themselves and their practice. They desire to play as large as they can and take every opportunity to do so. They get impatient with the status quo and are always in motion seeking to maximize their time, energy, opportunities, and resources.

5. Creative

Million Dollar Practitioners pioneer their work with their clients and their practice. They like to build upon what they've learned and are excited to develop their own approaches to their work that express their gifts, talents, and perspectives. Most enjoy the thought of writing a book or developing a program that would make a unique and powerful contribution to the world.

6. Service-Oriented

Million Dollar Practitioners truly wish to make a difference in the world and are grateful for the opportunity to be of service to their clients. While they may have their financial goals, they wish to practice "right-livelihood." It's more important for them to fulfill their mission and purpose than it is to be financially successful, and as a result—perhaps paradoxically—they help more people and ultimately become wildly successful themselves.

7. Walking the Talk

Million Dollar Practitioners believe in the value of their work and are enthusiastic clients as well. They put time and effort into developing themselves and building the life that they really want, while they are making a living helping others do so. They have walked in their clients' shoes and continue to do so. Here's a related principle: *Investing in yourself will help your prospective clients see the value of investing in you.*

As a private practice professional, you should be able to take a look at any of the Seven Habits of Million Dollar Practitioners and say, "Okay, I can do that if I want to: I can be positive, I can be passionate, I can be entrepreneurial, I can play large, I can be creative, I can be service-oriented, I can walk the talk."

The Lone Ranger

You can adopt the Seven Habits of Million Dollar Practitioners, no question about it. You probably need help overcoming some of your internal obstacles to do so. Just as you want to help your clients identify *their* obstacles, it's important to recognize that you have *your own*, and you need to deal with them, just as you want your clients to deal with theirs. And what is the most effective way to deal with them? By getting support for them, by not doing it alone.

One of my biggest pains and frustrations is seeing private practice professionals who want people to hire them yet don't get the support that they need. These lone rangers are struggling and flailing around because they don't have the clarity and resources that comes with having a support system, which is absolutely one of the biggest differentiators between being successful and not being successful. Are you getting help and support? No one is successful alone. People who try to do it all by themselves are building castles confined to their own minds. They are creating elaborate internal images that they think are wonderful and that everybody is going to love. But it's a fantasy if these images are not shared with others. Lone rangers lack the reality check that comes with doing something with and for real people, because they are living in their own minds, doing it by themselves, which is often a way of hiding.

There are many ways that we hide. Some people maintain a virtual practice. "I'm going to work from home and deal with people over the telephone and Internet so I won't even have to leave my house or directly interact with anybody." That is very attractive for some people, and certainly many services can be delivered effectively over the telephone. But if there is one thing I have learned in all my years of private practice, it's that you can't hide if you want to be successful. This lesson actually started much earlier, when I was 13 years old, and experienced the most terrifying moment of my life—ever.

Public Speaking

In preparation for your bar mitzvah, you are expected to study for about a year leading up to the actual event. And one of the biggest things you study is called the Haftorah—the portion of the Torah that you will recite for your bar mitzvah. In Jewish temples, they don't just recite it, they sing it. So not only did I have to engage in one of society's most feared activities, public speaking, I had to sing!

There I was, a 13-year-old boy, on a stage, behind a podium, with a microphone, in front of a couple hundred of my closest family, friends, and community members—singing! No joke: By the time I finished my performance, I was so soaked with sweat that I literally had to go home and change before the reception, which is immortalized in our family photos. If you look at a picture of me at my bar mitzvah, you will see me in a suit and tie with a blue shirt. And if you look at pictures of me at the reception, you will see me in a suit and tie with a white shirt.

Now after having gone through that experience you may think that I would never, ever want to subject myself to speaking in public again. But in junior college, in order to complete my requirements, I had to take certain electives, and public speaking ended up being one of them. Predictably, my first couple of talks were horrendous. But that class helped me become a heck of a lot more comfortable speaking in front of a group, even though, for many years as I toiled as a marriage and family therapist in private practice, public speaking wasn't something I had to do.

I went into a profession where all my work was one-to-one. I sat in a private office, with four walls and a door, a couch, a chair, and a desk, and me and one other person, or me and a couple, or, at most, me and a small family. Every once in a while I gave a talk to a group as part of my marketing, but it wasn't something that I sought out, and it certainly wasn't something I perceived myself as doing very well.

Eventually I made the transition to relationship coaching because I was burning out as a marriage therapist. In my new career path, I decided that I wanted to reach singles and figured the way to do so was to start hosting singles events and giving presentations and seminars—public speaking. As frightening a prospect as that was, I knew I didn't want to go back to my life of burnout, so my only option was to move forward. And going forward meant speaking in front of groups. Even though I was uncomfortable doing so, I did it anyway, and it worked out very well. My singles events were successful and I became more and more comfortable with public speaking.

Then, when I started Relationship Coaching Institute (RCI), just about everything I did was speaking to groups. Again, I didn't want to, but I did it anyway. For a long time my goal was to stay in the background. My introverted preference was to be the "man behind the curtain," supporting and empowering everybody else. I didn't view myself as anything special and certainly not as a front man. I'm not especially good-looking, charismatic, or brilliant. I'm just a regular guy and would rather be the supporter than the star. As a result of this mind-set, my business didn't go anywhere—that is, until I was willing to step out front and reveal all. Without getting too much into the psychology of it, there are many ways that we hide and there are many reasons why we hide, but there is one thing that is clear: You cannot hide if you are going to build a Million Dollar Practice. I didn't want to be the front person, but it was unavoidable. For RCI to succeed, I had to be a leader, I had to be out in front. Public speaking was something that I had to embrace to accomplish my goals. It was not something that came comfortably at first. It was not something I wanted to do. But the payoff was that, after working with a speaking coach/mentor (thanks, Burt!), it became something enjoyable, something I looked forward to, and something I became good at doing.

Many people are not comfortable speaking in public. They have tremendous resistance to it. Yet, part of building a Million Dollar Practice, especially as it relates to the one-to-many model that we will explore later in this book, is the ability to speak in front of groups. People who shy away from public speaking and say, "Well, I'm not comfortable," and use that as a reason for "No" are going to stay small. The ones who work through that fear and overcome their internal obstacles to public speaking—as one of many, many examples of what might get in the way—are the ones who are going to make it.

Remember: When I started out, I was scared just like everybody else. But I worked through that fear so as to not let it stand in the way of my goals. In time, I got better at it and was able to reach more people. And when it became apparent that speaking was going to help me get where I wanted to go, I even hired a speaking mentor, one of the top guys in the industry who advises lots of top speakers. He wasn't cheap but he was worth the investment. I worked with him for a year and I'm glad I did because I learned a lot. And the more I got up and spoke in front of people the better and more comfortable I became. Now, speaking in front of groups is something I look forward to and can do without anxiety.

My wife and I travel thousands of miles to speak at professional conferences, and when I'm getting ready to take the stage she always asks me, "Are you nervous?" And my response is always the same and she can't believe it: "No."

She can't believe it because she would be nervous. But when you do something enough, you become comfortable with it, you become good at it, and you even come to enjoy it, like exercise. Embrace the things that are uncomfortable or hard, don't focus on "I can't because . . ." or

"I don't want to." Focus on "How can I?" How can I get that speaking gig? How can I do a good job in that speaking gig? How can I penetrate this niche? How can I build a Million Dollar Practice? Those are the questions to ask. When you ask those questions, you'll find many ways. There are always resources. There are always solutions. There are always strategies. The beautiful thing is that there are usually *many* ways to go, not just one. It's like the marketing triad: speaking, writing, and networking. You don't like to write? You're not good at writing? You don't have to write. There are other ways to market. You really don't want to speak? Okay, there are other ways to market.

We should embrace and say "Yes" to opportunities that come our way. If somebody asks you to speak, say "Yes!" Don't say "No, I don't speak in public," "No, I'm not good at that," or "No, I'm not comfortable."

One day I was approached by a top-notch pay-per-click-advertising guy who wanted me to help market his services to my network. I appreciated his work and thought a lot of people could benefit from it, and I was quite open to the idea. So I said, "Okay, well, why don't you put together a tele-seminar introducing my network to pay-per-click advertising. Explain it to them, give them some tips, and then let them know what your services and programs are." And he wouldn't do it. He wanted the business, but when I told him how to get the business, he said, "No, I'm not comfortable doing that." As a result, he lost the opportunity to reach 20,000 people in a single 1-hour telephone call from the comfort of his home or office.

Again, the people who have the hardest time succeeding aren't the ones who don't know what to do, they are the ones who aren't willing to do it. They (understandably) hold back when they have internal resistance, which causes them to procrastinate, avoid, or delay, which in turn causes them to miss out on opportunities. The ones who are successful are the ones who ask, "How can I overcome this?" or "How can I accomplish this?" and who get the support they need to do it.

Fear of Success and Fear of Failure

Most of us understand fear of failure. We recognize that we all have a lower limit, a pain threshold, beyond which things become so uncomfortable that we feel the need to act to protect ourselves to survive. The fear of success, however, is not something that a lot of people really understand, but it's something that we all have. One of the most helpful ways of understanding fear of success is to frame it as an *upper limit*. An upper limit works similarly to the lower limit, except instead of being about survival, it's about happiness and success. Believe it or not, even though we might want it, when we get up there it feels scary. And so what do we do? We do things to bring us back down to a more comfortable level. We sabotage ourselves. Again, everybody has a comfort zone comprised of a lower limit and an upper limit. Our job is to not let those limits dictate our choices. It's unnecessary to live our lives based upon our survival instincts. We don't need to live our lives avoiding too much pain and happiness because when we get near them we become scared. But it's a lifelong journey to raise our upper limits to be able to handle increasing levels of success and fulfillment, because, for most of us, whether it's that relationship, that job, that business opportunity, or something else, when we get far enough outside of our comfort zone it brings up all our *stuff*. Childhood insecurities, family situations, experiences we've had in our past, lack of faith and belief in ourselves, how much or little we feel safe in the world, the amount that we trust ourselves or other people—there are many reasons why we self-sabotage. It all falls under the umbrella of *stuff*. For now, it's enough to be clear that we all have it, that it is triggered when we are outside of our comfort zone, and that therefore it's our biggest obstacle to building a Million Dollar Practice.

And since our *stuff* comes out in fear of failure and fear of success, and since building a successful private practice is an entrepreneurial enterprise and for a lot of practitioners being an entrepreneur does not come naturally, it's something that needs to be learned and chosen and consciously embraced. We don't just walk by the entrepreneurial pool and say, "Wow, that looks inviting, I think I'll jump right in!" No, we look at that pool and say, "Ooh, that water looks cold, I don't know if I'm ready to get in there yet. Maybe I'll put my toe in the water . . . well, maybe not my toe, I'd have to take off my shoe . . . how about my finger?"

In answering the litmus test question, whatever *stuff* comes up for you is just an indication of what you have to deal with. It doesn't mean that you are not able to become an entrepreneur or build a Million Dollar Practice, it just means that you are going to have a hero's journey. Well, congratulations, most of us do!

If it were easy, everybody would have built a Million Dollar Practice by now, and it wouldn't be worthwhile. Anything valuable, special, or exceptional is done through hard work, by taking risks, and with consistent stretching.

So now that we have laid out some principle habits of Million Dollar Practitioners and given you a flavor of the right mind-set, let's delve a little deeper into a key point of view that will guide you along your hero's journey to a Million Dollar Practice.

Technician or Entrepreneur

Three fundamental categories set the stage for how you operate in business: the technician, the manager, and the entrepreneur. Michael Gerber does a fantastic job of laying these out in his book, *The E-Myth Revisited*. For the purposes of determining how your current mind-set might be better aligned with that of a Million Dollar Practitioner—and as a prelude to Chapter 2, as it relates to your mission and message—we're going to examine the technician and the entrepreneur.

Most private practice professionals are technicians. That is, they have been trained in a particular area of expertise, much like somebody trained to fix your refrigerator or your car. They have skills and experience, training and knowledge. But there is a difference between the person who fixes your car or home appliances, and the person who owns a car or appliance repair shop and lives in a mansion on a hill:

The technician just wants to do his work and get paid for it.

The entrepreneur has a dream or vision to create a successful business.

The Entrepreneurial Mind-Set

Building a successful six- and seven-figure private practice is a journey fraught with obstacles. The litmus test question—in addition to helping you identify and uncover inner resistance—gauges your current level of resolve to navigate them. It sheds light on the entrepreneurial mind-set necessary to build a Million Dollar Practice.

Will you embrace your inner entrepreneur or submit to your inner resistance? The litmus test question helps you answer this question.

Again, if you answered affirmatively to the litmus test question, don't be discouraged. It doesn't mean that you can't build a Million Dollar Practice. It just means that what you really want, right now, deep down, is just to be given a job. You currently have inner resistance to the freedom, opportunities, and obstacles that come with being a self-employed entrepreneurial practitioner. If you answered "Yes" to the litmus test question, it means that the things most celebrated by entrepreneurs about being self-employed are things that scare you . . . at this moment. And that's okay.

Most practitioners, myself included, have a measure of fear and resistance at some level. But we also have the ability to identify, address, and overcome that fear and resistance. The litmus test question is one way to begin the transformation from anxiety to prosperity. Because if somebody were to offer you a job doing what you wanted to do with whom you wanted to do it, and you would accept it, that's a strong indication that—right now—you have some resistance to overcome to become ready for a Million Dollar Practice.

Setting business goals that are incongruent with an existing inner resistance to becoming an entrepreneur will lead you along a bumpy road to nowhere. Granted, if you are seeking self-employment you will likely have a bumpy road ahead of you anyway; most practitioners do. But understanding what's coming—to the extent that you can—and having the mind-set necessary to endure it helps you stay on course to where you want to go.

Reaching your destination takes strength of character, clearly defined goals, and an entrepreneurial mind-set. There is enormous pressure to turn around and seek safe passage when the storms rage and the seas swell in front of you. As practitioners, we recognize this. We understand that our clients have obstacles to achieving the results that we want to help them get. We recognize them because we have them, too—in life and in business. Resisting self-employment and the risk and freedom that comes with private practice is among them.

That's why many private practice professionals "sell out" to insurance companies and spend time, energy, and resources doing work they don't love and being underpaid for it.

Of course, if that's the only way you can serve your population, then you have to make some sacrifices. If you want to serve the homeless, you have to accept that the homeless can't pay you. You're going to have to spend your time and effort getting grants and government contracts. But to me, it's a trap, one that can permanently derail your efforts to build a Million Dollar Practice, one that has a significant social impact. When the focus of your organization is about survival, about getting paid, it takes time, energy, and resources away from serving your population, being creative, building your organization, and making a wider difference in the world.

But there is a workaround:

Build a wildly successful organization and then *contract with the government.*

To some, this may sound paradoxical, but it's like getting a loan at the bank; the bank wants to lend you money only if you don't need the loan. In the same vein, the government is most eager to give grants and contracts to people or organizations that don't need the grants or contracts. Everybody likes success.

Case Study: The ScreamFree Institute

Hal Runkel is cofounder and the public face of The ScreamFree Institute, an organization that promotes the idea that keeping your cool is the way to a happier home life and a successful marriage. Hal and his partners are worth emulating. The ScreamFree Institute is indeed a Million Dollar Practice. It also happens to be a not-for-profit organization.

The ScreamFree Institute helps tens of thousands of people all over the world have better marriages and families, including the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces. The government is happy to give Hal and his organization money to work with military families because ScreamFree—in addition to being a brilliant brand—is a tremendously successful business model, albeit a not-for-profit one.

It's catchy. It's "teach-out-of-the box." It's effective. Lenders and keepers of the purse happen to like it when you offer measurable results and a discrete solution. By discrete I mean it has a beginning and an end. It's not a black hole for time and money.

Make no mistake, the success of the ScreamFree Institute is no accident. Hal Runkel is a licensed marriage and family therapist, and he is also a savvy businessman. Hal and his partners have surrounded themselves with a team of intelligent and experienced people. They know what they are good at and empower each other to excel in ways that best support their mission. While they have certainly made their share of mistakes like everyone else, everything they have done—including adopting a not-for-profit business model—has been the result of careful consideration. If Hal and his team had started out pursuing government contracts, they likely would have hit hard times when the contracts expired or the funding ran dry. Instead, they built an organization and became visible and successful *first*. Jumping to the next level of reaching tens of thousands of military families was a natural progression. It wasn't based on survival, it was based on mission. And it's a perfect illustration of an important principle to bear in mind as you pursue a Million Dollar Practice.

The Long Way Is the Short Way and the Short Way Is the Long Way

One of my mentors adapted a passage from the Talmud[1] that has become one of my favorite sayings and principles:

In life, sometimes the long way is the short way and the short way is the long way.

[1]Solomon, Norman (2009). *The Talmud: A selection*. Penguin Classics. Gemara: [53b] "I was on my way when I saw a boy sitting at the crossroads. I asked, Which is the way into town? He said, This way is short but long, and that one is long but short. I followed the short but long [route], but when I arrived at the town I found that it was surrounded by gardens and orchards, and I had to retrace my steps. I said, My son, didn't you tell me that was the short [route]? He said to me, But didn't I tell you it was long! I kissed his head and said to him, Happy are you, Israel, for you are all astute, from the greatest to the smallest!"

Hal Runkel displayed knowledge of this principle in building the ScreamFree Institute, and it can be applied in all sorts of situations. I often remind my kids about it in relation to their homework. Invariably, when my kids take shortcuts and rush through their homework to get it done as soon as possible so they can play video games, it needs to be redone. It's sloppy and incorrect. I try to instill in my kids that if they would just take their time and do a good job on their homework from the outset, they would be done with it and able to play much faster.

It's funny; at parent-teacher conferences, the teachers tell me, "I only give 10–15 minutes of homework a night." And then I see my kids spending *hours*. Why are they spending hours when it's only designed to take 10–15 minutes? Well, partly because they have a tremendous amount of internal resistance to doing their homework. And who can blame them? However, if they would just choose to embrace the task with a positive attitude and say, "Okay, I completely commit to this and will do the best job I possibly can on this assignment," they would be done a heck of a lot faster.

It's the same with building a private practice. Seeking government grants and taking on managed care clients is often chosen over marketing to get private pay clients. It's the short way. But it's also the long way. Unless the managed care approach is in keeping with your original goals and interests, you are likely not going to be happy with where you end up, which, in effect, will be way off course from where you originally intended. Besides, the money wouldn't necessarily always be there anyway, so it's best to take the time to create a strong foundation.

Similarly, that's why I referenced the "stars-in-the-eyes" practitioners at the opening of this chapter. If you want to leapfrog straight to seven figures without paying your dues and laying your foundation, you are in for a rude awakening. If, on the other hand, you methodically build your business on sustainable, scalable principles, like Hal Runkel and his partners did with the ScreamFree Institute, then you can command all the contracts and get all the business that you want. In building a sustainable, successful Million Dollar Practice, the long way is the short way, and the short way is the long way.

It's an Evolution

Before you are ready to claim the mantle of the Million Dollar Practice and the lucrative contracts that come with it, there is an evolution that must take place. It takes time to create a Million Dollar Practice. There's a progression. And it should come as no shock to you that undergoing such a progression is not easy. It's not impossible . . . but it's not easy. That's why having a positive mind-set is so critical. And as we mentioned earlier, shaping that mind-set starts with recognizing and overcoming your internal fears and resistance. To assist you to do so, I'm going to rely on one of my colleagues to help demystify some of what lies ahead in your practice-building journey.

If you are going to pursue a Million Dollar Practice, the most critical piece of advice I can share with you is that you must understand and embrace the stages of practice building. You must recognize and accept not only where you are, but also where you want to go and what it takes to get there.

My friend, renowned conscious business expert and entrepreneur, Brian Whetten, PhD, of SellingByGiving.net, has created a comprehensive description of the progression for building a successful practice he calls *The Seven Stages of Practice Building*. With his permission, and because I have used it to such great effect with my clients, I would like to share the nuts and bolts of it with you now.

The Seven Stages of Practice Building[2]

Stage 1: Student

Your private practice career starts as a student pursuing your degree or certificate in your area of focus—psychology, finance, spirituality, etc.—and you are developing the requisite knowledge to prepare you for your quest to make a difference in the world. The developmental goal of the student is to "develop trust in the value of what you've

[2]Adapted from *The Seven Stages of Practice Building* with permission from Brian Whetten, PhD, MA, www.sellingbygiving.net © 2010. All rights reserved.

learned." This stage is marked by a comfort level some find tough to get beyond. Practitioners often revert back to this stage when they encounter obstacles or get in a jam: "I need to go back to school." "I need more training."

Stage 2: Intern

You are an intern when you graduate from your degree or certification program and are focused on gaining experience. Here the developmental goal is to "develop trust in your ability to provide exceptional value." The intern level is reached when you have successfully delivered exceptional value to at least five repeat clients. Getting paid for your efforts is not necessary at this level. What's important is that you receive positive feedback affirming your ability to deliver effective services to your clients.

Stage 3: Apprentice

Here is where you start getting paid. You know you are an apprentice when you are finally earning some or most of your income through your chosen profession, consistently. This level can be achieved simultaneously with stage two. The developmental goal of the apprentice is to "develop trust in your ability to get paid for your services."

Stage 4: Practitioner

This is the first stage of full-time private practice. If you haven't done so already (as many practitioners jump the gun in this regard), your efforts are designed to build your practice to the point where you can quit your day job. Some may think that leaving your day job early (before your practice pays your bills) to work full time in private practice gives you a tactical advantage in building it. But that's not necessarily the case. Leaving your day job too soon often creates undue stress and prompts you to act hastily and erratically, which in turn detracts from your ability to deliver quality services. Remember the survival mode we mentioned earlier? The goal of stage four is to "develop trust in your ability to support your basic financial needs with your practice's income."

Stage 5: Master Practitioner

In this stage, you have a successful practice and are refining your business to coincide with your vision, mission, and message. The developmental goal of the master practitioner is to "develop trust in your ability to enroll clients at will." You are confident in your ability to get clients, you only work with your desired clients, and you might even have a waiting list. This is the six-figure practice level.

Stage 6: Teacher

If you are in the Teacher phase of practice building, your focus is to "develop trust in your ability to effectively enroll groups of people and to function as an entrepreneur." Here we are getting to the crux of a Million Dollar Practice; the idea of a technician vs. an entrepreneur, a one-to-one model vs. a one-to-many model (to be covered in Chapter 2). This is where the rubber meets the road and where the entrepreneurial mind-set really kicks in. This is where the transition takes place for building a Million Dollar Practice.

Stage 7: Leader

At this stage of the game, your goal is to "develop trust in the systems you've built for effectively enrolling participants as well as building your organization to the place that you are no longer needed for day-to-day operations." But remember: This is not the endgame. You don't ever stop building your practice. You must continue to grow and expand your ability to serve your chosen niche. There is no limit to the degrees of leadership and how far you can expand your mission.

Again, the progression laid out in Brian Whetten's *The Seven Stages of Practice Building* is designed to put things in perspective so you can see where you are, where you want to go, and the steps and time investment needed to get there. So where are you now? While the primary audience for this book is Stage 4 Practitioners and above, those in the earlier stages can benefit from knowing what's ahead in order to "begin with the end in mind."

What is a Million Dollar Practice?

Many private practice professionals see a "six-figure practice"—or Master Practitioner as viewed through the lens of *The Seven Stages of Practice Building*—as the pinnacle of their professional and financial success. And there is nothing wrong with that. In fact, this was my goal years ago as a marriage and family therapist in private practice. Since then, however, I've learned that you can go beyond the six-figure level. You can indeed build a Million Dollar Practice. But what does that mean, exactly?

A Million Dollar Practice is not a numerical measure of success. It's a scalable business model. Sure, some practices reach the literal, seven-figure, quantifiable dollar value, but we are talking about much more than dollars. In addition to the inevitable financial compensation that comes along with it, we are talking about leveraging your expertise to not only build a successful business, but to make a significant difference in the lives of others.

Comparing the Six Figure Practice and the Million Dollar Practice

SIX FIGURE PRACTICE	MILLION DOLLAR PRACTICE
The Six Figure Practice typically exchanges time for dollars (one-to-one)	The Million Dollar Practice has multiple revenue streams (one-to-many)
The Six Figure Practice typically provides a standard service commonly found elsewhere	The Million Dollar Practice provides unique and creative services unavailable anywhere else
The Six Figure Practice typically emphasizes quality services and benefits	The Million Dollar Practice emphasizes life-changing results
The Six Figure Practice is typically composed of one practitioner and a few staff	The Million Dollar Practice is a collaboration of motivated partners providing complementary talents and contributions
The Six Figure Practice seeks to make a comfortable living	The Million Dollar Practice seeks to make a social impact

The Six Figure Practice Typically Exchanges Time for Dollars (One-to-One) If you are practicing at the six-figure level, there is a good chance that you are still operating under the one-to-one model. This is the mind-set and method of the technician. When your primary means of service is conducting one-to-one sessions, exchanging your time for dollars, you limit not only your income potential but also the number of people you are able to reach.

The Million Dollar Practice Has Multiple Revenue Streams (One-to-Many) By opening up your practice with products and programs, you instantly make yourself available to a much wider slice of your niche. This creates multiple revenue streams that can help others, generates income while you sleep, and leverages your time to help more people.

The Six Figure Practice Typically Provides a Standard Service Commonly Found Elsewhere Practitioners at the six-figure level are no doubt providing a valuable service. But they tend to offer a level of service that people can readily get elsewhere. This poses problems on several levels, not the least of which is that it forces the practitioner to compete on price. On one hand, why would you pay more for the exact same service when you could get it down the street for less? On the other hand, if you want ScreamFree Parenting, you can only go to Hal Runkel's organization.

The Million Dollar Practice Provides Unique and Creative Services Unavailable Anywhere Else When you make the switch to the Million Dollar Practice model, you begin to look for ways to customize your products and services. This adds more value to your constituents, who are not necessarily averse to paying higher fees for added benefits and a custom program unavailable anywhere else.

The Six Figure Practice Typically Emphasizes Quality Services and Benefits There is no quicker way to lump yourself in with every other provider that does what you do than to tout your quality service and benefits. That's what everybody does. And while it's important to do it, doing that alone won't lead to a Million Dollar Practice.

The Million Dollar Practice Emphasizes Life-Changing Results If you truly want to set yourself and your business apart from the rest, you would be wise to highlight the transformation that you deliver for your clients (and you do!). Again, excellent customer service is no longer enough; it's expected, a given. Today, in addition to clearly communicating the benefits and results of your services, you must deliver on your promise to change people's lives.

The Six Figure Practice Is Typically Composed of One Practitioner and a Few Staff If there's one mistake that I see over and over and over again with my practice-building clients, it's that they try to do everything themselves. Whether it is to hide, to maintain control, or to save money, many practitioners keep too tight a grip on administrative and other tasks that would be better suited for others.

The Million Dollar Practice Is a Collaboration of Motivated Partners Providing Complementary Talents and Contributions If you want to jump to the level of the Million Dollar Practice, you're going to need help. You can't do it alone. Taking advantage of skilled and knowledgeable employees, contractors, and partners is the way to grow your business efficiently, reach more people, and allow everyone to stay focused on their areas of expertise to benefit all involved.

The Six Figure Practice Seeks to Make a Comfortable Living If you are just looking to get by and live a fairly easygoing life—which is perfectly fine—then you will likely find yourself hanging around the periphery of the six-figure level. This mind-set is shared by many helping professionals who never really look beyond their desire to be a technician in their chosen field.

The Million Dollar Practice Seeks to Make a Social Impact Private practice professionals who are in touch with their inner entrepreneur are more prone to wanting to make a broader difference in the world. While it may be one component of a larger mission, they are not satisfied to see their contributions stop within the walls of their office.

Those pursuing the Million Dollar Practice seek to have a much larger and more significant social impact.

Is a Million Dollar Practice Possible?

Now that you see what a Million Dollar Practice involves, does it seem like it's worth pursuing? In your eyes, does a Million Dollar Practice seem possible?

We've already touched upon one example of someone who has built a Million Dollar Practice, Hal Runkel with the ScreamFree Institute, but there are other examples that may be more familiar to you. And they all share something in common with Hal and, more important, with you.

Deepak Chopra. Anthony Robbins. Jack Canfield. You name it. These are just ordinary people who have leveraged their expertise to build a Million Dollar Practice. These helping professionals have brought passion to their work. They have created their own approaches to helping people that make a difference. And they have built successful businesses around them.

While many practitioners might not believe such professional and monetary success is even possible for them, we know that it is. We know it because we have seen people do it. And we have much to learn from them. They serve as inspiration. They provide a roadmap. Their methods and techniques can be applied and built upon with your own special talents and areas of expertise to make a larger difference in the world and to touch the lives of many—that is, to build a Million Dollar Practice.

Again, this is not to suggest that building a Million Dollar Practice will be easy. While most private practice professionals dream of earning six and seven figures, it takes a specific combination of passion, understanding, risk-taking, entrepreneurial spirit, and overcoming obstacles and resistance to pull it off.

Let's examine some cases in more detail.

Case Study: Deepak Chopra

No practitioner has better leveraged his expertise to build a successful business and make a difference than Deepak Chopra. And you won't find a better example of a Million Dollar Practice than the Chopra Center for Wellbeing. While its reach now stretches around the globe, it wasn't always that way.

Founded by Deepak Chopra and David Simon, the Chopra Center began with two physicians who stood for something bigger than themselves, the concept of combining Eastern spirituality and Western medicine to bring a unique and holistic health approach to the world. Deepak Chopra and David Simon started with merely an idea and the passion to see it through. And they turned that into an empire that impacts millions. How did they do it? Well, along with leveraging the principles laid out in this book, they did it with the help of a great team of people, one of whom, Max Simon, is not only a friend of mine but a valued mentor.

Max Simon currently serves as Chief Enlightenment Officer of GetSelfCentered.com. And while he is a brilliant guy in his own right, he is also the son of Chopra Center cofounder David Simon. Fresh out of business school, Max was tapped as the Chopra Center's new Director of Consumer Products—a tall order for a 21-year-old. Max accepted the challenge and turned a fledgling products division into a multimillion dollar market. He revamped 49 products and tripled online sales. Max knows a little something about business.

During a recent conversation, Max gave me an inside look at the Chopra Center's transformation. He provided insight into how two ordinary guys, physicians intent on helping others through mind-body medicine, banded together and managed to leverage their interests and expertise to not only build a business around it, but also evolve their practice into a global phenomenon.

Through his experience with the Chopra Center, and through the principles and philosophies he teaches in his own business, Max is clear on what an entrepreneur needs to do to go from a one-to-one model (seeing people individually) to a one-to-many model (serving groups), one of the principal tenets of building a Million Dollar Practice.

First, let it be known—and Max will be the first to tell you—that the Chopra Center for Wellbeing is a bit of an anomaly. Not because they did something that you can't do, but because they were actually willing to do it. They stood for something that nobody else dared stand for at the time.

Back in the 1980s, mind-body medicine, meditation, yoga—even vegetarianism—were not commonly accepted. Deepak Chopra and David Simon championed a methodology and philosophy that was completely new to the Western world—a rarity in this day and age. As Max maintains, "There are very few things these days that are completely new to the world."

Most of what's new to the world these days is more good marketing than it is new concepts.

Deepak Chopra and David Simon were trained in Western medicine. They were also exposed to mind-body medicine. They trained in meditation and yoga. They explored and experienced a particular form of enlightened living and raising consciousness. And they were profoundly moved by it.

As physicians, Deepak Chopra and David Simon started to look deeper into the scientific and medical opportunities and implications of their philosophy. They believed that mind and body were connected and that much of the way Western medicine was being delivered to the world was incomplete. They felt that spirituality and mind-body medicine needed to be integrated into our modern health-care system.

While they certainly had a lot of the right ingredients fall into place over time, Deepak Chopra and David Simon's success came from seeing an opportunity to do something they genuinely believed was going to help people. And because they were innovators, they weren't immediately seen as popular or even credible. They were seen as eccentric, even crazy. It wasn't until Deepak Chopra went on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* that they gained some real traction. It started with Deepak Chopra's books. His books led him to Oprah. And Oprah led him to the world. Once he received that overnight recognition, everything just took off. Deepak Chopra's books became bestsellers, and Deepak Chopra and David Simon opened the Chopra Center for Wellbeing.

Neither Deepak Chopra nor David Simon ever planned to create a worldwide movement. They just took a stand for what they believed.

And while it's clear that a bit of good fortune came into play, as it does with every international sensation, it's also clear that Deepak Chopra and David Simon weren't just doctors waiting in their offices for people to come so they could heal them. They both took a firm stand, they were both teachers at heart, they both put themselves out there—in books, in classes, and in products—and they built a following in the process.

In addition to being an integral part of the Chopra Center's growth, being the son of one of the cofounders, Max Simon has been given a ringside seat to the personal side of the public face of the Chopra Center. Max has known Deepak Chopra all of his life and has been deeply influenced by him. Max is well aware that Deepak has a lot going for him—his charisma, his brilliant mind, and his ability to wrap language around the way he has come to look at the world chief among them—but Max also knows the man behind the public persona. He knows Deepak Chopra as a person. But just how important is that in growing a Million Dollar Practice?

When I interviewed Max for this book, I wondered what practitioners can learn about building a Million Dollar Practice from Deepak Chopra. I asked him what draws people to Deepak and what makes him so successful:

> *"Where does he come from inside that causes people to be attracted to him? Do you think that it's genuine? Is it manipulative? Is he just a good salesman? Is he truly as spiritual and compassionate as he seems?"*
>
> *"I think Deepak is all of it." Max said. "I think we all are."*

"He's got his flaws as well," Max continued. "He does things wrong. Yes, he's at times manipulative. He's just another person who's doing the best he can. People are often surprised about that. But I've known Deepak pretty much my whole life. Underneath the superstar is just another guy. But he truly is brilliant and charismatic, and he has certainly managed to do a lot of good things in the world. He's screwed up a lot of business deals and done a lot of things wrong. He's just like you and me. He's had lots of successes, and he's had lots of failures, too. And that's okay."

As you can see, while Deepak Chopra has his unique gifts and talents—just like you do—he is also a person who has made mistakes and who has built his practice from the ground up, just like you plan to do. His story is not unlike another Million Dollar Practice builder you may recognize.

Case Study: Anthony Robbins

Anthony "Tony" Robbins is more than a name. He's an institution. The world of personal growth owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to this pioneer.

Tony Robbins grew up in the Los Angeles area, a child of divorce, in a poor household. When he was 13, a stranger left an anonymous gift of food on his family's doorstep so they could properly celebrate Thanksgiving. Tony Robbins was so taken by this act that he vowed he would one day be successful enough to return the favor to others.

Like Deepak Chopra, Tony Robbins has always been a charismatic person. But his success comprises more than that. He, too, believed in what he was doing and put himself out there to champion it. By the time he was 19, he was making $10,000 per month as a salesman for motivational speaker Jim Rohn. But for Tony, it was too much too fast. As he achieved more and more financial success and recognition, he felt isolated and started sabotaging himself. He began missing meetings and overeating. He became an overweight recluse. Tony Robbins essentially hit rock bottom at the ripe old age of 21.

Out for a walk on the beach one day, Tony Robbins made the decision to pick himself up, take control of his life, and make the most of his talents and knowledge. With a foundation in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), Tony Robbins began hosting personal growth seminars that steadily grew in popularity and got himself back on track inside a year. His signature seminar was called Fear into Power, where he walked barefoot on hot coals and had people do the same. Over time, he revamped and improved his seminars and workshops, many of which were sold out months ahead of time.

One day he met a literary agent who was attending one of his seminars. This meeting eventually led to the book *Unlimited Power*, a huge bestseller that cemented his presence as a self-help guru. You may be familiar with Robbins's next marketing attempt, as he was an early adopter of the infomercial. Through these extended television broadcasts, Robbins sold his products, tapes, books, programs, and seminars and created an enormous following. He became extremely wealthy, amassed an elite client list from professional athletes to heads of state, and had a worldwide impact. He also charged top dollar for his personal time and ongoing daily group presentations. Tony Robbins built a Million Dollar Practice.

While things were certainly not all roses for Robbins, who, as we are all vulnerable, suffered heartache, skepticism—even lawsuits—there is no question that his rags-to-riches story serves as an inspirational example of the possibility of the average person to build a Million Dollar Practice. But it's important to note that—like Deepak Chopra and Hal Runkel—Tony Robbins didn't do it alone. He had mentors and a team of professionals to help him with his mission, some of whom actually now work within my organization to serve our clients and further our mission.

Case Study: David Steele

If you still doubt that building a Million Dollar Practice is possible for the everyday practitioner, allow me to direct you to another, lesser-known, example: yours truly. And believe me, no one was more surprised than I was at an ordinary person's ability to build a Million Dollar Practice.

Starting down the path of becoming a marriage and family therapist, I had no idea I would end up here. I never thought I would hit the big time. In fact, you could say that founding Relationship Coaching Institute was a bit of a fluke.

My mission started when I was a child, being unhappy and confused about my parents' divorce and why they were so unhappy and why my mother was so mean to me and why my father didn't have any interest in being a father. There was a lot of pain in my childhood. I was trying to understand it all. It was liberating to me when I realized, eventually, that it was not about me. It wasn't my fault. There was nothing wrong with me. That one realization, which occurred sometime in my teens, freed me up tremendously. But there was a lot of pain that caused me to enter my profession, a lot of healing that I had to do, a journey that I had to take to become the person I wanted to be, have the life I wanted to have, and get my needs met in ways that they weren't met when I was a kid. So I embarked on a mission that propelled me to get my degree and license as a marriage and family therapist, start my own practice, and share what I learned to help others who were struggling in similar ways.

I started out working with clients in the hopes of helping them resolve their relationship problems and dreamed of maybe one day hitting the six-figure level. Since then, I've met and exceeded that original aim by building a successful relationship coaching business in my local area, founding Relationship Coaching Institute (the first and largest relationship coach training organization), publishing relationship and practice-building books, developing numerous products and programs (*Conscious Dating*, *Private Practice Marketing on a Budget*, *Private Practice Magic*, etc.), and founding MillionDollarPractice.net to help private practice professionals build their ideal practices and fill them with their ideal clients. In short, I've built a Million Dollar Practice . . . but, like the other examples cited, it didn't happen overnight.

My Epiphany

Back in 1997 when I was a marriage and family therapist in full-time private practice, sitting in my four-walled office in Silicon Valley, my days and nights were filled with stress. I was burning out, my bank balance was heading south, and the reason I started my career in the first place, to help change people's lives (I had committed to singlehandedly bringing down the divorce rate in this country), had been met with mixed results.

That's when I stumbled upon coaching—and fell in love with it. Suddenly, I realized that an entirely new helping profession had developed completely off my radar. After first taking a weekend workshop, and then completing a comprehensive training in personal coaching—sometimes called life coaching—my perspective completely changed. I started to see new possibilities. As a therapist, I found it an attractive and novel approach to work with functional people who had goals and wanted fulfillment in their lives. So when I first looked at relationships from a coaching perspective, it struck me as more effective to help people succeed in their goals than to attempt to help them fix their problems. It seemed so logical all of a sudden: Singles become couples!

How could I have overlooked this niche—singles in Silicon Valley—for so long in my mission to help people have successful marriages and families? *If we could help singles learn about themselves and relationships, including how to make good relationship choices, their chances for long-term success would be greatly increased.* It was settled: Working with singles was the critical starting point.

Shortly thereafter, I started holding weekly singles events, and word quickly spread throughout the community. The events consistently filled to capacity. Before long, my colleagues caught on to what I was doing and they wanted me to train them.

No, no, no, I thought. *I'm having a lot of fun here. I just want to build a successful relationship coaching practice and work with my clients.*

After all, until then, it had never occurred to me to train anybody in anything. I had never dreamed I would ever come up with something worth teaching. Unfortunately, this mind-set is all too common with helping professionals. As practitioners, we are often in awe of other people who conduct trainings and who have originated things. But not in a million years do we think *we* can originate something. *All the good ideas are taken* . . . or so we think.

The truth is, we are all brilliant. We all have the potential to create our own brand—and our own branded programs—that we can leverage into a Million Dollar Practice, one that is helpful to a great many people.

Thankfully, along with my epiphany that singles become couples, I realized that to build a Million Dollar Practice you must leave your comfort zone. You must say "Yes" to things that you would otherwise shy away from. So, when I was asked to help train my colleagues—even though I was originally against it—I said, "Yes." And years later, here I am.

Who's on Your Bookshelf?

It's almost impossible to become a helping professional without accumulating shelves and shelves of books, and to admire and be influenced by certain leaders in our profession.

Thinking about all of the experts and industry leaders who have written books that have influenced me over the years, I started going through my bookshelf to identify those who have a Million Dollar Practice. As a result, I quickly identified a host of role models who have successfully reached the public and brought their expertise into the mainstream. And here they are in no particular order:

Rhonda Britten is a coach. She wrote a book called *Fearless Living: Live Without Excuses and Love Without Regret*. And she followed that up with *Fearless Loving: 8 Simple Truths That Will Change the Way You Date, Mate, and Relate*. She also wrote *Change Your Life in 30 Days: A Journey to Finding Your True Self*. Rhonda created the Fearless Living Institute, similar to the ScreamFree Institute, created by Hal Runkel, whose books I also have in my bookshelf. Fearless Living is Rhonda's brand, and she is definitely in the one-to-many space and has been on top TV programs. She has taken her passion, experience, and expertise and spent many years getting people to push past their fears, embrace their passions, and live their best lives. Now she is a franchise. She is an accomplished woman with a Million Dollar Practice.

Harville Hendrix wrote a book called *Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples*. He took his relationship theory and created a whole approach to relationships called Imago Therapy. He created the Imago Institute, which conducts training and certification of professionals as well as workshops and seminars for the public. He has been called "Oprah's favorite therapist." Harville packaged his approach to couple relationships just like I packaged my approach to singles. An intellectual with a ranch in New Mexico (which I visited at his invitation), Harville has the life of a rock star and makes a difference in people's lives on a huge scale.

Marsha Wieder founded Dream University. She is a coach like Rhonda Britten and wants to help people live their best lives by finding and living their dreams. She has been called "America's Dream Coach." That is her brand. She is Jack Canfield's coach. She conducts seminars and workshops and has a one-to-many model in terms of helping the public. She also trains and certifies dream coaches. She is a Million Dollar Practitioner.

John Gray brought relationship information to the mainstream with his book, *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus: A Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in Your Relationships*. He also wrote many follow-up books and has been widely seen on TV. John offers workshops and seminars for the public and trains and certifies other people to be Mars–Venus coaches. And he has franchises that are Mars–Venus counseling centers. He has leveraged all of this into a Million Dollar Practice.

John Assaraf came from the world of multilevel marketing and real estate sales and investments. Now he is "Mr. Law of Attraction" and "Mr. Spirituality." John was featured in the best selling book *The Secret*. He is a sought-after speaker with one-to-many programs for helping people generate wealth and make their lives better. He, too, has a Million Dollar Practice.

T. Harv Eker, who reaches the masses with his *Millionaire Mind* books, products, and workshops, teaches you how to attract, grow, and manage your money. Similar to Anthony Robbins, he started from nothing, owns his niche, and leveraged his interest and passion into a huge franchise.

Chris and Janet Attwood wrote a book called *The Passion Test*. Their whole approach is "follow your passion." And they train "Passion Test facilitators." They have leveraged their desire to help people identify their passions, get in touch with their passions, and live their passions into a Million Dollar Practice.

Marshall Rosenberg is the guy that I most want to be like. He created an entire approach to relationships and communication called "Nonviolent Communication." His passion is helping people communicate effectively in a way that facilitates connection and harmony and productive relationships. He also does it on the macro level, between countries and governments. Marshall established the Center for Nonviolent Communication and has written many books and created satellite centers all around the country and all over the world.

Sue Johnson is a relationship therapist in Canada. She developed an approach called Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) for helping couples. She started the International Centre for Excellence in Emotionally Focused Therapy (ICEEFT) and conducts seminars and workshops for the public and she also trains practitioners in EFT. She has written good, solid, credible books with genuine value. Sue Johnson is the real deal. And as far as I'm concerned, she has a Million Dollar Practice.

John Gottman is a psychological researcher who chose to focus on relationships. Through his research he ended up writing books, conducting workshops, and training other people who conduct workshops. You know you have arrived when you can start an institute and put your own name on it because your name is adequate by itself to be the brand. John created the Gottman Relationship Institute. Through it he has helped lots of people and generated significant income for his contributions to the relationship world. He has a Million Dollar Practice.

Terrence Real got his start working with some of the heavyweights in the area of codependency. He then went out on his own and founded the Relational Life Institute, where he writes popular books, conducts workshops and seminars for the public, and does trainings for professionals. He has been on all the big talk shows. He is a sought-after speaker. He is brilliant, insightful, and able to communicate his approaches clearly and compellingly to the public. He creates paradigms that make sense to people. He also has an edge to him. He is direct, he challenges people, and he is successful. He has gone from the clinical world to the mainstream, a necessary step for developing a Million Dollar Practice.

Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks are two of my favorite people. They have influenced me tremendously. They wrote a seminal book years ago called *Conscious Loving: The Journey to Co-Commitment*, and they have written many books since then. *Conscious Loving* was my landmark exposure to the world of relationships outside of the clinical realm. They showed me where I wanted to go, setting me on the path to be a relationship coach. When you are trained as a therapist, and you are looking at couples and relationships from a clinical point of view, and then you read a book by people who are writing about the emotional and spiritual potential of relationships to bring love and trust and intimacy to higher levels, it is inspiring. Gay and Katie are pioneers in their field. They dug the well. Today they still conduct seminars and workshops as well as professional trainings. And they definitely have a Million Dollar Practice.

All of these professionals, whether a coach, a therapist, or something else, have something in common: they have a mission and a message and genuine expertise, and they managed to leverage it to successfully reach the public, the mainstream, by leveraging the one-to-many model. They all have a Million Dollar Practice. They may have been ordinary before, just like you and me, but they are not ordinary anymore. Now they can be found on my bookshelf and on the bookshelves of many others who look to them as true experts whom they admire and respect and from whom they want to learn. Perhaps you are attracted to the idea of writing a book that has the same impact, but don't think it is possible. But everybody started someplace. You just have to make the most of who you are and who you want to reach.

Opportunity Lost: Leading Experts Unsuccessful in Business

There are two authors I have on my bookshelf whom I highly respect, whose books and work have made a huge difference for me. But in business they are examples of what not to do. In fact their stories are almost tragic examples of lost opportunities and unnecessary struggle.

The first example is considered to be the leading pioneer in his specialty and works for a prominent university. He is a professor. He does research. He has lots of students and interns and fellows hanging on his every word. But he has not been able to leverage his expertise and his accomplishment and his acclaim into money or a business. He does not have an organization and he doesn't even have a Web site. Despite my prodding and attempts to support him, he has convinced himself that he doesn't have the time or resources to set it up.

This person is a leader and pioneer in his field. He is well liked, respected, and intelligent. But he is holding himself back. He writes books, but he doesn't leverage them. He teaches classes, but he doesn't train anybody. He's a sought-after speaker for professional conferences, who pays his own way to share what he knows with his colleagues. He works with clients, but he doesn't show anybody how to do what he does. He has a tremendous potential legacy that will be greatly diminished because, while his work will live on in his books, he could have a much bigger impact. Additionally, he could be much, much more financially successful than he is.

If goodwill in terms of how many people think you are great and contribution in terms of how many people you have helped could be turned into money, this gentleman would be among the wealthiest. But goodwill, respect, and professional accomplishment do not automatically translate into business and income. Yes, the more people you help, the more money you make, as we will discuss later in this book, but you have to leverage it. He is just not leveraging it. And it's such a tragedy, not just for him, but for all of the people he could be reaching but is not.

The other example is someone whose career I have been following for decades, ever since I got into this field. He is great. He has written books that I liked and appreciated. I even wanted to feature him as a speaker at my Conscious Relationship Tele-Summit (a virtual conference by telephone and Internet). I tracked him down. I got him on the phone and told him how much I admired him, what I was up to, and asked him to conduct a presentation over the telephone at his convenience. What he told me blew me away. He said: "I'm old. I'm tired. I still have a full caseload of clients. I don't have the energy to do anything else." He couldn't even muster up the passion or the energy to get on the phone and do a presentation from the comfort of his home or office.

Here is a guy, like Terrence Real, who tells it like it is and is not afraid to shake people's trees, and he writes books that challenge the status quo and complacency. He should be at the time of his life where he is reaping the rewards for his expertise, his books, and his contributions. If he had built an organization, if he had leveraged who he is and what he does and what he teaches, and packaged it and managed it and created a Million Dollar Practice around it, he would have plenty of time, plenty of money, and plenty of energy. But that's not what happened. And I feel so bad for him. Here is one of my heroes, a guy whose work and books have influenced me from almost the beginning. And now he is sad, old, broken down, and still working full time.

So in looking for inspiration, and for what to avoid, you need to look no further than a collection of expert authors from your profession, and what they have done, or not done, to leverage their passion, mission, and message. And the examples I have cited in this chapter can all be found in my bookshelf. What's in yours?

Likely you will identify, as I did, a series of books from professionals who have leveraged their expertise into Million Dollar Practices of one kind or another. You may also find examples of the two tragic cases who held themselves back by working in their businesses instead of on their businesses, by being technicians rather than entrepreneurs, by coming up with all the reasons why they can't rather than trying to figure out a way that they can. They have been absorbed in all of the "gotta-do" tasks. They have made time for clients, but they have never made time for anything else. And the world will be less because of it.

So is the Million Dollar Practice Right for You?

Now that you have seen what I and others have been able to do, you should have a better idea of your own possibilities. You can create your own program. You can write your own book. You can create something significant that makes a difference in the world in a way that other people can't, because they are not you.

As a private practice professional, you have priceless expertise that can solve significant human problems, enhance quality of life, and make the world a better place for all of us. Your audience needs you and is waiting for you to show up. And you deserve the professional and financial success that results when you do.

Paving a new path, taking a stand that is not mainstream, being a pioneer—we all have the potential to do so in our particular specialty. You have your own unique mission and message, and pioneering your own approach to helping your clients is the best way to grow a Million Dollar Practice—not by being the same as the other guys, but by doing something uniquely yours.

All private practice professionals have the potential to make a unique and significant contribution to their niche, as well as to our profession and the rest of the world. We all have a gift, a passion, an area of expertise and a reason why we pursued it—often motivated by our own pain. We gain experience with our clients, who stimulate us to be creative. They challenge us to figure out how to effectively help them. In doing so, we often develop our own spin on things. We create our own interventions or systems of helping them—regardless of our training. Often we amaze ourselves. We come up with something and think, *"Wow, that was good. That was brilliant! Did that come from me?"* And it's all in response to helping our clients.

All private practice professionals do this, and we know we do it. But we don't always understand what to do with it. We don't understand the potential. We don't understand what it means. What it means is that we need to embrace our inner entrepreneur. We need to capture our ideas and expertise, leverage them, turn them into systems, products, and programs to broaden our reach, help more people, and make a larger difference in the world.

Can you do that? Are you willing to do that? Then the Million Dollar Practice just might be for you.

Million Dollar Questions for Chapter 1

1. Are you a technician or an entrepreneur?
2. What forms of internal resistance do you have toward building a Million Dollar Practice? How will you overcome your internal resistance?
3. Which of the Seven Habits of Million Dollar Practitioners are weak areas for you? How can you strengthen them?
4. Where are you in the Seven Stages of Practice Building, and what is needed to get to the next stage?
5. Looking in your bookshelf, who are your top role models and what about their accomplishments and businesses would you like to learn from and emulate?