

Successful people really are luckier

- 9 in-depth interviews with winners
- Straight answers to blunt questions
- How winners manage their minds

by Charles Burke

Inside the **Minds** of **Winners**

Volume 2 of the *Command More Luck* Series

Edited and Presented by Charles Burke

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<http://www.dawnings.com>

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Be sure to check the new material page fairly often. I'll be adding new items as they become available. See also the APPENDIX section at the end of this book.

In addition, I'll be bringing to you occasional introductions to other writers and lecturers whose work I think would be a good fit with your interests. If I find a product or service that I feel might benefit you, I'll bring it to your attention.

Wishing you all the brightest light,
Charles Burke, Japan

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The Special People in this Book

This page is both an acknowledgement of and a dedication to the fifteen people who made this book possible. A quick look at the Table of Contents on the previous page will give you their names. I met all but one of them at a seminar I attended in Atlanta early in 2001. It was presented by John Harricharan, and it featured a number of well-known Internet personalities as well as some people that I confess I hadn't heard of before attending.

A year earlier, I had written a book titled *Command More Luck* ([see excerpt at the end of this eBook](#)), but didn't feel it was "complete" somehow. So I was casting around for ideas to help me round out the project and begin selling it properly.

I don't usually enjoy seminars, and I mostly try to avoid them. I had just read John's book [Power Pause](#), however, and had spent two or three days walking around the house mumbling "I wish I'd said that." Then, I heard he was promoting a seminar in my old home town, Atlanta, and something in me knew I needed to attend this one.

I did attend, and things began changing. On the first day, during one of the breaks between speakers, I turned to Yanik Silver, whose book [Instant Internet Profits](#) had been a great help in understanding how to plan website sales flow. After introductions, I totally surprised myself by asking if he would consider contributing a section to my book. I am enormously indebted to Yanik for his gracious agreement. If he had shot me down, this book might have died right there.

Over the next three days, I approached several others about the project, and in every single case was greeted with enthusiasm and acceptance.

So I dedicate this book to my fifteen new and very special friends, with the understanding that this book is really theirs.

And to John and Yanik, I owe you special thanks for your roles in supporting my very first tentative steps in launching this project.

Charles Burke
Shirahama, Japan
September 15, 2001

Chapter 1

Charles Burke

<http://www.moreluck.com> and <http://www.inside-the-minds-of-winners.com>

Hello. I'm Charles Burke, the editor of this book, and author of *Command More Luck*, the first volume in this series. If you've glanced at the publisher's page, you may already know that I live in Japan.

I moved here in May of 1985 and liked it so much I decided to stay here a while. Through a lucky break, I was introduced to a small, well-connected design company who just happened to need a copywriter. I had been writing for my own enjoyment, strictly as a hobby, for years, but never professionally.

The advertising people liked my first efforts, however, and within a year I was writing catalogs for Toshiba, Isuzu and other well-known accounts.

Back in the States, I'd never had much luck with my career moves, so that was heady stuff, sitting in on business meetings at companies that are famous the world over.

After a couple of years of this, it gradually dawned on me that my luck was turning. What was I doing differently now? What had changed me? Or more to the point, what had I changed?

Most of that material is covered in *Command More Luck*, my first book, so I won't repeat it here. I will say, however, that I've remained fascinated with the elements of good fortune and what makes certain people luckier than others.

Then early in 2001, I attended John Harricharan's seminar in Atlanta, and I was suddenly in the same room with people I'd come to respect and admire after reading their books and following their progress on the Internet. Without any advance planning, I shocked myself by asking several of them if they would share some of their wisdom with my readers.

Every one of them said yes, they'd be delighted to do so. I think that speaks volumes about the kind of people they are. These are incredibly busy folks who, in some cases, plan their time weeks and months in advance. And yet they made the time to sit and talk candidly about their own careers, their beliefs, and their luck. As I describe on the next page, most of them don't actually believe in luck.

So you're in for a treat as you read this collection of conversations with people who are so very successful in their lives and in their careers, despite (or because of) this lack of belief.

The Luckiest Folks Just Don't Believe In It

What You're Getting & How You Can Use It

By Charles Burke

This book is cram packed with the words of some very smart, very successful people talking about the things they do to manage their own thinking, their own emotions, their own lives. They talk here about the things they do to help themselves build greater success.

In the process, they consistently attract to themselves coincidence after coincidence – I call them lucky breaks – that, to the uninitiated, are almost spooky, they're so “unexplainable.”

In a few cases, we elected to do articles rather than interviews. That was partly to give some variety to the format and content. And partly, it was because some of the contributors are “writing” oriented. They excel in expressing themselves in the written word.

For the interviews, I tried to ask the same kind of questions you'd ask if you had the chance to sit down and talk with these very gracious, but very busy people.

In some cases, we stuck quite close to the prepared questions. In others, we strayed pretty far afield. But I found every one of these interviews fascinating, and – best of all – the people I interviewed have become my very good friends. I cannot tell you how blessed I feel in that regard.

One of the great advantages of hearing from several different contributors is the diversity of expression. They say similar things, but say them – often – very differently.

And just as everyone says things in their own unique way, each of us also hears things in our own way. I believe that you will find at least one person in this book who speaks to you in exactly the way you hear.

Interestingly, most of the contributors plainly stated that they don't believe in luck. In the next breath, however, they tell us about unending streams of “serendipitous” or “synchronistic” events that routinely happen in their daily lives. I'd guess they don't like the word “luck” mostly because it implies that there is no way to control it.

They've learned better.

If you prefer to call it serendipity or synchronicity rather than lucky, that's okay. The message here is not which terminology to use. It's about what you can do to get these kinds of things happening for you. When they do happen, you can call them anything you want.

I've chosen to use the word “luck” because when I say it, people have a fair idea of what I mean. I try to avoid radical new terms when we've already got a perfectly good word. If I walked up to you and said, “I teach people to cause pleasant improbabilities to occur more frequently,” you'd probably draw a blank. You'd also probably head for the door.

So when I say “luck,” you and I are in the same ball park, concept-wise. It’s okay if our definitions differ slightly. This happens to us all the time anyway. Ever seen a husband and a wife agree on what “shopping” means? Or “one hour”? Most of the time, even though there are differences, we’re close enough for useful communication.

And that’s what we’re doing here. As you read, you’ll gradually find that my definition of luck includes a steering wheel and an accelerator pedal.

You’ll learn that I – and many successful people – believe that while specific opportunities and circumstances may not be controllable, the trend of those events can be, to a great degree. Does that mean that “bad” stuff doesn’t happen to us any more?

Absolutely not.

What it means is, when so-called “bad” stuff happens, when a ton of manure suddenly falls out of the sky onto them, lucky people tend to see it not as manure but as fertilizer, and look around for something to plant and grow in it.

Now, you can just read this book through and lay it aside, very much like you do all your other books.

If you do, you’ll get a few nice ideas from it, put none of them into action...then go on your way, while little or nothing in your life changes.

Or...

Or you can dig a little deeper, pay a little closer attention to what these very successful people say, maybe even take some notes, and begin doing some of the same things that work for them.

“Wait a minute, Burke,” I hear you saying, “Could it really be that simple?”

Truthfully, yes it is. And I think that’s why so many people miss out. They’re still searching for that one great illuminating moment, that one “eureka” experience, that one earth-shaking, world-changing, heart-stopping secret.

Want to know the *real* secret? There isn’t any secret. Never has been.

It’s just as simple as managing well what you’ve already got. Appreciate and be thankful for the things you already have. Love the people who are already in your life.

Then, just to prime the pump, be thankful for even more than you have – for stuff you haven’t received yet.

It is said that nature abhors a vacuum.

When you give thanks – real, soul-lifting, jubilant thanks – for things you don't have yet, nature rushes in to fill that vacuum. It'll fill it with all the things and qualities and people that are bubbling joyously in your heart and mind. Or sometimes it may decide that what you're being thankful for doesn't fit you very well... so it'll send you something even better. When dealing with life, flexibility is a good thing.

Anyway, that's the "big secret." That's all there is. All the rest is commentary.

Take this non-secret. Use it. Make your life and the world around you a massively richer place. And when your life has changed utterly with the love, the joy, the bounty, and the riches of every description, drop me an email and share your experiences with me and other readers.

Because I love a happy ending.

All the best of luck to you (I guarantee it),
Charles Burke
Shirahama, Japan September 15, 2001

Chapter 2

Malcolm Harvey

<http://www.successtrain.com>

Malcolm Harvey is one of the most common-sense voices on the Internet today. I love his level-headed advice for succeeding, because his articles are both hard-headed and kind-hearted.

I asked Malcolm, who lives in England, to write a special piece for this book, and he kindly agreed. The result is “Life Has Its Ups and Downs,” the lead article in his section. When I first read it, I had to smile. In this piece, he confirms what I had only suspected before: he’s “been there.” He’s struggled against early influence, self-doubts, and all the hundreds of little things that hold so many of us back. And he’s overcome. That is evident in his writing.

The recommendations he offers are so sensible and so “you-know-you-ought-to-be-doing-this-so-why-the-heck-aren’t-you?” that they sound like the things your favorite uncle would sit you down and tell you.

His viewpoint is so practical, and his advice so usable, that I couldn’t resist asking permission to include a few of his other articles here, as well.

I’m sure you’ll enjoy these four pieces because Malcolm makes it abundantly clear that, alongside the higher concepts and the higher technologies that surround us everywhere, there IS a place for good, solid common sense and grit in today’s world.

You can find more of Malcolm’s special advice at <http://www.successtrain.com>.

Life Has Its Ups And Downs

by Malcolm Harvey

<http://www.successtrain.com>

Life has its ups and downs. It's very easy to be swayed by circumstances and situations; the secret to success is how you interpret and learn from them.

One of the biggest things I've learnt over the years is that "you are what you think". You are able to create your own destiny simply by the things you think about. If your expectancy is to fail, then that is what you will probably do. If, however, you have absolute confidence that you are going to succeed then whatever "ups and downs" you experience you will interpret them as stepping-stones or a learning curve to your eventual success.

Of course there are many shades and levels of expectancy and if you are anything like me you have had your fair share of putdowns. Other people may have influenced your confidence, in most cases with negative consequences. You may have even self-sabotaged your own efforts because subconsciously you feel that you don't deserve success.

In my own case I was not made to feel that I could achieve much by the people who influenced my younger years. Having a slight hearing problem made it difficult to gain much confidence in what I was trying to communicate. My parents supported me but I found that I was very sensitive to the opinions of others. I knew that I had the ability to achieve great things but my expectancy was to fail; therefore, I found that whatever idea I had or action I started I would tend to seek to try to find a reason why it couldn't work! Sure enough I was "failing" quite often!

But I still had this burning desire to understand what life is all about. I travelled a lot, experienced many different religions, cultures and philosophies but I found that the more I understood; the more I found I couldn't understand! In other words my mind expanded to such an extent that I was aware of the absolute vastness of the universe around me and that man's interpretations just had to be finite.

Here lies the secret of the "luck factor". Examine your own expectancy and determine whether that is what you think, or is it what you were told to think. My motto is that "reality is in the moment; everything else is YOUR interpretation of that reality". Once the moment has passed you can either hold on to the hurt and let it continue to hurt you, or you can realise that the hurt of the moment has passed and that it is your choice whether you let it affect you.

Ok, it's not always possible to let go of negative influences, particularly when they come from loved ones or friends, but this is a key to success. It all comes down to your choice of what it is that you allow to influence your life. There are a lot of things you can learn from others, and we need the support of "tuned in" people if we are to succeed, but it is ultimately up to you and no one else!!

Developing the attitude of "if it's going to be; it's up to me" is the first step to take control of your life. Taking responsibility for your own actions means that success or failure is the direct

result of what you do or don't do, end of story!

Being able to make your own decisive decisions is another attribute that I have found to be important. By "decisive" I mean making a decision and sticking to it. So many times we decide to do something without the necessary conviction to carry it through.

If you are wishy-washy in doing anything you will be influenced by the first obstacle that you encounter. I found that conviction of purpose can be a hard thing to establish, particularly if you are plagued with doubts like me.

It is good to be aware of all the sides of the argument, but not to such an extent that you talk yourself out of doing anything. Sometimes it is the case where you have to just do it and adjust later rather than play devil's advocate all the time.

If you want success then you have to find something that you enjoy doing. Without passion it is extremely difficult to keep on track and stay the course. Success does not only mean wealth & fortune, I have met some very successful people who others would consider paupers. The thing is, though, they live their lives with passion, they are doing what THEY have chosen to do, and they love every minute of it.

Again I have met other people who are successful in very dire situations. When I worked in the refugee camps in Thailand after the "killing fields" of Cambodia I met people who had been through things that are difficult to even imagine, yet they considered themselves successful in that they survived at all! They looked forward with great expectancy for the future because their past was now behind them. Of course there were many who were plagued with tremendous hurts but there were a few who had the attitude of success. I sure learnt a lot from them.

So in conclusion, life is as you make it. It is possible to create your own "luck" by having the right attitude and allowing the good things to happen. Everyone is attractive like a magnet, we can either attract the things we want or we attract the things we don't want. Doesn't it make sense to concentrate on the things that we do want?!

You Are What You Think About

by Malcolm Harvey

<http://www.successtrain.com>

If you are anything like me you probably spend most of your day worrying or thinking about all the negative things in your life right now.

It's almost a human condition that we concern ourselves with the things that could go wrong, things that have gone wrong, things that annoy us, and our past bad experiences.

We all know about "positive thinking" and have probably been prescribed the "Say these affirmations three times a day after food and especially before bed" pill. But still we struggle.

Is there any hope for the normal Joe?

Is it only possible for the few "super hero's" to achieve the things they dare to dream?

Well, maybe there is a way to join the elite and break free from insecurity & negativity to become the person you were meant to be.

It requires a bit of work though, and you have to be prepared to change. But if you really have had enough of struggle and really want to achieve your ultimate desires, than yes there is a way.

The key is in the last sentence.

The words "really want" and "desire" are the action words for success. Combine them with "belief" and "trust" and you have the recipe to achieve anything.

Prepare yourself for that which you are seeking. Know that the forces of the universe will rush in to bring you what you want, provided of course you want it badly enough and believe that you can get it.

What this means is that you already have the answers, you already have the potential, and you already have the achievement within you if you only take the time to look.

You have to relax and become quiet. Believe in the inherent abilities within you, and the answers to How? What? Why? will come.

You don't believe me?

The truth is, whatever you see in your mind - good or bad - if you believe it, it will become reality. That means that if you think and worry about something, then your own concentrated effort brings about the very things you fear and worry about and vice versa!

Ok, then how do I control my thoughts?

- Take time out to write down everything you want or dream about having.
- Describe in words the person you want to become.
- Collect pictures of things that inspire you.
- Gather together all the music cassettes that uplift you.
- Read all the books you can get hold of.
- Make cards to stick on your mirror.
- Carry them in your purse.
- Put them on your dashboard
- Etc., etc. . . .
- In other words surround yourself with reminders of positive things that inspire you to do something!
- You get the idea.

I know I said this before, but it is fundamentally true - "If you don't know where you are going; then how do you know when you get there?"

By making the effort to actually move towards your goals, you will be amazed just how many things will fall into place.

The universe wants you to succeed.

Remember these words? - "Seek and you will find, ask and it will be given to you, knock and the door will be opened".

By gaining a belief that "Yes I CAN do it", you will find that the negatives will be replaced with the positives and a new strength will evolve within you that will help you overcome the peaks and troughs of your journey to success!

Remember, you are not alone or "different" for wanting to be positive. In fact you are being more honest to the real potential that is embedded in you.

So start to believe in your own ability to succeed and you will find that doors will open for you.

What's Luck Got to Do with It?

by Malcolm Harvey

<http://www.successtrain.com>

To some people, success is based on luck, a chance throw of the dice, a random whim of fate. But in reality, luck has nothing to do with it.

Yes there are occasions when success can be influenced to some degree by "luck" but it cannot be said that "luck" is an accident.

It is very possible to control, even to predict "luck" by hard work and concentrating on certain "luck" principles.

Such principles as:

1. Know clearly what you want - if you don't know where you are going, how do you know when you get there?
2. Have a plan of action - and actually put that plan into action!
3. Constantly remind yourself of your goals - visualize - collect pictures of that dream car, visit the showroom, sit in the car, sniff the leather seating, feel the smooth metallic bodywork, take it for a test drive, know exactly what it feels like so that you can emotionize that goal (of course, the same applies to any type of goal)
4. Start to act as though you already have achieved the goal - if you want to be a millionaire than act like a millionaire, dress smartly, be confident, go to the places that millionaires go to. I'm not saying that you have to be a millionaire to be considered successful. I know of and have meet many people who are extremely successful but don't have a penny or dime to their names, but the same principles apply whatever your goal in life.
5. Trust your own intuition - You know, if you would only listen to your self, what you should be doing in each and every situation and you can come up with all the answers you need. Learn to quieten the mind and develop your natural "sixth sense".
6. Be flexible - Don't be like a bull in a china shop. Step back, re-evaluate the situation and adjust accordingly.
7. Make a decision, make it your own, make it work, and die by it - In other words, make sure it is what YOU want, not what others tell you you should want, and do whatever it takes, remembering point 6 above.
8. Stop complaining when things are not going the way you think they should - Instead, examine the potential outcome of your actions, sometimes a few backward steps may be necessary.

9. Be generous with your time and money - sow before you reap, give without expecting a return.
10. Be patient - As they say "Rome wasn't built in a day" - sometimes things take a lot longer than you imagined - Stick at it.
11. Persevere - The greater the results you want; the greater and more sustained the effort.
12. Let go of the outcome - Stop striving, allow things to happen in their own mysterious way. If you supply the energy and direction, the outcome will take care of itself.
13. Have the courage and conviction to propel yourself towards your goals.
14. Cultivate the right attitude - If you have the right attitude to the job in hand, then half the battle is already won!
15. Discipline yourself to carry out the tasks daily - This is perhaps the most important principle. Its no use considering to reach any goal without first learning the discipline to carry things through - I've learnt the hard way that without discipline to apply these principles daily you will be setting yourself up for disappointment.

Success and happiness are not accidents. If you master the principles that influence "luck" you will increase the probability that you will be in the right place at the right time to accomplish the things that are most important to you.

So don't just wish that things will come right, make them come right and people will call you "lucky"

Decision Making for Giants and Elves

by Malcolm Harvey

<http://www.successtrain.com>

We all make hundreds of decisions every day.

Do I have tea or coffee with my breakfast? Do I wear that blue shirt/blouse or the white one? Should I move over to the right hand lane to avoid that slow moving, smoking and rusting heap of junk on the motorway ahead of me?

Most of these decisions really have no long-term consequence in our lives and we should be able to make them with ease.

Then why is it that we agonize over some decisions and not others?

Its OK where we feel comfortable and in control, in other words within our comfort zone. But in order to progress in life, even just a little bit, it is inevitable that we will be faced with uncomfortable decision making.

Some people seem to thrive on decision making and are paid accordingly. They seem to be at ease deciding on courses of action that would have tremendous consequences without so much as a hesitation. Yet some of these decisions are poorly thought out and are ego based rather than for the highest good.

Even these fluent decision-makers have times of indecision, particularity where it involves family and friends. So you are not alone when it comes to stress induced by not knowing which way is best.

How do you decide?

The first thing to do is make the decision!

Errrr... OK wise guy, if I'm struggling to know what to do, how do I make a decision then?

The main reason people put things off is that they don't want to make that decision, are not confidence about the outcome or are fearful of the reaction of others. Yet the only route forward is to have the courage to make a decision one way or other and face the consequences.

In many cases, whichever decision you make will be the right one; the important thing is to actually choose the next course of action. You can always adjust it later.

Learn to listen to your inner self and take the decision that feels right.

Make it your own!

Take responsibility for your own decisions and don't let others make your decisions for you.

You have no one to blame other than yourself. It's your decision and you are in control.

Obviously if you are in a partnership then decisions should be made together, but make sure you are not railroaded into a one-sided decision. Negotiate, compromise and then take responsibility.

Make it work!

Action is the key. Whatever decision you make, work at it, single-mindedly employing macro/micro vision, seeing the detail as well as the whole until fruition. Do everything it takes, but also be patient for the outcome.

Die by it!

It is a common reaction to doubt.

Did I choose the right decision? What if I did it the other way? Surely there is an easier way than this?

You've made the decision, you've taken the action and you've taken responsibility for that action, now stick at it through thick and thin, peak and trough.

We all make mistakes, but at least you are moving forward. Just pick yourself up and carry on with more action.

Remember, you cannot fail with your decision; you can only learn.

So to summarise:

Make a decision,
Make it your own,
Make it work, and
Die by it.

If you live by this rule you will at some time reach the success you desire. However, if you put off making that decision, the only thing left is a rut!

Malcolm Harvey is Publisher of "The SuccessTrain Newsletter"
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Chapter 3

Mary Martin Niepold

I first encountered Mary at an Internet seminar put on by John Harricharan in February 2001. You'll read other mentions of John and his seminar in this book. That seminar was a watershed event for me, though I had no inkling of it at the time. I just thought I was meeting some incredibly interesting people.

One of those people was Mary. On the day after the seminar ended, a few of us were sitting in the hotel lobby talking till our respective planes took us back to our homes. Everyone was fascinating, everyone was fully engaged in the subject at hand. But listening to Mary, I just knew she would have some important things to say on my favorite subject – luck – and how to see ordinary events as lucky breaks.

So on an impulse, knowing nothing about her credentials, or even that she was a professional writer and editor, I asked if she'd consider contributing a piece for this book.

Mary very graciously agreed, and though her schedule has been uncommonly full since that day, she did send me the piece exactly as promised.

Now I find that my instincts were spot-on. Mary offers us a wonderfully individual view of luck from the inside out, through the very unique filter of her own eyes and life experiences.

Seeing What's Already There

by Mary Martin Niepold

There's an old blues song that says, "I didn't have no luck till I had bad luck." I used to love that song. I'd amen, nod my head, and throw in a "have mercy" each time I'd hear it. That's me, they know it's so, I'd reflect. Then I'd laugh. Poor me. Bad luck all around.

That was then, in the adolescence of my mind and my view of reality. Today I think I'd rather sing, "I didn't have any luck till I had new eyes."

Perception – how we see things – good things, bad things – good luck, no luck – is really what shapes the way we shape the world, I think. It took me a bunch of years to figure that one out. Most of my life I thought that if I thought it, it must be so. Well, in actuality, that is the truth. "You are what you think." Mystics and philosophers and enlightened masters have been suggesting this for centuries. So my believing that thoughts were solid bits of reality, as opposed to an ever-changing energy pattern that may or not be based on reality, kept me shackled. What eluded me was this: You can change your mind, therefore your perception, and I – not circumstances nor any other person – get to choose what those thoughts are.

That one idea has revolutionized my life. In the acceptance of it, I shifted from victim to chooser.

What was the difference between believing you-are-what-you-think as a death knell versus understanding you-are-what-you-think as the most life-giving notion on the planet? Time. It took a great deal of time to shift from victim to creator. Once I saw I had a choice, my life lifted like an air current.

Someone once said, you cannot think two thoughts at the same time. How absolutely, eye-staggeringly beautiful. When I heard it, I gasped. The grandeur of simplicity. It never fails. You cannot think two thoughts at the same time. Just try it. The proof takes about a nanosecond of effort.

So when I tried it, I was ready for the next step, my new notion of luck: Finally, I understood that luck is really how you see things. Don't like what's in front of you? See it a different way. If you don't like what you're thinking – you're the only one thinking it - then change it. Just change your mind.

In this context, luck is what's already there. You just have to see it. Call it seeing possibility, call it seeing the unseen. However you want to put it, I believe that luck – the confluence of circumstances and readiness – is already there. But there's not a chance in hell I'll see it if I think that it's not - or not for me.

Another blind-sider: I don't see anything if I'm always trying to figure it out, or think I already *have* figured it out. In the stripping myself of expectations about what reality really is, I open myself to *it*, not to my notion of it.

I like the word possibility. It's sort of like hope. Both imply that something is already there. It's possible. In gestation, perhaps, but already begun, the seedlings of reality just waiting for someone to nurture, feed and caretake its maturation and unfolding.

This is not a simple fix-it job, mind you, not a wave of the New Age wand that says we can adjust anything just by imagining it to be another way. My experience tells me that you have to see it exactly *as it is in your mind* and that misfired patterns of thinking and feeling are literal energy matrixes in the body. They result in knots and short breath, in stress and high blood pressure. Sometimes, I believe, they can also result in heart attacks, cancer and other serious illnesses. My telling myself I will simply *not* be upset about my past anymore is like saying I'll imagine myself as 5'8" instead of the 5'11" I really am – and then try smiling with my knees up my nostrils in a four-seater airplane.

What I can do is decide – decide which frequency of feeling I want to stay with. I can choose the low frequency energies of anger, resentment, fear and sadness. I can feel them as they are and as they come up – and then I can choose, instead, to give my attention to higher frequency energies like harmony, peace, compassion and love. These are the real reality, anyway – our true essence. The low frequency bombardiers are just manifestations of my ego mind thinking that I am a separate reality (therefore fragile, protective, defensive, resentful) – not an interdependent expression of the harmonious energy that created all that is.

In *Everyday Zen*, a book by Zen teacher Charlotte Joko Beck, she retells the story of an old Zen koan about a monk who went to his master because he was very angry and wanted his master to help him.

The master said, "Show me your anger." The monk replied, "Well, right now I'm not angry so I can't show it to you." At which, the master said, "Then obviously it's not you, since sometimes it's not even there."

"Who we are," writes Joko Beck, "has many faces, but these faces are not who we are."

It has been my experience – through sitting meditation, through est, The Forum and the wisdom of spiritual teachers ranging from the Buddha, Christ, and Mother Teresa to Marcus Aurelius, Gracie Allen, John Coltrane, Albert Einstein and, among the living, healer Ron Young, my oncologist Dr. Mitchell Gaynor (who uses chanting and Tibetan bowls for healing) and my beloved friend, John Harricharan – that I have to *be* whatever those feelings and energy traumas are to have them released. And that it is *not* I – not me, the master of the self-help universe who can simply zap them with the latest New Age mantra or visualization - who banishes them.

Above all else (literally above and inside me), I have to ask for Help. Heal me, Lord, I pray. Help me, Buddha. May all beings be free. May all beings be happy. May I be free. May I be happy. Heal me. Fulfill through me. I surrender. I open to your healing essence.

It's the only prayer I know – again from experience – that works, and I say it often. It works, I believe, because it asks me to turn it all over, to surrender – the last gesture my ego-bound

universe of what's-in-it-for-me would like me to proffer. With this prayer, I release all sense of trying to fix anything. Instead, I go with the flow of the infinite – which definitely has a larger and more powerful ability to express harmoniously than my shriveling little ego, which thinks its infinitesimally teeny corner of the universe is where it's really at.



Today, my life is very different from what it was five years ago and dramatically different from what it was 13 years ago when I began sitting meditation each morning. For most of the last 20 years, I have been a freelancer working in Manhattan. Mostly, I write – articles, stories, brochures, speeches. Mostly, I write for newspapers and magazines. I also counsel other people – many of them women – about how to write and how to take responsibility for their own lives and activate what they'd like to manifest instead of blaming someone else (usually a parent or a partner) because it hasn't happened.

Two years ago my life changed when I added something else to it – a novel. I finally walked the walk of the language I had been using on a daily basis to encourage others. Over the years, I heard myself say, “Just dive on in, darlin’. Take the empty-handed leap. You gotta trust.” I said it so many times it started sounding ridiculously hollow – to me. When I really saw what was going on with my words, I realized that I kept saying the same thing because, in fact, I was attracting people who needed me to say it! Now I can see that I was attracting to myself the lessons *I* needed to learn.

And it was in meditation that I saw this.

It's a technique, while not traditional, that I use and one that I like to recommend. After 20, 30 or 40 minutes of classic sitting – just with your breath, just with your mind, just being, not trying to analyze, alter or redirect it – I let my consciousness come to the forefront of my thinking. In this relaxed state, I then consciously bring in a certain situation that is troubling. I visualize this situation, the other player(s) involved. I just see them and me in this situation and then I ask: What do I need to know about this? Obviously, I have been missing some important link because the unsatisfactory situation is still continuing. So I just ask, what do I need to know about this? And I wait.

Sometimes the answer comes immediately, sometimes the answer comes after days or weeks. But it always comes, and when I asked that question of myself about why I was always telling other people that *they* needed to take a leap, I discovered that my telling it to them was also telling it to me. Practice what you preach, a voice came. And I heard it. And I realized that in fact I had not taken a leap with my own life.

It was time for me to write – not for anybody else and not for any kind of fee. I needed to write because that was my leap into the unknown that my dreams had harvested. It also meant that I needed to trust.

You are what you think. I changed my mind about myself:

No, I didn't have to have an assignment to validate my wanting to write.
No, I didn't have to have anyone else's approval that I write in order to do so.
No, I didn't even need to know what I was going to say. I just needed to begin.
Let rip. Let it soar.

And this act became the most blissful – and most illuminating – experience of my life.

In it, I discovered my feet as well as my voice. And I discovered that there is a vast difference between putting down words (I had been paid to do that for decades) and expressing who I really am (the essence of the universe was spitting this one out).

It was as if I began to tap dance just like I did in the early 50s as a child. I didn't think about the steps, I just let the music move my feet and hips and arms. All I knew was that I just felt good doing it – and that that feeling was its own reward.

Would you call this luck? I don't think so.

Would you call it discipline, the ole put your nose to the grindstone and grind it out? Definitely not.

I simply changed my mind and asked for help.

Dear Lord, I don't have a clue what I'm doing, but I trust that you do, 'cause it doesn't feel like me saying it. It just feels like me sitting at the computer. Please help. I surrender.

And that higher power did exactly that. Even when I was scared or feeling clueless about whatever I was going to say next, I'd just sit in front of the keyboard. I'd rest my wrists on the front panel of my PC and then I'd pray, O.K, I'm ready, your turn.

Whether this book is published and read I can't say at this point. I've just finished it. What I can say is that I fulfilled something in me by doing it and I activated a long dormant fear that I really didn't have anything to say. I proved that wrong, and now a book called "Blues for Joshua" is ready to find a home. I hope it will be read – for one reason only: It's a story that's probably as real for anyone who reads it as it is for the one who wrote it. Turns out, that it's all about the notion of freedom – and I didn't even know what the theme was until *after* I'd written the whole thing. Near the very last chapter, it was revealed that I had spent most of 18 months writing about the very thing I was expressing by doing the writing.

I also know today that I did the best I could – and that's a lot. Especially for someone who spent most of her life thinking that if you told me you liked me first – then – I'd give you something. Thank you, Lord.

So, as with about every other aspect of my life, the biggest hurdle in writing this book was my own thinking. Constantly, the old fears and judgment came up: Who do you think you are? It's already been said, what makes you think you have anything to say?

But because I meditate, I could let these questions come up and not try to fix them. I just let them have a life of their own there in my mind. I simply let them be, not resisting them and not trying to alter them or make them go away. I embraced them, but I didn't go to bed with them. And in being with them – they came up and vanished within seconds – proving that these thought patterns are really low-frequency, short-lived mental energy patterns. Time and again, I discovered that it's the resistance to the thoughts – not the thoughts themselves – that brings the pain. In that state of acceptance I could choose peace and sure-footedness instead.

And in the doing of that, I learned what the masters and everyday heroes have also said for centuries: Courage isn't the lack of fear, it's the doing it anyway.

When I sat down with my own darkest fears, I discovered the greatest thing of all. Freedom came like a childhood friend who didn't want to do anything but just be there with you. And she always stayed because you liked her just the way she was, too.

The 13th century Persian poet, Rumi, said it this way:

If a Friend rose inside you, would you bow? Would you wonder where that one

came from and how? If you say, "I will bow," that's important. If you answer,

"But can I be sure?" it will keep the meeting from happening, as busy people

rush there and back here murmuring, Now I know; no, I don't know now. . . .

Be silent and revolve with no will. Don't raise your hand to ask anything.

Holy one, sitting in the body's well like Joseph, a rope is there in front

of you. Lift your hand to that!

Would You Bow?

Rumi

Biography

A resident of Manhattan, **Mary Martin Niepold** has been a freelance writer, editor, coach and consultant for the last 25 years. She was a features writer and editor for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* newspaper for 14 years and most recently was Executive Editor of *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, an award-winning quarterly.

She and Dr. Mitchell Gaynor have co-authored a book called *Healing Spaces* about the unseen but scientifically documented healing effects of the environment – everything from light and sound, color and plants to hidden geometric patterns and how they affect our bodies all the way to the cellular level. This book, as well as her novel, *Blues for Joshua*, are currently under consideration for publication.

Specializing in travel, fashion, beauty, health and the arts, her articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Associated Press*, *Copley News Service*, *GQ*, *Northwest Airlines*, *New Choices* and various other newspapers and magazines. Her corporate communications accounts include Cornell Weill Integrative Medicine Center, Estee Lauder, Clairins, Chanel, Cartier, Tiffany, Chesebrough-Ponds and others.

A practicing Buddhist, she is the mother of two children and the grandmother of (almost) three.

Her consulting fees are by the hour; her writing and editing fees are by the project. Mary's e-mail address is: Mmniepold@aol.com.

Chapter 4

Joan Marie Whelan

Joan is an intuitive. That is, she sees things, knows things, that others don't seem to have such ready access to. And she uses these talents of hers in the service of others. When clients come to Joan with personal problems, fears or anxieties needing resolution, she calls upon the help of beings that most people have no direct experience with. Angels, guides, departed loved ones, spirit counselors.

And she gets results. Her clients leave in better shape than when they arrived.

Now, some readers "believe in" this approach, while others do not. What I believe in is this: Joan's clients consistently get the results they're seeking, and that's the proof of any pudding. As long as her approach produces greater good for her clients, then it's valid. I admire Joan greatly for her courage in confidently walking a path that most "ordinary folks" are too timid to even think about.

She's literally walking out there close to the edge that divides our "safe and predictable" world from other realms. And walking there, she meets wise beings that the rest of us are never lucky enough to encounter.

It's to her enormous credit that she brings back knowledge and help for the rest of us.

I asked Joan to write a piece that would touch on how to work with an intuitive to improve one's own life. She has produced this and more. There are places here that literally sing, and reading it, you will get, perhaps, a small glimpse of what draws Joan to walk so much closer to that other realm.

Anywhere Else But Here

by Joan Marie Whelan

Life is a game. Depending on how you play you can either come out ahead, where you want to be - or behind, where you may not want to be. Being behind, however, is not a bad place to be. You may think this statement is crazy but for just a minute think of all the lessons you could experience from being behind, and think of all the places you can still go to from there.

If you are fully in the present moment and accept where you are, you will be able to afford the opportunities to learn all you need to in order to move out of that place and - hopefully - not be back again.

This can be a tough way to look at situations in life, I agree. The choice, though, is yours. Would you like to return to that place? Or learn all you can so you no longer need to be there? Maybe you would like to stay behind because it is comfortable for you and you are content being there. Again, the choice is yours. If perchance you lounge back behind at times, you may not need to stay long. It could be a reminder of what you no longer need. Bless it with love and say 'no thank you.'

My name is Joan Marie Whelan. I am currently living in New York City and working as a Present/Past Regression Guide. I assist people and help them re-create their lives. When clients come to me to solve their problems, they expect to walk away from the session totally changed - a new 'them.' But when you walk out of our session you are still you. You have to deal with you.

Clients sit down and share with me all their problems. We begin to understand a pattern flowing in their life and what they are contributing to the starving or the feeding of the flow. I always suggest stepping outside of yourself for a minute and observing the picture; do this often, no matter where you are, and see how you contribute to your own story called life.

What is a Present/Past Regression Guide? It is an individual who has trained professionally and can put someone in a hypnotic state to deal with specific problems. Such a guide can regress you back in time. This is how I work with my clients. Not everyone who does this work comes from a spiritual approach or works with Angels, Spirit Guides, and loved ones who have passed on.

I have the ability to see energy, and read a person's energy flow. I can inform you of what is going on in your body. I also have the ability to see Angels, Spirits Guides and beings who are no longer with us on this plane. When I work, I invite the Holy Spirit, your Angels, and your Spirit Guides as well as my own to work together with us as a team. Our goal is to get to the root of your fears, phobias, self-esteem issues and to assist you in understanding why you continue with the same pattern flow in your life.

The truth, however, is that we can only do as much work as you are ready, willing, and able to do. As I have already mentioned, many people come to me expecting a miracle. The miracle is in you and the work must be done through you. I can assist you and open your eyes a little wider,

but it is you who must be ready to say good bye to the old patterns and hello to the new.

When working with my clients I put them in a very relaxed, meditative state. At that point I take them into a beautiful garden where we invite their Angels, Spirit Guides and loved ones who have passed over to come into the garden and talk with them. At this time the client is able to ask them any questions they may have regarding their life. What we work towards is having the Guides give the client an understanding of why they chose the path they did. They also offer advice and steps to help in the creation of new patterns in their life.

The client may spend as much time in the garden communicating as they like. Then we go on a journey, perhaps in this life pertaining to a childhood experience that may be assisting you to feel the way you do.

It is important to keep in mind that you do not have to go to a bad situation or to an uncomfortable time. We are allowing the client to see where they may have learned a specific behavior.

If they believe in reincarnation, then we can also go to past lives and explore situations from hundreds of years ago that they are still recreating now.

In this article I will touch on intuition in working with yourself and with someone else, and also the subject of being lucky.

It is important if you are going to work with someone who is highly intuitive, and has the ability to communicate with your angels for you, that they should be compatible with your personality. You must be comfortable with the advice and the things they say to you. I was told once, after receiving a reading, that I need to utilize the advice like I would use a hand-me-down suit. If it feels good, keep it; and if it does not seem to fit properly, throw it away.

You are the most important person in your world. If someone says something to you and it brings up fear, explore it – what are you afraid of? If you disagree and say 'no way, that is not me,' then, for now, it is not.

After a reading, you may also leave on a very high note. You just received all of this great information regarding your future. It is so bright: money will not be an issue, you are healthy, and you will be getting married to a wonderful person with green eyes and perfect teeth. It all sounds fantastic and now you decide you are going to sail through life. This could be wrong.

Any reading you get is based on the feelings and energy you are manifesting for yourself at that time. I have had many readings not come true. Why? Because although the doors regarding my career did open, as the intuitive stated they would, I was simply not yet ready to walk through those doors and accept the good coming to me.

We all have free will, and the Universe cannot guarantee what someone else will do or will not do. I feel that some of our life is mapped out for us and we will meet specific people and

encounter specific situations in our lives, but plans can change and the timing may be off. It is wonderful to be able to work with a mentor and or a support team.

Having readings done is also very fun and can be helpful in making choices in your life. Use them as a positive tool to enhance yourself, but do not rely on their every word and allow them to live your life. Your life is for you to live and create. We are all going to have life lessons along the way.

You are your greatest asset. You have the ability to be your own intuitive, and you really know what works best for you. I wrote this for a friend of mine who is making a big decision at the end of the summer.

If God gave you a gift today would you accept it? Will you sit long enough to hear him? Will you obey, or say 'this sounds crazy, I am not doing that'?

Will you let go of what you think you really want and let God give you what you need, knowing deep within that this is better than any 'want' you think you may need? Can you surrender and let go of the life you plan and let God give you the life you deserve? Can you not-run today and be still, enjoying the moment? Can you turn off the radio and TV long enough to hear him?

If you hear God, will you know it is he, or will you think it's a trick? Do you know what God sounds like?

All of a sudden, God chimes in. "I am softer than a whisper speaking calmly and gently only knowing the best for your heart. Can you listen to me? Can you hear me and not be angry that you assume I am telling you what to do. Again, know I only have your best interest in place. I know your future and the outcome you will have whether you take my road or your road. Listen softly, gently - at times it may be in the music or through laughter from the TV, mostly it will be from me, straight to you, through your heart, wishes, dreams, and desires. Did you hear me? I said through your dreams. My wish is to work with you, not against you. I am not a hurting being. I am a being of pure love who is only teaching you love. It is your choices and actions that will determine if love will be done."

You may or may not believe in God and that is perfectly all right. Isn't it nice, though, to know that there is another being, a higher power, assisting you in your life? It actually can relieve any burdens you may have, knowing that you are not alone, that there is someone else, that apparently there are many more beings actually waiting for you to ask for their assistance. The minute you ask you will receive.

Sometimes, though, it does not come the way you think. I know people go down really rough roads and financial hardship, I have been there. At those moments you wonder where is the help. God, Angels, Spirit Guides can not do all the work. You must come to the plate, work smart, be

prepared and really get to the root of why you are there in the first place. We are all here on this earth for a reason; you need to find your purpose, find out why you came back.

Everyone has the ability to hear that small still voice within. You may call it intuition, God, or your higher self. This voice only has your best interest at heart. To really hear this voice within and to fine tune yourself to listen, you must know stillness. You must spend quiet time alone with yourself.

You may begin by meditating five minutes a day in silence sitting on your couch or the floor. If you like, you can eventually work your way to meditating thirty minutes a day. Life is a process. The art of knowing you and listening to your higher self is also a process. Time and patience.

There are also many types of meditating tapes out there. One I can suggest is from Dr. Wayne Dyer. At first you may think you are going crazy, your mind wants to yell and scream. Starve the negative and begin to feel comfortable looking within and admiring the beauty that is there.

I tell my clients that there is a small flame within them, like a ball of sunshine. Learn to focus on the light within and you can start to feel the light and make it brighter by seeing it in your body. Feel good about you. If you are not happy with you or where your life is going you need to find out why you are there. Whose issues are you carrying around? What old voices do you need to let go of?

The following is an excerpt from my book, *Only You*, to be published in fall 2001.

I dug deep down to the darkest part of my soul and found out she was not dark at all. I perceived her as dark; I have ignored her, I ran from her, I tried to hide her, and my soul, persistent, sits there and waits patiently, feeling sad that I am not talking to her in a loving way. I do not understand why she's there or what lessons she has for me to learn.

My soul is asking me, why are you ignoring me? Why are you not listening to me? I have put friends in your path to assist you. You avoid their help. When will you listen to me? When it's too late. When you are so sorry no words can describe. When you've hurt and brutalized you and everyone else and turned people away; when you become sick. I have only asked one thing of you in life and that is to love me, your soul; that is all. Do you know how? Do you know it is in you? I am a little piece in you and you have me sugar coated with so much stuff around you, layers of garbage, it is hard to find the real you.

What greater gift is love; with love you can do anything, be anything. The answer is not through yelling at you. Not through telling you; you do not try hard enough. Love and accept you for who you choose to be today. Love you for all of you whether you like all parts or not, whether you feel you did it right in your eyes or not. You did it right, whether you are fat or thin you are perfect; love you. If you would just love you for who you are now, you will

become who you are supposed to be. By treating you with love you will automatically treat others kinder and be patient and tolerant of who they choose to be in the moment, as well.

For as long as I can remember, I wanted to speak to my soul. Yet I could never muster up the courage, so I ran from my soul instead. At times, I did sit with the feelings of heaviness, guilt, sadness, and tragedy; they were all so overwhelming to me. I did not want these feelings in me, yet I did not know what to do with them. How did they get there? Are all of these feelings really mine? I could not imagine I was the rightful owner of all of this stuff.

My soul began talking to me again. Let it all go, she said. Dump it in the river. They said you were nobody, they were wrong - let it go. They tried to make you feel inferior; focus on you, the bright star you are within; it is all about you, let them go. They said you could not do it; who are they? Let them go. They laugh at you and tease you; it is they who are really unassured; know who you are, let them go. You did not get the job, they did not want you, you want you, let them go. Let go of all anger, guilt, tragedy, and frustration, anything weighing you down; let it go.

My soul continued: in return allow the sunshine in. Accept the sunshine into your body. Feel it absorbing into your skin. It's healthy, it's healing, the powers can wash out the old and allow the new to transcend in. It's radiant, warm, powerful, at the same time gentle and beautiful. At times it may be overwhelming, take a big gulp and breathe it in. Let your achey legs be healed by the sun, soak up the rays, absorb its energy.

Let it warm your body, transform your cells. No cloudy thoughts can enter, do not allow them in. Yes, I said, let the sunshine radiate stronger throughout my body. Stay here, never leave me. I want to feel your energy forever. Stay within me, be within me. I am beginning to feel you. My legs are beginning to pulsate, what is it? I've never felt this before. My soul replied, it's your legs awakening, coming alive, your legs are talking saying yes, yes, engulf me in the sun. Awaken me, heal me, and transform me. I like this, it feels good, I reply. I have never felt this before; if I did, boy did I forget this feeling. The sun is getting warmer now. I really feel the energy flowing through me, wow, it's powerful, my legs are waking up; they are starting to burn, it feels good.

My soul replied: the energy is echoing down to my feet and back up my spine. My whole body is tingling, can this be what being awake feels like? The soul answered: in the beginning yes, until you are consistently awake. When your body becomes comfortable with energy flowing through you, you can begin to sense its aliveness. I am relaxed, fresh, and alive, I am free, I can breathe. The soul replied: take a big gulp and absorb the sunshine into your body. If you are ever feeling gloom, begin thinking of the sun in your stomach area radiating

all over your body and it can assist you with melting away the negative energies. A few times I was scared. I went with the flow, though, and I am alive. Why would I ever want to go back to the way things were? Why do I keep going back to the way things were?

Let's talk about my thoughts on luck. I will be talking from experience, as this is always a good place to come from.

In the early part of my life, I can honestly say I always lucked out! I was an excellent athlete, had many friends, was easy to get along with and escaped many mishaps that could have gone the other way.

Years later when I was living in LA, I had a problem with my car. I took it to be serviced at the local Volvo dealership. As I began driving home, I instantly knew that they did not solve the problem. I was wondering what they thought they had fixed.

I immediately went back to the dealership, went to the repair department and said I just paid for a bill, sat here for two hours and you did not even fix the problem - what did you do? We popped the hood of my car. Now mind you I know nothing about cars. I could not even change a tire.

Anyway, I began speaking to the head mechanic telling him what exactly was wrong with my car and what needed to be done. The men were so embarrassed they fixed the problem quickly and of course did not charge me for their services this time.

Driving home I was grateful because I knew that I was lucky; this situation worked out to my favor. In LA there is really no public transportation, so you need a car. I was also on a fixed budget, did not have extra cash and could not afford to have an ongoing problem with my car. I knew there was someone else who had a hand in this whole situation and was working through me and with me.

Many times in my life things played out this way for me.

Then there came a point in my life where I was not happy, my goals were lost, the dream was farther away, and I was spending time with people I really did not need to be spending time with, doing things that really made no sense.

Going home for the holidays to be with my family, I decided it was time to have a serious talk with my parents, discussing with them my feelings and how I felt. I believed it was time to come home to the East Coast and re-group, become more focused enabling me to create the life I really want. As luck would have it, my luck ran out.

The conversation never took place between my parents and me. The first day home, I was in a serious car accident. While heading to a business meeting with my stepfather, another car crossed over the double line into our lane and hit us head on. My life instantly became one of survival. My life turned from one of lucky moments to one of overcoming medical conditions that plagued

me for years, and to a life of learning and understanding a new way to live. It took me years to really recover from this accident.

Yet through it all, wasn't I lucky to be alive?

Luck can come in many disguises. My luck changed from a view of the external to a journey into the internal. Luck is how you perceive things. Yes you can have a fun-filled life with everything going your way; to me that is lucky. There may also be certain things you wish for and do not get. The Universe or a higher power may have a better plan for you. Isn't that lucky you did not get what you wished for, because something better was waiting in the wings.

Life is energy; what you put out you will get back. If you are going to sit around all day eating ice cream and watching a lot of TV, wishing for a better life, the only thing you will get in return is some extra pounds and an electric bill. You need to have your heart open and be receptive to the good that is coming into your life.

You need to be comfortable having good in your life. If most of your life has been about struggle and hardship, then all of a sudden things begin to turn around for you, your mind goes into shock for a bit thinking is this really happening to me? Can it happen to me? Your mind must be ready to say yes it can and not freak out when your life is coming together. You must enjoy and make the good flow in your life, accepting it as a part of your new habits. If you are not ready to feel you *deserve* luck in your life and *accept* luck in your life, luck will leave you as fast as it came to you.

Here is a parting gift for you. Another excerpt from my book, *Only You*.

Look at all the beauty around you, smell the fresh air, hear the birds talk, feel the gentle breeze blowing as it whisks through the trees. How fresh and beautiful everything is here. Do you hear the laughter, the joyous conversation between friends; the birds are putting their two cents in. Feel for the moment fresh, light, and free. Why would you want to be anywhere else but here?

The breeze is talking to you, what is it saying? Looking up, see the blue, blue sky. At this moment perfection is above. It is so pure, so blue, the clouds so white and thick with fluffiness. Why would you want to be anywhere else but here?

The wind is blowing with gusto now, the chimes are ringing, and the flowers are hanging on for dear life. The leaves in the trees are fluttering. Tell me, at this moment, why would you want to be anywhere else but here?

I see the green in the trees. I see the thick masculine, strong trunks. I see a soft gray house with a light stone chimney, all fresh and alive. I see rich green in the flowers with fuchsia, yellow, white, purple and lilac all at the tips. I see brand new fresh wood, medium brown wood in the middle of older darker

wood. I see the sun beating down strongly on the rich green grass. I feel the wind gushing through again. This time umbrellas are spinning, birds are still singing, chimes are ringing, bird houses are swaying, a brush from the grill is dancing, lilac flowers are jumping for joy. All while the sun is still shining down keeping everything warm, bright, and alive.

Tell me again, why would you ever want to be anywhere else but here?
Where, child, do you want to be?

The older ladies nearby are now laughing loudly, sharing in conversation. The birds are trying to top them, chirping louder, all of them at the same time are reminiscing over the past, truly enjoying, enjoying the moment. The laughter is contagious, bringing a smile to all who hear them. Tell me, why would you want to be anywhere else but here?

The birds are still talking, the ladies are still catching up, the sky is still pure blue, the clouds are fluffy and moving to their new destination now, the trees are rustling, flowers dancing, the wind bringing freshness everywhere. The sun is beaming. Why would you want to be anywhere else but here? Why would you want to leave this place, this moment in time? You are lucky to be right where you are, right now.

** NOTE: All three quotations (indented passages beginning on pages 29, 30 and 32) are from Joan Marie's book *Only You*, to be released by Christmas 2001.

Biography

Joan Marie Whelan, a powerful and dynamic speaker has the gift of communicating with spirits, guides, angels and those who have passed to the other side. She facilitates her clients in receiving messages that can very often enable them to change their lives.

Joan Marie received her B.A. from Lynchburg College in Lynchburg, VA, and trained with Brian L. Weiss, M.D., Chairman Emeritus of Psychiatry at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami. Dr. Weiss is the author of *Many Lives, Many Masters* and *Messages From The Masters*.

She currently does group and private sessions in the New Jersey and New York metropolitan area. As a Present/Past Regression Guide, Joan Marie enables clients to discover their true self and core purpose as they journey through life.

Using guided meditations to induce a relaxed state, she assists her clients in releasing blocks to effective functioning, opening the way to feelings of empowerment and with a greater sense of freedom. Clients, from a deeply relaxed state, are guided to deal with specific issues including relationships, negative habits and balance in the overall wellness of their mind, body and spirit. This healing work, over time, enables them to gain the confidence and calmness necessary in improving their quality of life.

Joan Marie's first book *Only You* will be out by Christmas 2001. Her consulting fees are by the hour. Her email address is: joanmarie@bigplanet.com.

Chapter 5

Anita Bergen

Anita specializes in collections of quotes. I had read *Pause and Reflect*, a previous book of quotations that she had edited, so when I finally met her, I was expecting a shy, retiring, bookish person. Someone like the stereotypical librarian.

Not even close

I was pleasantly surprised to meet a poised, self-confident, and very outgoing lady who just exuded competence, but without the hard-edged bustle that often accompanies it. As we chatted, it became clear that Anita possesses both clear convictions of her own together with uncommon openness to new ideas.

We only had a few minutes to talk, but before we parted, I asked her if she would contribute a section to this book and build it upon the quotes of others.

The following article, “Change Your Attitude – Change Your Luck,” is the result. She takes the views of twenty-five people from widely differing times, cultures and lands, and she interleaves them with her own commentary. The result is a picture, gradually unveiled, of the real characteristics of luck, what it is, how it works, and what we can do to get more of it.

In fact, the result she has achieved here is very close to what I intended when I began collecting material for this book.

So look this article over very carefully. It’s an accurate micro-view of what this entire book is about.

Change Your Attitude — Change Your Luck

by Anita Bergen

Everything in life is luck.
Donald Trump

Life is Change. At times I marvel at the sheer intensity of this statement. It is blatantly honest; it is precise; and it is valid with the utmost certainty. It's undeniably a statement that is accepted without dispute.

If this is true, why don't we act as though we believe it? Why do we not accept change as a normal part of life and work toward adapting to it? Why do we choose to resist, to deny it's all part of the greater plan? Do we somehow feel if we stand in opposition, resolute to hold our ground, that change will just blink, turn in retreat and leave us alone?

"Change hurts," you might well reply. "Change is uncomfortable. Change means more work. I've got enough on my plate, thanks. I can't deal with this now. I'll just keep coping with things as they are."

In order to further the cause, I'd like to propose a new bumper sticker:

Change happens... Adapt!

Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.
Karen Kaiser Clark

This profound quote from Karen Kaiser Clark cleverly sums up a fantastic philosophy about life.

At the same time my friend Brad Steiger, author of over 150 books, puts it another way, "In the beginning was the word; and the word was 'Adjust'."

Life is Change... Learn to Adjust! That sort of says it all — plain and simple — short and sweet.

Yet what could possibly be simple — let alone sweet — about life in the twenty-first century? Nevertheless, as a society we stand poised at the starting gate to a whole new millennium.

"Well," you might ask, "besides the change in numbers, what's so new about it?"

The answer — perplexing as it might seem — may well be that nothing is new, yet everything has changed.

I believe life is a series of near misses. A lot of what we ascribe to luck is not luck at all. It's seizing the day and accepting responsibility for your future. It's seeing what other people don't see, and pursuing that vision.
Howard Schultz, Owner of Starbucks Coffee

This new millennium has brought changes to our lives and environment at an ever-increasing speed. That being so, Mother Nature clearly illustrates that our very survival depends on our ability to adjust and adapt to these ever-changing conditions. Simple version: In Order to Survive — Adapt (or become extinct).

It's no small wonder that, at times, we may find ourselves unable to cope — totally overwhelmed by change — incapable of adjusting. But if we give it some careful thought, we may stumble upon this simple truth: In life, there really is no security. Everything is subject to change; and change — regardless of its inconvenience or discomfort — is inevitable.

One half of life is luck; the other half is discipline — and that's the important half, for without discipline you wouldn't know what to do with your luck.
Carl Zuckmayer

Depend on the rabbit's foot if you will, but it didn't work for the rabbit!
Anonymous

But just look around; we've not been singled out. We're literally surrounded by change, as any glance at the economy, politics, employment statistics, family structure or personal relationships will prove. Yet, in spite of the fact that change is everywhere, some folks seem to thrive on it, while others just barely survive.

Since many of us feel quite comfortable in our preferred habits, we usually find it more agreeable to resist change. That's simply because change can be quite uncomfortable — forcing us to move from our favorite position, forcing us to think, forcing us to take risks, even forcing us to consider alternate possibilities.

But despite the pain and discomfort it creates, when we work with it, change causes us to stretch and grow far beyond the limits of our comfort zone. This growth process can be a painful procedure — one that leaves us never the same as before. Along with all of this stretching and growing, dramatic changes are taking place within. At times, these changes are a cleverly disguised internal metamorphosis of sorts — more evolutionary than revolutionary in nature.

Luck is largely a matter of paying attention.
Susan M. Dodd

I think luck is the sense to recognize an opportunity and
the ability to take advantage of it... the man who
can smile at his breaks and grab his chances gets on.
Samuel Goldwyn

If we continue, we eventually become aware that our personal struggle is not at all unique. We've not been singled out. There were others who traveled similar paths, doing battle with many of the same dragons.

A few of these fellow travelers were fortunate; they found a way to persevere. Some even managed to survive. In the end, armed with extensive insight, they were able to overcome crippling obstacles.

Yet, no matter how overwhelming our problems may appear nor how frantic our desperation to resolve them, we must realize that someone else has experienced this challenge before.

In times of confusion and frustration we may want to seek the help and advice of someone who could show us the way — a mentor of sorts. But where would we find this mentor — someone willing to spend the necessary time and energy to teach and help us on our personal path?

Personally speaking, the most profound wisdom I've ever found came from a source few would suspect. Some of the greatest personal mentors I've ever encountered are the thoughts, insights and perspectives of previous pilgrims.

Simply put, the quotations and insights of other travelers on the trail of life have provided the greatest guidance and inspiration that I've ever received.

Failure and success seem to have been allotted to men by their stars. But they retain the power of wriggling, of fighting with their star or against it, and in the whole universe the only really interesting movement is this wriggle.
E. M. Forster

Luck is the residue of design.
Branch Rickey

When you work seven days a week, fourteen hours a day, you get lucky.
Armand Hammer

It's a great comfort to stumble upon the inspiring reflections of someone who has endured, survived or, perhaps, even conquered a common problem. What a fantastic discovery — a kindred spirit! Someone who's been there, done that and somehow managed to put it all down in writing, exclusively to share with us! It's almost like discovering a lost treasure — one that we've desperately been searching for.

Let's face it, when problems arise, it's much easier to get some guidance from someone who's already dealt with the same situation. But guidance itself won't solve our dilemma. We've got to get in there, take action and participate in our own lives. Nevertheless, using some sound guidance undoubtedly beats the trial and error method of re-inventing the wheel.

I've found that luck is quite predictable. If
You want more luck, take more chances.
Be more active. Show up more often.
Brian Tracy

Some luck lies in not getting what you thought you wanted, but
getting what you have, which once you have got it you may be smart
enough to see is what you would have wanted had you known.
Garrison Keillor

You never have a chance for your luck
to operate if you don't take risks.
Anonymous

But does learning about change or how to manage it put us in control of our lives and our luck? Perhaps we're victims, no more than petty pawns on some "Universal Chessboard." Do we believe we have the ability to become self-actualized personalities or are we simply objects of predestination?

Perhaps, we are being manipulated — punished or rewarded by some unknown force for previous misdeeds or inactions. Perhaps, we're being taught a mighty lesson by our higher consciousness in the "Infinite School of Life."

Maybe, it's our karma; or maybe, it's our fate. Maybe, we get what we deserve; or maybe, we get what we expect.

Get as much experience as you can, so that
you're ready when luck works. That's the luck.
Henry Fonda

Luck is being ready for the chance.
J. Frank Dobie

What helps luck is a habit of watching for opportunities, of having a patient,
but restless mind, of sacrificing one's ease or vanity, of uniting a love of
detail to foresight, and of passing through hard times bravely and cheerfully.
Charles Victor Cherbuliez

Indeed, the topic of luck can be quite a controversial subject. Do we believe in a concept such as luck? Is it possible to control our luck, or are we destined to exist at the mercy of fate?

Obviously, the answers vary tremendously from one individual to another. Yet, how one responds to these questions reveals volumes of data about our personal experiences, perspectives and attitudes.

Why does it frequently appear that some folks (usually the ones we can barely tolerate) seem to get all the luck? Or, at other times, the best of all possible outcomes seems reserved for the most undeserving, uncaring, self-serving members of society.

It will generally be found that men who are constantly lamenting
their ill luck are only reaping the consequences of their own neglect,
mismanagement, and improvidence, or want of application
Samuel Smiles

Luck is good planning, carefully executed.
Anonymous

I'm hardnosed about luck. I think it sucks. Yeah, if you spend seven years looking for a job as a copywriter, and then one day somebody gives you a job, you can say, "Gee, I was lucky I happened to go up there today." But dammit, I was going to go up there sooner or later in the next seventy years... If you're persistent in trying and doing and working, you almost make your own fortune.
Jerry Della Femina

Could it be that luck just doesn't care? Perhaps, like electricity, luck will work for the snakes of society as well as for the doves. All you need to do is turn on the switch and the electricity will flow. And it flows as well for Adolf Hitler as for Mother Teresa. No judgments, no evaluations, no tests, just juice.

Life has taught me that we all create our own luck through our personal beliefs and attitudes. By beliefs, I mean the ongoing, internal chatter of self-talk we listen to every waking hour of the day.

Most of our problems seem to come from our deep-seated thoughts and beliefs. These can be negative beliefs about self-worth, guilt, luck or fear. Setting this situation right often requires some thoughtful self-examination followed by an equal amount of positive action.

Plainly speaking, we don't need to "re-invent the wheel." In order to find a bit of solace while working toward the solution, it helps to reflect on someone else's experience. Following this, we merely need to ask for help from a higher source and wait in quiet expectation, pausing silently to listen for the reply.

Taking some time to pause is extremely important. While reviewing the manuscript of John Harricharan's marvelous book, [The Power Pause](#), I was completely overwhelmed by its contents.

This short story is an amazing tale of one man's personal search for solutions to the difficult luck he had experienced. He ultimately learns that much of the solution comes from taking time to pause — in breaking away from the problem.

I don't know anything about luck. I've never banked on it, and I'm afraid of people who do. Luck to me is something else: hard work and realizing what is opportunity and what isn't.
Lucille Ball

We must believe in luck. For how else can we explain the success of those we don't like?
Jean Cocteau

Thorough preparation makes its own luck.
Joe Poyer

The elegance and simplicity of John's story motivated me to begin work on my second collection of spiritual, inspirational and motivational quotations titled, *Pause and Reflect*. So it was that John asked me to make it a part of the *Power Pause* package. I was thrilled to do so.

I believe that in the midst of all our troubles is when we most need to take time to pause and reflect. There's enormous healing power in allowing ourselves to break away from our problems. As we take time to pause and reflect, we discover that the solutions are closer than a whisper.

Some would believe luck is as fickle as a butterfly, fluttering from this flower to that, following any whim or impulse. I prefer to believe that luck is as deliberate as a honey bee, going about its work, collecting pollen, in a very ordered and purposeful manner. If it doesn't feel welcome on one flower, it merely moves on to the next. Nevertheless, the honey bee won't be found around vinegar. You've got to attract it with sweet flowers and pollen.

Lady Luck generally woos those who earnestly,
enthusiastically, unremittingly woo her.
B. C. Forbes

Some are satisfied to stand politely before the portals of Fortune and to await her bidding; better those who push forward, who employ their enterprise, who on the wings of their worth and valor seek to embrace luck, and to effectively gain her favor.
Baltasar Gracian

Luck is not chance; it's toil. Fortune's expensive smile is earned.
Emily Dickenson

There are times during our most difficult personal conflicts and tragedies when good luck seems to lose all meaning. We often lose our way when we most need to hear the few words that will inspire us to go on.

It's during these times that we need to find hope — the kind of hope that comes with change. We need to take some time to break away from the problem. Take time to break away, to pause, to reflect, to find a new perspective. By taking time to find your spirit, you will find the courage and confidence to change your luck.

Biography

Anita Bergen takes joy in creating and editing books of all kinds, especially those that explore and express the spirituality in everyday life. Her best works are her quotation anthologies, which include, *Pause and Reflect* and *Life and Other Options*.

In addition to her talents in the written word, she is also a prize-winning artist and the former Vice President of Silvertch Industries, Inc. She has addressed numerous groups in locations such as Barcelona, Paris and London and remains an avid world traveler.

She continues writing and editing from her home in the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

Anita leaves us with this personal observation:

L ~ Learning to adapt to

U ~ unexpected

C ~ change = (equals)

K ~ key to success.

Chapter 6

Sami Laitinen

Sami is the only contributor to this book that I did not meet at the SuperSeminar in Atlanta. He was, however, introduced to me, via the Internet, by John Harricharan, who hosted that seminar, and we have become very good friends.

My first contact with Sami was an unexpected email in which he commented favorably on *Command More Luck*. John had suggested he read my book. After a series of increasingly interesting exchanges, he mentioned that he, a native of Finland, had written a short article in English for his close friends on the subject of winning, and he offered to send me a copy.

I had grown quite impressed with his level of understanding and his grasp of the principles involved in generating success or “creating your own good luck” as I often call it. It was only later I learned that Sami is just twenty years old.

Of course, I jumped at the chance to read what this unusual young man had written. And when I had read it, I knew it would be a perfect fit for this book.

The article that follows is his. Though edited slightly for style, it is otherwise unchanged.

Transforming You Life from Dreams into Reality

by Sami Laitinen

In our society, people compete constantly, and from a traditional viewpoint there are winners and losers. First we compete for who will be whose friend, who gets the best grades at school, who will date their dream girl or boy, who wins a scholarship or who lands that dream job. Some people, if things seem discouraging in this game of life, may ask themselves, “What did I do wrong?” or “Why did this happen to me?”

It is very important, however, to understand that ultimately there are only winners, and this essay discusses how you can begin to see yourself as one of them. No more suffering or questioning why. How would you feel if you could assume fuller control of your life and start living your dreams? You are already getting close, because reading articles such as this one suggests that you are ready to examine alternative methods for creating that life you desire.

For quite a number of years my passion has centered on a single question: “What makes a winner and how can I lead the life of my dreams?” I didn't settle for the kind of pat answers that seemed to flow in a steady stream from the church. I felt there a certain arrogance, and one of the objects of the church seemed to be the limiting of people and their dreams by first demanding “Is this from God or the Devil?”

If you will follow along with me, I think I can explain why I believe it is God's good will for ALL of your dreams to come true. I will explain my fundamental beliefs and how I understand them. I urge you to read with an open mind, absorb whatever you find useful, question everything, and accept only what feels right for you.

I believe that the Bible was written by ancient seers who taught the members of their respective mystery schools how to master the art of living. They wanted to preserve all this information for generations to come and asked one simple question: "How can we protect these inner truths through the coming centuries?" Those ancient ones were wise enough to avoid stating their teachings plainly; they knew that the first jealous tyrant to cross their path could easily stamp out such teachings, and their school as well.

The Bible deals with spiritual and mental laws. The characters and events depicted there present psychological states of mind. It tells readers the story of how God became a man so that man would understand that, as co-creator, he is able to lead the life of his dreams. God has given each of us the gift of creation, and that is what the Bible is all about: how to use this gift in the best interests of oneself and everyone else.

God is omnipresent and omnipotent, and according to the Bible He is the Alpha and Omega. He takes life and he gives it. In this sense, the writers of the Bible wanted to lead you to understand that God is the source of everything, is everywhere. is in everything at all times. Thus there is no room for a devil who is trying to persuade you to separate from God. Since God is everywhere and in everything, how could there possibly be any separation?

Ancient people referred to the devil as someone who applies the laws of life in the wrong order, and thus the devil represented God turned upside down, or the misuse of good principles. It is the same thing with the word “sin.” In the original meaning of this word, you are sinning when you aim at an objective and fail to hit the bull's eye. You simply missed what you were aiming at.

There is a wonderful quote in the book *“Why Is This Happening to Me... AGAIN?! And What You Can Do About It”* by Dr. Michael Ryce:

“Most of us have bought into sin as something terrible and awful. It is something we have been taught to feel guilty and bad about. Sin was originally meant to be positive feedback. The English translation of the Aramaic word, *khata*, is 'sin.' It is an archery term. When you fired at a target and missed the bull's eye, the scorekeeper yelled, 'Sin!' It meant, 'You are off the mark,' which, in practical terms, means improper for your energy system or less than your highest and best. It does not mean you are evil, damned or should be groveling in the dirt. The simple implication is to adjust your aim, it's time to take another shot, time to do something differently in your life! ... Evil is 'bisha' in Aramaic and is another archery term. Sin is missing the bull's eye, and evil means 'off target,' missing the target altogether.”

So, typically, someone is separated from God when they have turned their attention to false opinions, fears, and jealousies, thus giving recognition to external “forces” that are controlling them. That is the separation that the Bible tells us about. In that context, the separated person has not awakened the Christ within (the perfect ideal) who redeems us from “sin” (missing the target).

When we were young, we were taught how life ought to be... how it should take enormous efforts to succeed... and how we should be afraid of God who is going to punish us. So, the very first thing on this highway to success is to realize that God is you at your highest and best. Your highest human potential is God.

If you want to claim your birthright to bask constantly in the presence of God, realize that “with God all things are possible.” Cease giving the power that rightfully belongs to you to external influences. The very first gateway to success is to realize that other people and events have no more power over you than you give to them. When someone voices an opinion that you don't see as truth, you may tell him, “Thank You, I value your opinion,” but in your own heart, you can remind yourself of the truth about you and your own life.

The second point is to realize that there is no competition. When you compete, you are suggesting to yourself that you may not have full power over the situation you are facing. Yes, there are some invisible laws of the universe that are shaping this world around us, and those laws provide that the world will yield to your desires and goals.

How can one make this happen? This is a good, practical question. The answer is: these principles work through the power of your subconscious mind. [For more information on how the subconscious mind works, refer to *“The Power of Your Subconscious Mind”* by Dr. Joseph

Murphy. This book, available at Amazon.com, is an excellent guide for any layman on how to mobilize your own subconscious.]

View it this way: each person's mind is like a computer connected to the Internet. When you give a request to your subconscious, it will immediately access the rest of the network and start seeking a way to bring you the thing you want. Whatever you ask for, the universe has a way to deliver it to you. This is possible because the creation of all things is already complete; everything already exists in this wide universe. So all your subconscious mind needs to do is simply find an appropriate channel for delivering to you the things or changes you have requested.

How do you impress upon the subconscious mind that it should do this for you? There are various methods to accomplish this. I cannot say what method will work best for you, since one thing may work well for me, while another may be more effective for you. You'll need to experiment with different methods and techniques. You'll quickly find which ones work best for you.

After discussing the matter of methods and techniques with many people, however, and drawing upon my own experiments, I have concluded that a highly effective approach for many people is to use a sort of meditation in which you quiet your conscious, reasoning mind, setting it temporarily in the background. This then gives you a more direct pipeline to the realm of your subconscious mind.

Before you begin quieting your conscious mind through simple meditation, it is important to hold a clear intention of that which you really want. No, don't start to think of excuses. Nobody is going to judge you here... so take your pick of all the wonderful things you want to receive.

Then, find a comfortable place to relax, close your eyes, and count backward from 50 to 1. With each number, simply feel yourself going into a deeper and deeper state of relaxation. If you would like, you can repeat quietly to yourself, "I am now in a quiet and relaxed state of mind where all success originates".

Now, begin imagining some event that would occur if your dream were to suddenly come true. Imagine it as vividly as you can, and make it very real to yourself. Sometimes, to get yourself started, it helps to begin by playing "what-if" in your own mind. This technique is one of the very best ways to impress your subconscious mind, which always closely observes your imaginings and feelings, and tries to bring them to reality.

When you begin to live toward a desired result, something within you starts to act like you have the thing you want or that you can already do the thing you want to do. There is planted inside of you a tiny, growing seed that is living in the assumption of your fulfilled dream.

The trick is that your subconscious mind cannot recognize the difference between "make-believe" and "reality," and it begins to bring into being whatever you have ordered. Next, combine all this into a short phrase which implies that you have already fulfilled your goal ("I

have my ~ ~” or “I am doing ~ ~”). Now repeat this phrase along with a sincere thank-you, knowing that your infinite power is now in charge.

Now naturally, everything takes a certain amount of time to be brought into existence – some things happen quickly; others appear to take more time. I sometimes see people begin to change their environment, but when these changes start to appear, they quickly stop because they simply cannot believe it is possible. This process takes time, especially when you are first learning to trust the process, but be patient for it will come. Don't give up.

Have some faith in yourself, and don't undermine your own investments in your new reality. What can you possibly achieve by doubting? Can anything good come out of doubting or being negative about this new skill you're developing? How can doubt originate anything good or be worth the time it eats up? As far as I am concerned, every negative thought or doubt is a waste of time and resources, and truly is “sinning” in the original sense. Redeem yourself by recognizing the REAL savior in you. The savior is that which fulfills your dream. And if you encounter doubts, you can repeat "Thank You God for giving me this dream. I am so happy." Walk daily in the assumption of having what you want, and it will coalesce into reality.

I cannot say this for sure, but I believe that one of the fundamental reasons why many seekers don't reach their goals is that we all may unconsciously absorb some of society's tendency to be envious of others. Here you are, an earnest student of life, but you don't have that beautiful Porsche car or that lovely home you would enjoy. “But look,” (society's influence whispers darkly), “there is that rich corporate executive who ‘basically does nothing’ and drives that Porsche you've had your eye on.” You may unintentionally envy him or assume that he is somehow "bad."

What we fail to realize is: what we think about others is also exactly what we must think about ourselves. To think something positive about everyone and wish everyone the very best of luck is actually an irreplaceable investment in our own future.

Reverse your negative thoughts when you catch them; try to maintain a positive attitude all day long. My friend, John Harricharan, maintains that using your feelings is the best and fastest way to create new realities in your life. This is certainly in accordance with what Dr. Joseph Murphy said throughout his life.

Feel your goal to be true about you at this very moment; live with it. This is another good way to assure you are being positive toward others and wishing them the best. Stop judging events as good or bad, and instead learn to appreciate some aspect of everything that you meet in life. See something good in everything (even the things that at first look like problems).

Another thing you can do is to stop creating new buts and ifs; reverse the old patterns and you will move toward new ones. Remember, you are a co-creator, one with God. Who is going to stop you? The only one who can possibly stop you is you.

Who says it always has to take lots of time? Who says your life has to be a certain way? You

(often through your subconscious mind) are the one who actually decides these matters, although most people deny their own power and responsibility, and so they let things be decided by default. Don't ever forget: it is up to you how long it takes to fulfill any dream.

What would you like to do if lack of money or other blockages were not stopping you? Once you decide this, all you have to do is visualize it to be true of yourself right now, in this present moment. Don't concern yourself with questions such as how or when. Those are not your problems. Your subconscious mind is master of how and when, and it will handle all those details for you. Those are its specialty.

One last thing – there is enough for everyone. You don't ever need to envy what someone else has... you can have your own Porsche – or whatever is it that you really, really want.

I wish you the best of luck, and Godspeed in all your endeavors. As one author said, "Meet you on the top".

Now you know how to be a winner in your life. Start exercising this power. Do it every day, and you will see some wonderful changes in 30 days. Within a year you will be well on your way to a future that is far more satisfying. I congratulate you.

Sami Laitinen is currently a 20-year-old soldier with the Finnish Defense Forces. With plans for a career in law-enforcement in the United States, he has long been fascinated with spirituality and helping people find ways to fulfill their dreams. His more long-term plans include becoming a spiritual/motivational speaker and author, and he looks forward to the future's challenges helping others fulfill their dreams.

At the moment his desires include settling down in Los Angeles and leading the life of his dreams there.

Chapter 7

Interview with Joe Vitale

Author of *Spiritual Marketing*

May 3, 2001

The Magic Escalator Through Life

To hear free audio samples from this interview, click on:

<http://www.inside-the-minds-of-winners.com/samples/>

Command More Luck (CML): Today we're talking with a man who is a successful author and Internet businessman, and who is also legendary as a publicist and copywriter, Joe Vitale. You can find his main website at [Mr. Fire dot com](http://www.mrfire.com).

Joe, thanks for being with us today.

Joe Vitale: Well thank you. It's a great treat, a great honor, and I'm excited.

CML: For readers who may not be familiar with your name, could you give us a bit of background about yourself and your business and career?

Joe: Well, I'm a full-time marketing consultant and author of some eight or ten books including a couple of best-selling eBooks. I have several audiotape programs including a best-selling one with Nightingale-Conant called *The Power of Outrageous Marketing*. And my most recent book is called [Spiritual Marketing](#). The one before that was the only book only written on P.T. Barnum called [There's a Customer Born Every Minute](#). And I wrote [The Seven Lost Secrets of Success](#) and [The Complete Guide to Small Business Advertising](#) and *Cyberwriting* and *Turbocharge Your Writing* and you know, on and on.

So there you go in a nutshell.

CML: Your books on copywriting, in particular, [Hypnotic Writing](#) and [Advanced Hypnotic Writing](#), have helped me tremendously with my sales letter writing.

Joe: That's good to know.

CML: How did you get into copywriting?

Joe: Oh boy! What a great question. How did I get into copywriting? Probably because I needed a copywriter. So I learned to do it for myself. Now, obviously I've been a writer for a long time. I've been writing since I was a teenager, and when I started getting my work published, I quickly learned that publishers don't know anything about marketing,

and that if I wanted to get these books marketed I had to be responsible for it. So I just started learning the craft.

There were a couple of books. The Robert Collier Letter Book changed my life as a copywriter, and I became much more powerful as a writer after reading that book. That, and the works of John Caples, and just learning it on my own and applying it to my own needs. Then as I became successful, people started coming to me and saying, "Hey, will you do the same thing?"

So I more or less evolved into being a copywriter.

CML: Did that take a pretty good length of time, learning copywriting as a craft?

Joe: That's hard to answer because I already had such an extensive background as a writer. I had written a play that was produced in Houston back in 1979, and I learned a lot about dialog that I used in my copywriting.

Also, I had written a novel, and I learned a lot about storytelling that also goes into my copywriting.

I had written some articles and was a journalist, and I learned about factual writing, which goes into my copywriting. So that was kind of a lifetime experience. I can't say it took me 20 years or two years. It was always learning to be a better writer and then learning how to apply that to the craft of copywriting.

CML: And I suppose you're still digging around for stuff to learn.

Joe: I'm always digging around. Some people are astonished. I'm sitting in this beautiful library that I own – there are like 5,000 books here – and maybe a fifth of them are all on marketing and copywriting and becoming a better writer; they think, "Well, don't you know it all?"

And, no, I'm nowhere near it. I mean, you're in Japan where the concept that you're never truly a master exists, and you're always learning the craft. You may be called a "master copywriter" but you're really a student, because in terms of what there is to know and what's always changing, it doesn't end.

CML: Perhaps many people have come to think of you as a fairly hard-headed, "nuts-n-bolts" type of businessman. But you just recently released your newest book. You mentioned it a little bit earlier.

Joe: Yes, Spiritual Marketing. I know where you're going with the question, and it's the other side of what might be perceived as "Mr. Fire" (Mr. Fire is my nickname and handle), and here I come out with this kind of "touchy-feely," whimsical, airy-fairy in some respects metaphysical book.

CML: A bit of a change of pace.

Joe: Well, it's perceived as a bit of a change because I haven't been out in the open with it, but the reality, the truth (and you and many of your listeners are hearing this for the first time) is that Spiritual Marketing (my inside-out approach to marketing) has been how I've led my business and my life for decades.

I've only recently come out of the closet about it and made it public by writing a book on it, but even that book was not fully intended for publication. When I wrote it, it was a little pamphlet that I wrote for my sister. She was on welfare, she was basically having health problems, financial problems, she was struggling in her life, and I thought, "Oh God, there are some things, if she only knew them, that would make a difference." And I wrote this little pamphlet called Spiritual Marketing for her.

As it evolved, I gave it to a speaker one time as a gift, and he announced that book in front of 250 people at his seminar . . .

CML: And you weren't ready.

Joe: And I wasn't ready, no. Sixty people – literally sixty people – came up wanting that book right then and there. I realized that there's a market for this. People are ready for this. I don't have to hide my spiritual side. So in some ways, it's a shock for people to hear that Joe "Mr. Fire" Vitale has come out with *Spiritual Marketing*, but in other ways, it's just the real me.

CML: Where can listeners find the book?

Joe: [Amazon](#) sells it, so that's a good way to get it. It's also listed on my website, [Mr. Fire dot com](#), and [First Books dot com](#) is the publisher of the book. But I always drive people to Amazon. It's one of my favorite places to shop, so go to Amazon and get it.

CML: Including your eBooks, how many books does this make now, Joe?

Joe: I don't know. I think it's eleven – well, it could be thirteen. I do have a couple of books that aren't published yet, and I will be publishing them, so it's in the neighborhood of a dozen.

CML: That's a good stack of books.

Joe: Yeah, it is. It's my own little library.

CML: You talk about your "Five Step Formula" in the book. Can you explain this a little bit?

Joe: Wow, The Five Steps in Spiritual Marketing. The first is to know what you don't want.

Most people are real hung up on what they don't want. They're always complaining, they're gossiping, they're saying they're hurting, they don't have money, they don't have the health that they want. They're stuck on this stage.

And I'm saying, Step One is know what you don't want, because you use it as a springboard to Step Two, which is know what you DO want. That's a very powerful single step.

I have learned about the power of intention. Intention can reshape the universe to your will. And it comes from making a decision for what you want, which is Step Two in Spiritual Marketing.

Step Three is to get clear, meaning that if there are beliefs within you saying that "I don't deserve the things that I want," or "it's not possible to get the things that I want," or "there are other things that may have to happen before I can have what I want," those are all beliefs. Get those beliefs out of the way so you're streamlined to go for what you want. And Step Three is all about that; that's getting clear.

Step Four is feeling right now what it would be like to have, do or be the thing that you want. So if it is to drive the new car or live in the new house or have this particular romance, this relationship, feel it. Feel it as if it's happening right this minute because the more you can feel it right now, the more you turn yourself into a magnet for the thing you want. And it will start to come to you as you start to go to it. That's Step Four, feel it.

Step Five is let go. Step Five is let go, because so many of us are still trying to struggle with life and make things happen, and I've actually found the escalator through life. And the escalator through life is these five steps that I put under the title of Spiritual Marketing.

CML: I like that phrase, "escalator through life."

Joe: Well, we've all struggled. I mean, I've been there. I starved in Dallas twenty years ago. I was homeless, I shoplifted to eat. I tell this story in Spiritual Marketing. And we've all gone through some of that.

My sister was the same way. Now, the real miracle about this is that I gave her a copy of the new edition of Spiritual Marketing, the one that's in hard cover and in paperback now, and she wrote me a letter. Now this is the same woman who was on welfare, struggling, didn't know where her money was going to come from, trying to raise three kids. She read my book and wrote me a letter saying, "Joe, I read Spiritual Marketing. Great book. I went out and bought a new car right afterwards."

I thought she was kidding. I thought she was being skeptical and being humorous and kind of digging at me saying, "Yeah, a whole book about miracles, right. I went and

bought a new car." She did. I talked to her, and she literally did.

So what I'm saying is, yeah, we all know where the rocky road of life is. Most of us are still on it. Most of the people that are driving to work and crying as they're at work, or they're in pain, they're in agony of some sort and don't know that there's an escalator.

I've found it!

CML: I have one question.

Joe: Only one? Okay.

CML: Only one – about this Five Step Formula, the one that was hardest for me was Step Three. Getting clear of all the negative and limiting beliefs. That's still a battle sometimes. Any suggestions or hints there?

Joe: Yeah, that's a good point. That is a toughie. See, most of us don't get anywhere – or don't move very fast or very much forward in our lives because we're still within our own box. We're in our own frame of reference. The story I talk about in Spiritual Marketing to illustrate this is that I had a dog in college that I never put on a leash and I always let it run. Of course, it tore up the garbage and tore up the gardens and ran out in traffic and just generally raised hell and was a total nuisance to all my neighbors.

So I put the dog on a leash, and I felt terrible about putting her on a leash. It was a little three-foot leash, and I thought, "That's plenty for her." But she'd run and try to play and was totally restricted.

Then, weeks later I went and got a six-foot leash. I put the six-foot one on her, and I said, "Come on, come on." But she only went three feet. She went the length of what she had been trained was her boundary.

I had to go, put my arm around her and walk her the other three feet and say, "Look, you've got a lot more room here."

CML: Joe, this sounds like a lot of people's lives, a lot of people's childhoods.

Joe: This is exactly the point. It is, and the metaphor goes on because I was a coach to her. I think we all need some kind of "miracles coach" to show us we don't have the boundaries think we have.

CML: Right.

Joe: That's the answer to getting clear. That whole chapter is pretty long in Spiritual Marketing because I talk about doing a lot of work with a mentor that I went to for ten years. And I still go to mentors like that. I think we all need to have a coach, a mentor, a

counselor, a mastermind group, something that contains a person or persons who are already successful where we want to be successful, because they can show us our limitations, our leash, our boundaries, our beliefs, and we can go, "Oh, I didn't realize I can have more, be more or do more." So that's the key to me – it's seeking help.

CML: We'll get back to that in a little bit. I want to cover this in a little more depth, but first, with this same Five Step Formula, just before that, on page 81, there is a phrase that I love, Joe. It goes something like this: "The hardest part to creating life the way you want it is learning to stop figuring out how you will get what you want." Can you tell us what that means to you?

Joe: That's really with Step Five in letting go, because most of us are still trying to mold life and direct life and orchestrate life. And I swear, Charles, I have had some incredible miracles in my life, and these were things I could not personally orchestrate.

For example, when I was writing one of my most popular books, [The Seven Lost Secrets of Success](#), and I tell this story in Spiritual Marketing, so you might remember it), I was called out of town to work with a doctor who wanted me to write his book. He wanted to have a book written, and he didn't want to write it, so he wanted to hire me.

I was very reluctant. I was working on The Seven Lost Secrets of Success. I had my own agenda, but something inside of me said, "Oh, go on out there; you're going to get paid and you can use the money; it'll help carry you through while you're writing your own book." So I went, I met with him, I signed an agreement, and he gave me a non-refundable check for several thousand dollars.

Then I came back to Houston where I was living at the time, and I started working on my own book, just kept going. After a month or two, I thought, "Oh, I should be working on the doctor's book." So I called up there to the clinic and nobody answered the phone. At the doctor's clinic, nobody was there to pick up the phone. It's sounding ridiculous, but I called during normal hours and nobody was there.

CML: This is sounding like Twilight Zone. The guy didn't exist?

Joe: Well, in a way, he didn't, because three days later, when I finally did get hold of somebody, I spoke to his business manager, and he was very sheepish. I told him who I was, and he said, "Oh, Joe, there've been some changes."

I said, "Like what?"

He said, "Well, the doc's in jail."

And I said, "The doc's in jail?" I mean, this blew my mind. Why was he in jail? The business manager said, "Well, he violated his parole."

I thought, "What? He was in jail before?" I didn't know any of this.

The behind-the-scenes story was that he had gone through a divorce, he wasn't happy about it, and he started sending bombs to his ex-wife. They put him in prison the first time, and after he served some time, they let him come back out. They let him be a doctor again. He just wasn't allowed to send bombs to anybody anymore. And they found him with bombs in his desk. So they shut him down and put him back in prison.

Now, the punchline is, he had given me a non-refundable deposit to write his book, a deposit that I was able to keep so I could continue writing my own book. And that helped me give birth to *The Seven Lost Secrets of Success*, one of my most successful books, a book that one person so liked that they bought 19,500 copies of it.

How could I have ever orchestrated that kind of funding? I joke in my book, where I say I could have placed an ad that said, "Wanted: doctor who wants me to write a book, give me a lot of money, and then go to jail so I don't have to write his book." I never would have found who I was looking for. But the universe directed it to me because I had this intention that I wanted to finish *The Seven Lost Secrets of Success*, an important book to me, and I needed the funding to do it.

So the universe, in its wisdom, seeing way beyond my ego's vision, orchestrated all of this.

The same thing happened – can I tell this other story?

CML: Yeah, sure, please do!

Joe: The same thing happened with my Nightingale-Conant tape set, *The Power of Outrageous Marketing*. I wanted to be in Nightingale-Conant for over ten years. I would send them copies of my books and urge them to consider my work, and say, "I really believe that something like, for example, *The Seven Lost Secrets of Success*" could be a very powerful, good-selling tape program with Nightingale-Conant." But nothing ever worked. Ten years!

Finally, I just gave up. I thought well, it'll work out or it won't work out, but I'm not going to force it. I'm not going to struggle with it. In other words, I got off of the rocky road and got on the escalator.

One day (I live by my e-mail), I got this e-mail that was from an unknown person who had some questions about P.T. Barnum. One of my books is on P.T. Barnum, the one called [There's a Customer Born Every Minute](#). I answered his questions and didn't think anything of it.

The next day, he asked me another question and I answered it.

The third day, he asked me another question and I answered it.

Then finally, I get this e-mail from him that says, "I'm very grateful for all the time you've taken with me in answering my questions about P.T. Barnum." He said, "If you ever want your material considered by Nightingale-Conant, I'm their senior marketing manager."

I still remember that moment. I had been going up the rocky road and pounding on the front door to get into Nightingale-Conant, and nobody was answering or listening. Then, the universe, God, spirit (whatever you want to call the bigger energy source than what is generated from our own ego) orchestrated it so that somebody, who I don't know, writes to me and I'm kind enough to write back, and it ultimately leads to me having a program with Nightingale-Conant that has become a best-seller for them.

That's letting go.

CML: Wow. Do you have any kind of working definition for luck, or fortune or success that you generally use in your daily life?

Joe: Yeah, I do, and it's not mine. The exact quote is in *Spiritual Marketing*. It's by Raymond Charles Barker from a book he wrote. I may be paraphrasing it, but I might also have it almost exact: "Success is being able to do what you want to do when you want to do it."

I love that. Because for the longest time I wasn't able to do that.

CML: Can you say that again?

Joe: Success is being able to do what you want to do when you want to do it.

The exact quote is in *Spiritual Marketing*; if I can grab a copy, I'll flip through and find it for you.

CML: That's so simple. That's great.

Joe: Well, it's simple, and at the same time, for most of us, it seems like the impossible dream. It is a goal, it is an intention, and it is possible.

That's the beauty of it. It is possible. That's why I used it in *Spiritual Marketing*. I have these little quotations throughout the book that are just inspiring, they're thought-provoking. They're to get people thinking, "Wow, I wonder what else is possible?"

I believe anything is possible and everything is possible.

Here it is. It's by Raymond Charles Barker, 1954, in a book he wrote, *Treat Yourself to Life*: "Prosperity is the ability to do what you want to do at the instant you want to do it."

That's his quote.

CML: I like that. Yeah.

I think our listeners will like that, too, but you know, most people don't live that way.

Joe: No.

CML: You tell a little bit in your book how your life wasn't always like it is now. You went through a fairly long "bad luck" spell. Did you ever feel like life or the universe was a "reverse mechanism" where everything you wanted to do, it would trick you around the other way?

Joe: Yes. Yes, absolutely. You know, I tell stories. I think I've already mentioned that I starved in Dallas and shoplifted to eat. In Houston I struggled for over a dozen years and lived in a very poverty-stricken area, struggling to do my work, and feeling like nothing I was doing was working out.

I remember when I first got to Houston in the late seventies, early eighties, and I took jobs as a laborer, as a taxi driver, as a reporter, a car sales person. And I remember being phenomenally unhappy.

CML: I can identify with this.

Joe: I can remember being so unhappy that, you get to the moments where you think, "Why live?" If this is life, why do you want to keep living it?

Part of what kept me going was curiosity, because I kept thinking, "What's next? What will happen next? What will shift next?" I think that I always had some sort of vein of optimism in me, though at times, when I think back on some terrible moments when that optimism wasn't there at all, it was a bleak and as black and as dark and as pessimistic as anybody could imagine.

Yes, I've been there. And I think it's not unusual; I think we all have. It's just a matter, for many of us, we're are still stuck there. And they don't have to be. I think in Spiritual Marketing I have this one section, which I think is titled "It Can Be Another Way." That's part of my message in the book; it's part of the message I wanted my sister to have; it's part of the message other people have given me; it's part of the message I'd love for others to hear – that it can be another way. However it is for you right now, if you really don't like it, it can be another way.

CML: When you think about your life now, Joe, do you feel like you've come out the other side?

Joe: Oh, absolutely. Oh, I live a miraculous life. Right now, as I'm sitting here, I'm in this

beautiful home, on the second floor looking out over oak trees and acreage that I now own. I've got a beautiful car that I've always wanted. I've got this beautiful girlfriend. I've got new books coming out that are doing phenomenally well. I've got the income that I've wanted. And it's passive income. That was one of my goals. I didn't want just income; I wanted it to come if I was sleeping or eating or traveling or whatever.

I live a miraculous life. Every time I turn around, there's something majestic taking place. Most of the time it comes as an absolute surprise to me because I just allow it to be there.

I'm always setting intentions; I think that's part of directing fate or increasing your luck, is by stating what you want. You know, it's part of the Spiritual Marketing formula. And I'm also letting go. It's basically pointing and saying, "You know, I want to go over there," and then taking the escalator and letting it take me there.

CML: Do you feel like there was like one major factor or one deciding moment when you learned to make your life more predictable?

Joe: I would say that the one single thing that has made the most dramatic transforming difference in my life has been my work with Douglas Norment, who is the counselor, the mentor I talked about heavily in the chapter on getting clear in Spiritual Marketing.

He was to me like I was to my dog in the sense that I showed my dog that he had more freedom. Douglas has shown me that I have more power, more freedom, more influence, more energy, more impact than I ever came close to imagining in my life. And I'm a guy who came from a background – I had been a New Age journalist for years. I had interviewed gurus and healers and authors and speakers who talked about magic and miracles in your life.

CML: So you knew about all of this stuff.

Joe: I knew of it from an intellectual level. I did not experience it. That's the key difference. I had dealt with Barry and Suzie Kaufman who had healed their children and many others of autism. They have an institute in Massachusetts called A Place for Miracles. And I studied with them. I know them.

I've interviewed authors that are very famous, that talk about creating miracles in your life by learning how to control your own energy.

I knew all of this. I met these people. I had breakfast with many of them. I wrote about them. I reviewed their books.

I wasn't living it.

CML: You were like the kid with his nose pressed to the toy store window.

Joe: Oh, yeah. Now I play with those toys, and I own many of them.

CML: Wonderful.

How big a part does feeling like you deserve to have – how big a part does that play?

Joe: Fantastic. That is probably the single stumbling block for most people, and it was for me, too.

It's the idea that you deserve it, that you can have it, that you're worth it. You know, it's learning to like yourself, and even bigger, it's learning to love yourself.

You know, you and I were in Atlanta (at John Harricharan's [SuperSeminar 2001](#)) and we heard a speaker there say one of the hardest questions he ever asked was to look in the mirror and ask himself, "Do I love me?"

That is powerful. I would say that is the single most powerful thing for someone to get over, is to realize, "Okay, miracles are possible; I deserve them, too; I am good enough; I am enough to have them now."

I knew a counselor at one time who used to ask people, "How good can you stand it?" The phrase was implying that you can have more and there could be more. Do you want it? Will you accept it? Do you feel you deserve it? Are you willing to have it? Will you receive it? Will you open your arms?

Most people push it away.

CML: Yes, that's the secret, isn't it? Will you accept it?

Joe: Will you accept it, yes.

CML: Because it's there all the time. It's already in existence.

Joe: For example, people that are listening to this right now may be having a variety of thoughts going through their head, but one of the things we can ask is, "We're showing you where the escalator of life is, we're showing you a five-step process (that can even be reduced to one step) on how to create the life that you want and have the things that you want; will you accept it?"

Here it is. Will you accept it? Wow! That's a powerful question.

CML: Being human, we all have our ups and downs, our good days and our bad days. Do you ever find yourself facing a day when you feel like "Oh, I just don't want to motivate myself today," or a period when you feel like "I'm just not really having good luck"? Do

you have a set of techniques for putting yourself back on track?

Joe: Well, those don't happen very often any more, but they do still happen. I've met people who say they don't happen at all, and I look at them and think, "Really?"

But it may be the case, and maybe that's where I have to look at it in the sense of, "Well, my life could still be another way." Maybe it is possible to be happy in every single moment, every day. I have to entertain that possibility.

Right now, yes, occasionally I do have those moments where there's a slump or I feel like I'm stuck in negativity. And there is a variety of things that I do – everything from as simple as taking a nap, because I can just get the energy I need, realign myself to feel better by getting the energy, just getting a little bit of sleep. I may talk it over with somebody. I may meditate. I may do my own Five Step Process and set a new intention for how I want to feel and how I would like to experience things. There's a variety of methods that I've used, everything from the focusing method, to the option method, to Sedona's method. There's a whole bag of tricks.

CML: In other words, you do something. You do something about it.

Joe: Yes, I do something about it. I remember hearing Wayne Dyer twenty years ago say that if you're really depressed, go get a basketball and shoot hoops. And he followed it up by saying the only thing is take some physical action.

CML: Yeah, change something.

Joe: Change something. Go make a movement, do something. Shift where you're at.

CML: When you face a big new project – to most people, writing a book, especially a non-fiction book with all the research you have to do – that's a big project. Do you ever have feelings of just being overwhelmed when you first tackle something new?

Joe: Usually, when I first start it, I do. I can think back to the most recent one that required a lot of research was the book I did on P.T. Barnum, [There's a Customer Born Every Minute](#).

CML: Great book, by the way. I enjoyed that.

Joe: Thank you very much. I had a lot of fun writing it, discovered a lot about him and about myself. It's a great marketing book and a very entertaining one, and there's even a spiritual quality to that book, too.

I found that when I was hired to write it, the American Management Association, AMACOM, wanted me to write it, I immediately felt overwhelmed. I mean, here was P.T. Barnum who lived eighty very colorful, busy years, and he was far more than a

circus promoter. I mean, he was an entrepreneur, he was a publicist, he was a politician, he was a best-selling author, he was a famous speaker. He never said the line, "There's a sucker born every minute," so there was a lot of clearing up of some bad statements that had been made about him.

I thought, "How am I ever going to wrap myself around this man?"

What I had to do was just basically take it one piece at a time, one step at a time. Remember the old thing about how do you eat an elephant? You know, one bite at a time. Even though that's a bizarre thought, the concept is right in the sense that I made an outline and I thought, "Well, you know, I'll write whatever's coming up to me first, and I'll always know that I can rewrite later and edit as I feel; I'll never turn it in until I'm happy with it."

So I just started. I just started and had a blast doing it. One thing led to another; I ended up with a book that I'm very proud of.

You know, A&E on national television, the Arts & Entertainment station, did a new biography on P.T. Barnum, and at the end of it, the host said, "Are P.T. Barnum's secrets to success valid today?" And that host, on national TV, held up one book and only one book, which was my book.

And I didn't know he was doing that. Overnight, my book became a best-seller at Amazon.com. The book was completely wiped out of print because there were no copies available after that.

So I went from being overwhelmed to writing a book that was so noteworthy that it became a best-seller overnight because a news story loved it.

CML: And all you did was just break it down into bite-size pieces.

Joe: I broke it down. I remember buying a file that had about fifteen folders in it. All those folders were empty, of course, to begin with, and I just started throwing notes in it. I thought, "Okay, Barnum as a politician, I think I'll throw that all in this folder. Barnum as a speaker, I'll throw that in this folder, Barnum as an author in this folder, Barnum as a promoter in this folder. And I ended up just breaking it down into manageable tasks.

As I did my research and came up with more material, it padded the folder. Then when I started writing, I would just pull out a folder. I'd work on one at a time. I could not write such a very in-depth research oriented book in a week or two. So it was a six-month process of research and a six-month process of writing to end up with a good book, but doing it one piece at a time.

CML: In virtually everything we've talked about so far, you've mentioned lucky breaks here, lucky breaks there, and they always seem to be something unexpected. Can you tell us a

little more about how you set up to attract lucky breaks?

Joe: You know, I like the word "luck" but there's also a feeling that goes with the word that implies you don't have control. And I think we have far more control than what we expect. There's a phrase I heard from Robert Fritz, another author I like. He wrote a book called *Creating*, and I forget the name of his course that he teaches, but his phrase is, "You are the predominant creative force in your life."

I can go even further (and I still struggle with this a little bit), but I have a quote in [Spiritual Marketing](#), too, that says, "Everything that happens in your life happens because of the magnet in you." Everything. Now, that one's a tough one to accept because most of us have things that happen to us that we think, "Oh no, I didn't want that, I didn't bring that, I didn't cause that." But I'm really feeling that on some level, yeah, we pulled it to us. On some level, for some lesson, we did.

CML: Maybe, if we'll get around to accepting responsibility for the bad stuff, then maybe we can finally accept more good stuff in our lives.

Joe: I think that's it. I think it is accepting all of it, and then using it to grow.

CML: Speaking of growing, what books or what teachers have helped you to grow?

Joe: Wow, there've been a lot. I mentioned I have a giant library here. I would say, clearly, a book that came out in the fifties by Claude Bristol called *The Magic of Believing* was a book that changed my life. I read it when I was a kid, fifteen or sixteen years old, reading such a powerful book. That book was about creating your own reality, though I don't think he used those words. He talked about the "if you believe it you can achieve it" type of mentality. *The Magic of Believing* is so powerful it has gone through dozens of editions, and it's still in print today. So *The Magic of Believing* deeply influenced me.

The works of Barry Neil Kaufman, who I mentioned earlier about healing his son and some other children of autism. He has lots of books out, and those have deeply influenced me.

Boy! There are so many. I've got a lot value from the works of Jerry and Esther Hicks, who channel a spiritual being, or teacher, or mentor, however you want to view that, called Abraham.

And I've worked with a lot of belief therapists. There's one named Mandy Evans who has a book called *Traveling Free* about dissolving the beliefs in the past that are holding you in old patterns.

There's an old out-of-print book called *The Book of EST*. *The Book of EST* was based on the famous Werner Erhard training that was controversial in the sixties and seventies. Well, *The Book of EST* kind of brings that seminar to life, and I remember it impacting

me in a way few books had.

Off the top of my head, those are some of the books that got to me.

CML: So there were a lot of steps along the way.

Joe: Oh definitely. A lot of steps along the way.

CML: Have there also been certain people who personally in your life, either knowingly or unknowingly served as mentors to you?

Joe: Yes. I don't know if you mean people I've actually met . . .

CML: Yes.

Joe: Well, Douglas, for example, is one of them. Douglas Norment is the counselor I worked with. He's no longer available, so I haven't been able to use him as a resource. Mandy Evans, who I mentioned wrote the book *Traveling Free*, is around, and she is a beliefs counselor who has been a wonderful friend, a wonderful mentor, a wonderful counselor, a wonderful freeing agent for me personally.

I've probably learned from everybody I've ever met. I hope I have, anyway.

CML: Could you tell us a little bit about your experiences with some of these people?

Joe: Wow. I've got to think about it for a second. I guess I can mention one of the ones with Douglas.

One of the very first ones I ever did with him, and I didn't really know what kind of work he did. He said it was energy work and he could help change the things that were going on in me, so that I could have new experiences happen in my life. And when I went to see him the first time, I was struggling. I mean I was with a wreck of a car. I never knew if it was going to make it someplace or it was going to have to be pushed.

CML: I've been there. Yeah.

Joe: Yeah, we've gone through that, too, and right now I can remember the first time I went to him. I was driving that clunker and it started to stall as I was driving. I remember saying out loud to the car, "Look, you can stop if you want to. I'm going to walk to Douglas or I'm going to hitch a ride to Douglas, or you're going to get me to Douglas, but I'm going there."

Well, it got me there. And through my work with Douglas, which was a lot of work about cleansing and clearing the negative beliefs – I wanted to get a new car, for example, at that time, and I thought it was impossible. My credit was bad, I didn't really

have an income, I was self-employed and struggling, and I thought there's no way. So he helped me explore that. We explored everything from "do I want it?" (yes), "do I think I deserve it?" (well, I wasn't so sure so we worked on that).

Then we worked on things like what does it mean if I have a new car? Well, one thing that came up was "what's my father going to say?" How would he feel? Well, he was 2,000 miles away and I hadn't seen him in years, but he was still in my head as a voice, as a belief.

CML: Uh huh, I think everybody has a father and a mother in their head.

Joe: That's right. And most of us – you know, the parents have done wonderful things by getting us to where we're at, but we also have to get to the point where we get beyond where their limitations were.

I am now at that place, but I had to go through some help with Douglas, for example, to remove those limiting beliefs, to realize my father has his own limiting beliefs, and do I want to keep them or not. Well, I didn't.

Not only did I end up buying a new car, and a year or so later another new car, and another year or so later another new car, another year or so later another new car – at this point I'm driving the car of my most glorious dreams. I'm driving a BMW Z3, which is a 2.8 hotrod, that I've never had so much fun driving in my entire life.

Well, this is the same guy who was driving a clunker and my big concern at the time was, will it make it home? And I thought it was impossible.

CML: And you never would have conceived of this back then.

Joe: I would have thought it was preposterous. I would have thought it was insane. Well, now I'm at the point where I think, "Oh no, why don't I go wash it?" It's cool, because I'm having fun with it.

You know, to answer your question, it's kind of hard to describe some of the experiences with different counselors and teachers. With Douglas it's very metaphysical and it's very energy oriented. But for me, we're in a belief-driven universe, and as we change our personal beliefs, we can have more of the things we want and we can be far, far happier.

CML: Looking at it from the other side of the relationship, why do you think somebody would decide to mentor other people? What's in it for them?

Joe: Oh, good question. Years ago, I took a seminar with Donna Fisher and Sandy Vilas and it was on networking. It was on people helping other people to get mutual results. They asked this question that was similar to what you asked: "Why would anybody want to help?"

I think it was Donna who said, "How do you feel when somebody asks you for help?" Well, you usually feel good. You usually want to help. There's usually a sense of – I don't know – a natural giving. So I think on one level it feels good for these people to help other people. And I think on another level they're giving back when they have gotten.

CML: They're completing a circuit.

Joe: They're completing a circuit – right, they're completing the circle.

CML: Good answer.

The way you live today, do you feel like you're living a totally free-form life, or is your life fairly carefully planned out now?

Joe: That's a very interesting question. I would say I have intentions. I have long-term and short-term intentions, but I remain open to change. So in other words, it's a little bit like what I mentioned earlier about I'll point in a certain direction and say "I want to go over there." And then I'm going to ride the escalator to get me to it, or to get me to something better than it.

So that requires me to have a sense of where I would like to go while also having a sense of, "You know, if I get nudged to go over here, it's okay." Because over here might be far better than what I thought was over there.

I'm talking in somewhat general terms because I'm not sure how to answer it more specifically. I am not a person who carefully plans out my day, my life or any of that. I do have intentions.

I learned from Abraham about segment intending, which means you can break up your day into segments, and throughout those segments you can have intentions for each one. For example, oh, forty-five minutes ago, before we started this phone conversation, I had the intention that I was going to give an inspiring, informative, articulate, up-beat conversation with you, that you and I would have a great time doing this, and that the people who listen to it down the road will learn something that will make a massive difference in their lives – they'll get more of what they want, they'll be happier in each moment, something will shift for them in a wonderful way.

I set that as an intention. But I didn't go and map out, "Well, I've got to make sure I say this, I've got to make sure I answer a question in this particular way, and there's really this quote – I've got to make sure I say this quote." I didn't do any of that. Out of my intention for where I want to go, a lot of these other things will just bubble up.

You've asked me some questions that have led to things I didn't know I was going to say,

but they came out, and you've even acknowledged once or twice like, "Good answer," and I thought, "Well, I didn't know it was a good answer. I didn't even know I was going to say it."

So I'm having an intention, but I also have that fifth step about letting go to something better.

CML: If this were music, it would be like your intention is the theme, and your performance is the jazz that results. Something like that?

Joe: That's a way of describing it, yes.

CML: Do you believe every single person – every person – can improve their life and their luck?

Joe: Absolutely.

CML: No exceptions?

Joe: No, no, no. No exceptions. No. I can't imagine any exceptions.

I know that there will be many people who will refuse the possibility, but I think it goes back to if they accept it, if they accept what's being offered, if they believe it, if they feel they're worth it. You know, all of that internal stuff can be changed. Those are all thoughts.

Those are all thoughts; you can change your thoughts. I know I've also been at the place where I thought, "You can't change your thoughts, not that easily, nah, uh uh."

Well, that's a thought. That very belief that you can't change your thoughts or it's not easy is a belief. You can change that, and then you're back to, "Well, I guess I can be happy, I can experience the life that I want, I can have miracles." Yes, every person can improve their life and their luck.

CML: We talked a little while ago about feeling like you deserve good things. What's the very best way for a person to help themselves feel like they deserve good luck or success or good things in life? Let's touch on this again.

Joe: That's a good question. I would say possibly sitting down and remembering some of the good things you've done for yourself or somebody else. Possibly remembering some of your achievements, your accomplishments, and those don't have to be a New York Times best-seller if you wrote a book, or you won a Nobel Prize. They may happen to be something like you helped a neighbor in an emergency, or you made a phone call to your mother and it made a difference. Those kind of things for one.

And then, I would say do something for yourself. In other words, take the bubble bath, or go to the movie that you always wanted to see, or buy yourself that nice dinner, or whatever it happens to be.

CML: It doesn't have to be big and earthshaking.

Joe: No, not at all. It's these little tiny things that send a signal to yourself, almost unconsciously, that say, "I'm okay, I'm worth it, I love myself." It can be the most small, tiniest experience that you and I would think is insignificant, but in some way is important to the person doing it.

CML: Anything to break the momentum in the wrong direction and start the momentum in the right direction, anything, no matter how small. This is what you're saying, right?

Joe: Yeah, it's the baby steps that just lead to bigger steps.

CML: For a person who's up to his neck in problems, what do you suggest they do first? And why?

Joe: If a person is up to their neck in problems, I think they should seek a mentor. I think they should seek somebody who's already successful at what they want to be successful at.

CML: Won't that mentor laugh at them, though?

Joe: No. No, that's the wrong mentor, if they do. I suppose that's an outside chance, but I think when you start to look for the people that will help, like in the back of my Spiritual Marketing I list six or seven different counselors that are available. You know, Napoleon Hill talked about the power of having a mastermind group. I heard a story the other day. I think it was about Tony Robbins, the famous speaker. Somebody was complaining that they have a mastermind group and they're only making \$5 million a year.

CML: Oh, poor guy.

Joe: Yeah, poor guy. He's making \$5 million and he wants to make more, but he feels like he's got that leash. He's opened his leash, but he's only opened it to \$5 million a year. So he's not going as far as he can see; he's only going as far as he feels he can walk. So Tony Robbins says, "Do you have a mastermind group?"

And the man said, "Yes, I'm in a mastermind group. We meet weekly and we have various people in there, and we all try to mentor each other."

Tony Robbins said, "How much is the most wealthy person in there making?"

He said, "\$5 million a year."

Well, Tony said, "That's the problem, then." He told the man, "I'm in a mastermind group, and I make hundreds of millions of dollars a year, and the most successful person in my mastermind group makes \$500 million a year. You need to have another mentor."

So I think we need to have a mentor who's already successful at what you want to be successful at. You began this conversation by asking me about copywriting. One of the mentors who helped me the most when I was struggling and trying to learn the craft was Bob Bly. Bob Bly has written thirty-five books. He has been a prolific advertising genius. He has always answered my questions, he wrote books, he sent me books, he sold me materials, he was always there for me. I met him only once a couple of years ago, and I felt like a little kid who met his superhero.

I told him that. I wrote him a note and said, I felt like a little kid meeting my superhero for the first time. That's how it felt. He gave without wanting anything in return, but that was a mentor, already successful in the field I wanted to be successful at.

CML: He's a great inspiration.

Joe: And he has been to me, and he still is.

I send out a monthly newsletter. People can go to [Mr. Fire dot com](http://Mr.Fire.com), my website and sign up for it, but I sent out the most recent one, and Bob Bly wrote me a note and said, "This was the best newsletter you've ever written. How in the world did you ever do it?"

I wrote back and said, "All I do is follow what you do." He's inspiring to me. So to answer your question about being neck-deep in problems, I think that getting somebody who's already out of it to help you is important.

And there are coaches out there. That's another word for a mentor or a counselor. There's nothing wrong with having a coach. You and I met one of the coaches in Atlanta when we were there.

CML: Yeah, [Don McAvinchey](http://DonMcAvinchey.com).

Joe: That's right. He's available. Help is available, and maybe this is another part of it; being willing to ask for help. Being willing to raise your hand and say, "You know, I can't do it on my own, will somebody help?"

CML: And if you've asked for help and somebody laughs at you, as you said, you've asked the wrong person. Move up, move up.

Joe: Yeah, move up is right.

CML: What was the hardest thing in your life to change? And why?

Joe: Probably coming to the place where I felt like I deserve the things I wanted. Probably learning to love myself, learning to like myself, learning to accept myself, learning to be okay with who I am and where I am, while knowing I'm changing and going for who I would like to be. A sense of deserving, a sense of "it's okay to have the things I want in my life." It's not going to hurt other people, it's not going to take away from other people, it's okay if it's more than what my parents had. A sense of deserving was probably the hardest thing, and once I'd taken care of that, more and more miracles in a magical universe became mine.

CML: Do you feel like you've finally arrived at something like a coasting phase? Or are you still on an uphill track, and you're still learning lots of new stuff?

Joe: Well, I'm still learning, but I'm not on the uphill track. I'm coasting. I'm on that escalator. I've found the escalator, I know where it's at, I get on it every day, and I coast.

CML: How to go uphill without climbing.

Joe: That's the phrase. I'm going uphill without climbing. Yeah, I'm not falling down on rocks and getting all cut up. I'm going uphill.

CML: Does learning get any easier for you, the farther you go?

Joe: Yes, it does get easier. And there's a saying. This is really stimulating, and you may have to chew on it for a little bit, but I have it in my [Spiritual Marketing](#) book. It's something Douglas used to say. That is, "If you get the lessons, you don't need the experiences."

If you get the lessons, you don't need the experiences. So many of us are suffering, and we will suffer until we get the lesson of that suffering. If we got the lesson of it before the suffering, we would never have the suffering.

CML: This is important.

Joe: This is very major. This is breakthrough information. I mean, it's going to be a little tough for a lot of people who hear it for the first time, and even after that, to understand it and accept it. But I love it. I've reminded myself of that. You know, if there were any of those bumps in the road or the old dark times, or a day where I feel like I'm in a slump, I may have to look at it and say, "Okay, what's the lesson? What am I trying to tell myself? What do I need to learn here?" Because the quicker I learn it and I get it, the quicker I'm out of it. If you get the lessons, you don't need the experience.

CML: I know that for most people, learning new things can be pretty stressful. Do you think we ever reach a point where we can just relax and enjoy every – every – new learning experience?

Joe: I think that's the definition of enlightenment. I think that's enjoying each moment. That's being aware of each moment. That's appreciating each moment. That's living in each moment. That's seizing each moment. I absolutely do believe we can relax and enjoy it and learn in each moment. It probably comes from one of the greatest challenges of all time, being here now.

Most of us are thinking back to the last question you asked, for my answer, or moving forward to "what's he going to ask next?" but not right here where my breath is. Where I am. Where you are. You're in Japan. I'm out in the hill country of Texas. In this moment is a shared, magical miraculous, wonderful experience that we can relax and enjoy as we're learning.

CML: You just said something which, the implications of that just kind of blow me away. You didn't say it directly, but I'm going to rephrase this.

Joe: Yeah, tell me. I'm interested.

CML: The enlightened person doesn't know everything, but the enlightened person can relax and enjoy learning new stuff.

Joe: Oh, you're right. That's a massive statement. There is no "knowing everything." That's an impossibility, in my mind. There is no knowing everything.

We talked about copywriting. I'm supposed to be a hotshot copywriter. I don't know everything about copywriting. I supposedly know about metaphysics and I wrote about spiritual marketing. I don't know everything about that. I never will.

I wrote one of the most well respected [books on P.T. Barnum](#). I'm considered a P.T. Barnum expert. I'm not P.T. Barnum; I don't know everything about his life. There are entire holes I'll never know anything about.

My goodness, it's an ego trip to think we are going to know everything. We have to let that go so that we can enjoy everything that we can know in this moment.

CML: Do you have any advice for people who don't really like to learn new stuff?

Joe: Yeah, be happy.

CML: Be happy.

Joe: Be happy.

I learned from Barry Neil Kaufman in his research (and it's all about being happy now), most of his research is saying that the miracles come from being happy. He said that happy people (and this is the one step: I mentioned earlier that Spiritual Marketing has

five steps to it and I can reduce it all to one step, this is so profound), the idea that Barry's research showed that happy people tend to go for and get their goals more often than unhappy people.

Unhappy people tend to use unhappiness as a type of motivator. They get angry enough, they'll take action. They get unhappy enough, they'll take action. What he found is that they just get unhappy, they don't take any action. Or if they do take any action, they don't achieve anything. They're going up the rocky road; they're not going up the escalator.

CML: They're just dodging rocks.

Joe: They're dodging rocks, dodging bullets (perceived bullets), but they're not achieving what they want. Happy people tend to get more of what they want, and even when they don't, they're still happy.

CML: Just one or two more things. Let's turn to the future now, totally different subject. Many teachers say the earth experience is about to change really significantly. How do you envision our daily life changing in the next fifty or one hundred years, or the next five hundred years or so? This is far out stuff.

Joe: It is far out because I have no idea. I don't know.

I'm going to say first that human nature is never going to change, and that's wonderful that it won't. People are still going to be moved by their passions. They're still going to want love and money and romance and health and happiness. All of those key, core emotions, those drives are never, ever going to change. They've never changed since the beginning of time; they're never going to change.

The things that will change will be the technology and our life style, our way of living. And I believe it's going to become more fascinating, more interesting, more exciting than ever before. If somebody had said seven or eight or nine years ago that there would be an Internet, I didn't know it was coming. That was only, what, within the last ten years? How am I going to predict fifty to a hundred years? Or five hundred? Something so fantastic is going to take place that the most brilliant science fiction writer can't even paint it because he can't even imagine it. I'd say hold on for a wonderful ride.

CML: I like your vision of the future. Do you have any final words of advice to our listeners who may still be floundering around trying to get out of the starting gate?

Joe: Well, sure. My self-serving bit of advice is go get [Spiritual Marketing at Amazon.com](http://SpiritualMarketingatAmazon.com) and enjoy that. But the larger, more global, less self-serving advice would be, you know – maybe I can say it this way: people have asked me what I think I owe my successes to. And I said (and this is what I would advise people to do), I follow my enthusiasms. I follow my enthusiasms. It's very close to the Joseph Campbell phrase of "follow your bliss."

All I've done is, I was excited about P.T. Barnum so I wrote about P.T. Barnum. I was excited about Bruce Barton, an advertising genius who is long gone, and I wrote about him for [The Seven Lost Secrets of Success](#).

I've been fascinated with spiritual marketing, so I wrote about that, primarily for my sister. I have followed my enthusiasms. So I would say, follow your bliss. Follow the things that excite you. Follow the things that you get enthusiastic about. Go there.

CML: Great.

For our listeners, you can visit Joe's main website at [Mr. Fire dot com](#), and you can get Joe's new book, *Spiritual Marketing*, at [First Books dot com](#) and now also at [Amazon dot com](#) where he gives his very special take on life, luck and success in the new book, *Spiritual Marketing*.

Joe, we've used up all our time. I want to thank you again for speaking with us today.

Joe: Thank you. I've had a marvelous experience.

Joe Vitale is a world famous copywriter, marketing specialist, and author of eleven books, including: *Spiritual Marketing*, *There's A Customer Born Every Minute*, and the best-selling e-books *Hypnotic Writing* and *Advanced Hypnotic Writing*. He also created the best-selling audiotape series for Nightingale-Conant, *The Power of Outrageous Marketing*. He is the creator of the Guaranteed Outcome Marketing formula. Joe's main website is at <http://www.mrfire.com>, and his books are carried by <http://www.amazon.com>.

Chapter 8

Interview with Yanik Silver

Creator of *Instant Sales Letters* and *Instant Internet Profits*

May 4, 2001

The Invisible Path to Success

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Command More Luck (CML): We have with us today Yanik Silver, one of the rising stars among an impressive generation of bright young Internet entrepreneurs. Yanik runs a number of successful websites including [Instant Internet Profits](#) and [Instant Sales Letters](#).

Yanik, thanks for visiting with us today.

Yanik Silver: No problem, Charles, glad to be here.

CML: For readers who are not familiar with your name, could you give a bit of background about yourself, your business and your career?

Yanik: Yeah, my career. That's a funny thing. I'm twenty-seven and live out of Maryland right now, married. Came to the Internet, just like any other person, not really knowing anything about the Internet – nobody's really born an Internet marketer.

I started in the world of direct marketing. Let me back up. I actually started in the world of face-to-face sales and telemarketing sales. I used to work for my dad's company selling medical equipment. And when I was about fourteen he put me on the phones telemarketing for latex gloves, I believe. So I got an early start in sales.

Then when I was sixteen, he essentially said, "Okay, you've got your license. Go make some cold calls." So here I am, a sixteen year old kid going off to try and talk to some doctors about buying medical equipment.

CML: How'd you do?

Yanik: Pretty good, actually. Considering my age and my peer group, I always had the most money out of my friends, and I always worked my way. I worked four or five hours through high school and then probably about twenty hours a week during college. I went to college here at University of Maryland, and his company was right down the road, so I worked about twenty hours a week there. I was doing pretty good as a twenty year old

kid selling medical equipment.

I was also in charge of all his marketing and advertising, and that's actually how I came into direct marketing. One of my customers, a doctor, gave me a Jay Abraham tape. I was about seventeen when he gave me that tape.

CML: There was a piece of luck.

Yanik: Yeah, I guess that is a piece of luck. I never really thought of it that way.

And that kind of opened my eyes to what was possible and what's available out there, because if I look back on the advertising I was doing before then for the company, it was horrendous. So I started using some of these techniques and things like that. I think Jay has a really terrific grasp on fundamentals and on concepts, and that's probably the best place I could possibly have hoped to start with because he's got a broad brush.

CML: So you came to sales really early in life. I know an awful lot of people will do just about anything – they'll walk through fire to stay out of sales.

Yanik: I think sales really gave me an edge because what I do now is a lot of copywriting, and the best definition I know for successful copywriting is "salesmanship in print," though we're not really doing that anymore in print now; it's on the Web, on the screen. But it's the same general idea and if you can sell somebody face-to-face, you can use the same principles to sell them en mass through your words on paper.

CML: You're pretty well known for kind of a hard-headed approach to business. You just jump right in there, you don't seem to hang back and wait to be persuaded.

And yet, the things I've read about your career, I've gathered that there have been break points, interesting little jump points, where you'd get a new idea or the like, and often it came through just good fortune like the doctor who gave you a tape and introduced you to a whole new world of ideas. Do you have any kind of working definition for luck or fortune or success that you use in your daily life?

Yanik: Yeah, I do. My favorite definition is from Earl Nightingale. We'll probably talk a lot more about him. But his definition is "when opportunity meets preparedness, that's luck."

And I think my getting onto the Internet when I did – about February 2000 when I went fulltime on the Internet with the Instant Sales Letters – my preparedness was all my background in direct marketing. That's really what the Internet is mainly about, and most people don't do that. So I had those skills already.

Taking from Earl Nightingale again where he said you could become an expert on any subject by reading just an hour a day for, I believe it was three years. I might get it

wrong; maybe it was five years. So I thought to myself, what happens if I read for two hours a day on a subject? And that's what I did.

Probably just like you, I have tons and tons of books and resources and things like that. I don't hesitate to invest in my education. I probably spend about, oh I don't know, \$10,000 a year at least on my education.

CML: This is probably above average for the typical population.

Yanik: Yeah, I think so. But if you want to do something that's extraordinary, I think you can't be like the average person.

CML: There's a price. Is it a negative price to you?

Yanik: Not to me. I mean, I love learning.

CML: Out of curiosity, how much time a week do you spend watching TV?

Yanik: Very little. It depends. I'm a pretty avid ice hockey fan. If it's playoff time like it was just recently, where my team, the Washington Cats, got eliminated in the first round, now I don't even watch any more TV. I watch maybe three hours a week.

CML: This also is a little different from the national average.

Yanik: Yeah, I don't remember what it is – I think it's like twenty-six hours a week, the last I heard.

CML: If somebody would read even half of that time, they'd be an expert in – what – three months?

Yanik: They would at least be very well skilled and very well versed in that field.

CML: And prepared when luck hits.

Yanik: Exactly. And you know, when an opportunity arises, if you're not prepared, you're not going to see it as an opportunity. And you're not going to have the wherewithall to believe that you can take advantage of that opportunity.

CML: So there's an outside component of success or good luck, and there's an inside component. The preparedness.

I know you've had some really outstanding successes. You've already told us a little bit about it. And you're still in your twenties. Have you ever gone through a bad-luck period when it seemed like life was just trying to thwart you in everything you tried to do?

Yanik: I don't know if I'd call it a bad-luck period, but there was definitely a time when I wasn't feeling too good about myself and I was in – not a slump but even worse than that – it was right before I quit my job working for my father. In a family company that's kind of hard to do. It just got to the point where I really didn't enjoy getting up in the morning to go to the office. I would come in kind of late, or right at the latest moment I possibly could and leave at the earliest possible moment. And throughout most of the day I would just really hate what I was doing.

CML: Would you care to venture a guess how many people live entire years and years like that?

Yanik: I have no idea, but I'm sure it's a lot. It's probably a matter of thinking that there's nothing else out there, or you get into a comfort zone, or you get into a rut, whatever it is.

CML: I'm not really sure why people call it "comfort zone." Because it's not really comfortable. Maybe a "familiarity zone."

Yanik: Right. People are creatures of habit.

CML: A habit zone, yeah.

Yanik: A habit zone, right, that's good. So this is what they do every day. They get up, fight traffic, yell at the idiot driver in front of them, go to work, spill coffee on the way to work, get pissed off at the idiot guy working in the cubical next to them, and go home, get into a fight with the wife or whatever. Then they do it all over again.

CML: What did you do to get out of that slump period, or that unpleasant period?

Yanik: The biggest thing I did was evaluate what I wanted. I have a sheet in front of me that I look at every day. It's inside my planner. It says: "What Do I Want?" One of the things is, I want to be happy working where I want to be working; working on projects that I want to be working on.

So I came to that conclusion and I said, "This isn't making me happy." I know it would probably make my father happy if I took over the company or whatnot, but it's not making me happy. I just said I have to get out.

CML: So you did something.

Yanik: Exactly. I did do something, and at that time (for a little more background), I was selling an information product to cosmetic surgeons based on my background in the medical field. I was selling them a manual on how to market their practice better. You know, I was kind of puttering along, and I could see that we were making some sales. We sold the manual for approximately \$1,000 a pop, so it didn't take too many sales to be over what I was making in my daily salary.

I thought, why do I need to torture myself selling here when I could focus on this more.

CML: Was there any unexpected piece of good luck or some unexpected event that kind of helped you along there, or was it just purely a decision?

Yanik: A lot of it was decision. Some of it was timing, because – well, Missy's my wife now – we had just gotten engaged at that moment when I was quitting, and that opened up an opportunity for us to move in together and for me to have an office out of our house here. So I guess it had something to do with timing there.

CML: So things just sort of came together for you at a good time.

Yanik: Yes they did.

CML: Because you were prepared.

Yanik: Yeah, I think so, and mostly because I made the decision that I'm not going to be doing that anymore.

CML: Do you feel like you've come out the other side of that period now?

Yanik: Oh yeah, absolutely. Some people talk about being – athletes talk about being in the zone or in the flow – and things have just been going extremely well for me right now. I attribute a lot of that, actually, to, well, Earl Nightingale again. We'll talk about him. He calls it "cheerful expectancy." So I cheerfully expected to do well in the Internet as soon as I got on there. And I think a lot of people go there . . .

CML: Sounds like the opposite of worry.

Yanik: I think so. Yeah, I think it is the opposite of worry. I thought, "Okay, I've got all the pieces. I know what I'm doing with direct marketing. I've studied the people that are making money online right now. I know I can do the same thing.

CML: What do you feel was the major factor in learning to make your life more predictable? Or have you always felt like you had some control in your life.

Yanik: The biggest thing is that I always try and take responsibility for all my actions and for all the places I am in my life and everything that comes into my life.

CML: You don't spend a lot of time griping.

Yanik: No, I try not to, and if I do, I try and notice it and cancel that out immediately. I always feel responsible for where I am now. I think my thinking up to now has brought me to where I am, and wherever I'm going to be going in the future, my thinking to this point is

going to take me there.

I think it has a lot to do with yourself. People that blame the environment or the economy or any number of things; I mean there's no shortage of excuses you can come up with.

CML: The most successful guy in the world has an environment, too.

Yanik: Absolutely.

CML: I hear so many people on the Internet say they can't think of anything to sell. Yet, every time I turn around it seems like you've got another new and very successful product. What's your latest product?

Yanik: Well, the latest one, just released a couple of months ago during Valentine's Day, is called [Autoresponder Magic dot com](#).

Charles:
Autoresponder Magic dot com.

Yanik: Right. With that one, in about seventy-two hours, we made \$10,000 net.

CML: Holy cow!

Yanik: That was good. With zero cost. That was pretty neat. And it only took me approximately two weeks to put it together.

Then we have a new project coming out by the end of May that, hopefully, will do the same thing.

One of the big ways that I get ideas is simply rearranging things that are working right now.

CML: Rearranging things that are working right now. Can you go into that a little more?

Yanik: Absolutely. My main flagship site is called Instant Sales Letters, featuring sales letters and templates, things like that. They've been a perennial best-seller. With business people, there have always been books with business letters in them, or CD-ROMs with them, and all kinds of things. So obviously that's a good seller.

Then I incorporated sales letters into it. There are some other CD-ROMs out there that have sales letters and things like that, but I've looked at them and if you ever used them, I don't think they'd sell anything.

So what I did is, I took a lot of the sales letters that I've used firsthand, that I know work,

and simply incorporated them into this tool for people. From my past experience with the doctors, I used to give them pre-done newsletters they could send out to their patients. I used to give them pre-done ads, letters, things like that, and they really loved that stuff.

People deep-down are lazy. I'm lazy, you're lazy, we're all lazy. It's just to a different extent, and the more you can give people something to use as a tool, the greater I think your success is going to be. I try and focus a lot on the tools. And that's how the idea for Instant Sales Letters came up.

CML: So that was an idea that anybody could have had.

Yanik: I think so – if they had some particular knowledge in sales letters and direct marketing and just kind of kept their eyes open for what goes on.

CML: Do you have some kind of special brainstorming process you rely on? Or do your ideas just come from things you hear customers asking for?

Yanik: A lot of times it's just ideas that kind of pop into my head from really just being aware of different things going on. My wife will tell you, I have no shortage of ideas. I have a little "idea journal" that I keep, and I just write down things in there, you know, some good, some bad, who knows?

CML: Do you ever just play around with ideas, just for comic effect?

Yanik: I probably do that. I would probably just tell my friends about it. Or, I can think of some things. I was thinking the other day, I told my trainer who I was working out with, I said, "You know what I'd love to do? I'd love to (somebody's going to take this idea and run with it and make a million) I'd love to send people off to like a Rock-n-roll Boot Camp where they're like a rock-n-roll star for a week." The groupies, the drugs, etc. You know, make it some outrageous amount like \$50,000 or \$100,000. You know how there is baseball fantasy camp or whatever fantasy camp. Well, this is Rock-n-roll Fantasy Camp.

CML: Rock Star Fantasy Camp. Hey, you know what? I think that's a great idea.

Yanik: So if anyone uses that, please send me a commission check.

CML: A finder's fee or something.

Yanik: I definitely have stuff like that all the time.

Actually, there's another idea. Someone else is probably going to use this one. I was playing golf the other day. I'm a very big hacker, pretty bad on the golf course, but I was talking to one of my friends while we were playing, and I don't know why, but the

conversation turned to strip bars. He said, "You know, why don't we combine the two? Why don't we have topless girls driving around in the beer truck on the golf course?"

There's everything for men right there.

CML: Or, let's see, topless shoeshine stands.

Yanik: Sure, you could definitely run with that. I mean they have topless car washes that I believe do really well in California.

CML: It's been a while since I've been to California.

Yanik: Yeah, so it's not that much of an "out-there" idea.

CML: Now what could we do with that for the ladies?

Yanik: I don't know. They'd have to have a separate course with the Chippendale guys.

CML: How do you recognize when a new product idea is a really good one? Do you have some kind of procedure for testing your ideas, or do you just somehow know, hey, this one's going to be a winner?

Yanik: A lot of it is that gut feeling. Also, I rely on Missy's intuition. She's my wife. I'll run it by her, and I like to hear what she says. Also, just the fact that, if I'm enthusiastic about it after a week or two weeks, because I'm always enthusiastic about an idea as soon as I write it down.

CML: Staying power.

Yanik: Yeah, exactly. Staying power, because a project is usually not going to take only two weeks like Autoresponder Magic. It'll usually take a little bit longer. And you've got to have that enthusiasm and staying power to stick with it. If you're not excited about it, you're not going to be energetic enough to get moving on the idea. So I'll go back to my idea notebook and say, "Okay, which of these am I still excited about?" And also, I evaluate it on time involved and potential reward. Some practical things and also some gut things.

CML: Do you run it past other friends or do you keep your ideas pretty close to the vest?

Yanik: Very close to the vest. There are not too many people I care to share it with because most people are negative. They'll say, "Aw, that'll never work. That's not going to work. No way."

CML: Good point.

Yanik: That's one of the reasons I got out of my father's company because a lot of the people I worked with were like that. I find a lot of people are pretty negative. What's that analogy of when you get two crabs in a bucket? When one tries to climb out, the other one won't let it climb out. It'll grab it with its claws. That's the way a lot of people are. For some unknown reason they don't want to see you succeed on the plane that you're currently on and that you share with them. It's a rare breed of successful people that encourage you and are positive about your ideas.

CML: Do you ever have days when you feel like "I just don't want to motivate myself today." Or do you have a set of techniques for putting yourself back on track when that happens?

Yanik: Yeah, I definitely have those days, and my wife's family has a term for that; it's pretty funny. They call it "feeling blibby-blobby." I think it's something they made up, I don't know what it is, but it's when they're kind of in the dumps and feeling a little funky.

So, yeah, I get that on occasion, and usually the main reason is because I'm working on something I don't want to be working on, like I'm doing administrative tasks that I hate – some dumb paperwork or something like that. That just happened pretty recently. I have three or four projects that I'm kind of in the middle of or starting and excited about, but then I have some other administrative tasks that I've been doing lately. All I did was clear my calendar and said okay how am I going to move forward on these ideas that I have. That got me in a much better mood and got me out of the doldrums.

CML: How do you see the difference between success and luck?

Yanik: Hmmm. Well, I already gave you my definition for luck, which is Earl Nightingale's.

That's a tough one. Success and luck. I believe we make our own luck. Successful people more so than anyone else. I don't know if there's such a thing as happenstance or haphazard events. I think a lot of things are meant to be, and they're really directed in a way by your subconscious, which is a goal-striving mechanism. When you're in tune with what your goals are, all of a sudden something might pop up which seems like a lucky break, but really you were just more perceptive to it because you have an intention and you realize what you wanted, and it just makes things clearer that way.

CML: You mentioned earlier about books and tapes and so on. Which ones in particular, or which teachers in particular do you feel have helped you grow the most?

Yanik: I've got a lot of them. On the marketing side, it's got to be Dan Kennedy, Ted Nicholas and a bunch of other top copywriters like Gary Halbert, and all the old masters like Claude Hopkins, Maxwell Sackheim. I really like Sackheim's stuff because he actually shares my birthdate and place of birth. Which, I don't know what that means, but it's pretty interesting. He was also a guy from Russia. I was born in Russia. My parents immigrated over here when I was two and a half. He was born in Russia and I believe was even approximately the same height as me. I don't know what that means, but I

really like his stuff.

As far as personal development, Earl Nightingale for sure, Jim Rohn – I'm just starting to learn from him. Our friend John Harricharan, who I've become pretty good friends with lately. He has some incredible messages. There's this [Power Pause](#) that really rolls up and boils down all the success literature I've ever read.

CML: He makes it so simple.

Yanik: Yeah. And Napoleon Hill for sure. And Maxwell Maltz's *Psycho cybernetics*.

CML: Have there ever been people, actual persons in your life, who either knowingly or unknowingly served as mentors to you along the way?

Yanik: My father is probably my first mentor. He's definitely one of my heroes. He came to this country with \$356 in his pocket, and he started his own business about a year and a half or two years after we got here, I believe, and grew it now to a \$2.5 million company. So he's definitely my first mentor, and he gave me the "entrepreneurial bug," if you will.

Project number twenty on my list is a book about the immigrant success factor. There are actual facts that say that immigrants are, I believe, five times as likely to become millionaires as American-born citizens. There's a lot to learn from there.

He definitely gave me a hard work ethic, which I'm trying to shake now since I'm on the Internet working; I'm trying to automate everything where I don't have to work sixty hours a week. So he was definitely my first mentor.

Then, mostly people that I've read their works and tried to study their lives as much as I could. The people that I mentioned, they've just been mentors to me through books, really.

CML: There are people who actually physically meet with other people on a formal basis and become actual mentors. Why do you think somebody would decide to mentor another person? What's in it for them?

Yanik: The biggest reason, I think, is to see someone succeed or to help them grow as individuals. You get just a good feeling from that. I'm not saying that I'm a mentor to someone right now, but the trainer, the guy that I work out with, he and I are on the same wavelength, and I always give him the CDs that I listen to and the audiotapes and things like that. He really appreciates it, and he gets a lot out of it. That makes it fulfilling for me. I also have a friend that I give some tapes to, and I like to share as much knowledge as I possibly can with people.

I think it also stems from a natural inclination some people have to teach. I think I have that inclination because nothing is more fulfilling to me than when I get an e-mail from

someone that says that they read my information and it has changed their life. Or they listened to an interview that I conducted and it changed their life. I got an e-mail like that the other day and I was like, "Wow, that's pretty cool."

CML: Yeah, that's a nice feeling.

Yanik: Yes, it's a very nice feeling. And you mentioned meeting with people in person. I have just set up something that we just started doing for about six months now, and it's really helping. It's not so much a mentor relationship, but it's more like a mastermind group, where I get together with three or four other marketing guys. Every month we get together and just kind of go over each other's projects and what's going on. It's essentially the same principle from Napoleon Hill, the mastermind group.

CML: What effect has that had on your forward progress?

Yanik: The biggest effect is, I feel like there are other people out there that are on the same wavelength that I am. That's one of the biggest reasons I love going to seminars and things like that. We were just in Atlanta together at [SuperSeminar 2001](#) with John (Harricharan), and you get to meet all kinds of people that are in the same boat, if you will, as you are. They've got pretty much the same thoughts, and even more so, when I go to seminars (you've got to be selective) but there's one put on by Jonathon Mizel. I don't think he's ever going to do it again, I don't know, but when you go to one in Boulder like that, and you meet all kinds of people that are like you. They're successful people and they're, I guess different from what their friends are. You come together and you have that feeling of camaraderie and have people on the same wavelength. That really is special.

CML: People on the same wavelength. They think similarly? They're interested in the same type of things?

Yanik: Right. Exactly. They're success oriented, they're oriented towards marketing philosophies that I've studied, and that really is a big difference. I go out with my wife's friends and there's just not a real solid connection there. It's chit-chat back and forth. Nothing too substantial.

But when you get together – for instance, we have this group that, we call ourselves "The Marketing Junkies," somebody coined the term. I think it was our friend Rob. So we get together and we talk about marketing. Obviously, sometimes we get off the subject, but we talk about things like that and it really helps because you can bounce ideas off people that like-minded.

CML: Regarding your life today, are you living totally free-form, or is your life fairly carefully planned out now?

Yanik: I'd have to say a combination of both. I have goals planned out for the next couple of

years, different milestones that I've set.

CML: Is this important? Writing out your goals?

Yanik: Yes. It is to me. I've found that writing out my goals makes it clearer to me, and I also read them every morning. You know, some people have different thoughts on this, but for me it just helps me focus on what I want to do. It's about a ten or fifteen minute process every morning where I just sit down alone, and I'm looking at my values and goals.

Then the part that's free-form is just the ability to – well, the way that my life is structured now, with the Internet, it really gives me a lot of freedom, and I have the ability to almost travel at will if there's a good opportunity that comes up. One of the projects that I'll be working on is a travel related project so I can write off all this travel.

For instance, I just got a call a couple of weeks ago that some of the Internet marketing guys like Jonathan Mizel and them are going to be in Amsterdam, and do you want to come? I'm like, "Yeah. Why not."

CML: Do you believe that every – EVERY – person can improve their life and their luck?

Yanik: I think so. I think the biggest way to do it is to first take responsibility for all your actions for everything that you got today.

CML: Does that include the bad stuff?

Yanik: Absolutely. You've got to. I mean, there's no way around it. The most important thing to think about is (I'm talking like Earl Nightingale again) you become what you think about. So you have ultimate control over your thoughts. That should be really exciting to people because you can change your thoughts in an instant. The things that you think about the most throughout the day really become what you are.

CML: How important a part of success do you think is the feeling that you deserve good things?

Yanik: Well, this feeling is absolutely important. You know we talked about "cheerful expectancy." That's certainly a part of it. I really believe in self-fulfilled prophecies in a way. If you believe you're going to die early and suffer a terrible accident, there's a good chance that you probably will, if you really do believe that.

I believe that modern medicine is improving and I'm going to live to be a hundred and twenty, vibrant and healthy. And I also have this belief that I'm going to be successful online and be a multi-multi millionaire.

CML: For the person who seems sort of obsessed with negative things and worries and so on,

how do they replace that with the good thoughts, the things they want.

Yanik: Well, I think a good way to start is to think about what you're grateful for.

CML: Gratitude.

Yanik: Absolutely. Gratitude usually brings some incredible results. As Bob Proctor (he's somebody I didn't mention, but he's an influence) said that it centers you with your source of giving and receiving. I'm going to take a worst-case scenario and say you live in a shack and have no running water and no electricity whatever, but there are still things you can be grateful for. That feeling of gratitude just centers you and makes you focus on the positive aspects instead of the negative. That's part of my values and goals that I look at every day, and one of the things is that I'm grateful for all my things that I have in my life right now. I take a few moments to think about those.

CML: So for the person who's neck-deep in problems, what's the absolute first thing they should do, and why?

Yanik: Focus on what is working for them. What they have in their life. Maybe they have a loving wife, a family. Focus on that.

Also, it's really just take action towards what you want. I'd take a piece of paper and write down everything I want. It doesn't matter if you think you can get it or you can't. Just write it down.

CML: Don't you think a lot of people edit before they write? They say, aw naw, that's too much, I can't reach that.

Yanik: Right. And I find myself doing that on occasion, too. I mean, what's the worst that's going to happen? People are somehow afraid of failure, that if they write down a goal and they don't reach that they've failed. I don't really think that. If they're striving toward that goal, I think they're a success because as long as they're striving, moving positively towards it, they're not stagnant. When you become stagnant you die.

CML: What was the hardest thing in your life to change?

Yanik: I think the hardest thing in my life to change was just my general inclination towards education and reading. I've always been a reader but not so much in self improvement as a subject that I liked. But that change probably happened pretty early when I was about seventeen. Like I told you, I got that tape and I was fascinated with direct marketing. But until that point I was pretty much watching TV, slacking off. I was a fairly bright guy in school and I realized that if I just paid attention in classes I really wouldn't have to do much. I could get by. The biggest thing that most people do is, they just kind of get by and coast through life.

CML: And never think, "What could I really do?" I can identify with that.

Yanik: Absolutely. The biggest regret that I would have in my life is if I didn't give it my all. We're all put here for some reason, and if you don't provide the biggest amount of service you can, you're doing a disservice to the creator. You know, I don't want to get religious because I'm really not that religious, but there's got to be someone.

CML: Well, there's a spiritual side, which I think is not – it's almost the opposite of religion. In my opinion. Nominal religion sort of nails everything down and turns it into dogma and beliefs. And spiritual (in my mind) tends to be more dynamic and fluid. I just think of it as living versus not really alive.

Yanik: Absolutely. You can look at a lot of people if you walk around any major city and just look into people's eyes. They're kind of glazed over. There's no real light, there's no real fire in them, and it helps when you're enthusiastic about a project or something you really believe in.

One of the things that we didn't talk about, but I think is important for people to hear, is about natural laws. I always believe in natural laws just like gravity is a natural law. Maybe you don't believe in gravity (I live here on the eighth floor), but if I throw myself off the balcony, even if I don't believe I'm going to fall, I'm going to fall. So it doesn't matter what you believe or not, it's a natural law. And the biggest natural law that I always try and work with is cause and effect. Reaping and sowing.

The more service that you can provide to the universe and to people, the more luck you're going to attract, the more success you're going to attract. And it's not so much a matter of going out and finding it. It's really an attraction to you, if that makes sense.

CML: Extremely well said. Luck is not really something you plan. It comes to you. I think that's why we call it luck.

Yanik: Right. Yeah, I think so. But it's not really luck, in a sense, because it happens from your actions and what you've become. For instance, with Instant Sales Letters, I got on the Internet and started doing some things. And all of a sudden, as I became successful, more and more successful Internet marketers, people who were mentors to me through their books and manuals, became friends with me. Which is really amazing. Like I just mentioned, I'm going to Amsterdam with these guys, and it's something I wouldn't have dreamed of two years ago.

CML: Does learning get any easier, the farther you go, or is it always hard?

Yanik: I don't see learning as hard, because I look at it as fun and exciting. Depending on what the subject is – if it's learning about accounting, which I really hate.

CML: Now, that would be stressful, right?

Yanik: It's not fun to me.

CML: Most people think of learning anything as stressful.

Yanik: Right. It doesn't always work that way. If you're interested in a subject, it's not really learning. It's more like discovering. One of my favorite subjects is influence. Tactics of persuasion. Not to use them in an unethical manner, but I try and use them in my copywriting as much as I can. That's something that I love learning about because it just endlessly fascinates me that you can do something that persuades people to take action like that.

CML: I'm not sure why people consider persuasion to be negative. Persuasion starts in the cradle. You get hungry, you cry. You persuade your mother to "come shut me up."

Yanik: Exactly. And as we go along in life, it becomes a kind of negative connotation.

CML: Do you have any advice for people who don't like to learn new stuff?

Yanik: I think you have to, in the society that we're living in now. It's something like information doubles (I believe, the last I heard) every two or three years now. It used to be that information doubled like every forty or fifty years. Something along that line. I may not have it exactly right.

CML: And almost everybody's job is going to become obsolete.

Yanik: Yes, and a lot of people are very hesitant about change and they don't like it, but with change comes opportunity. I mean, look at the Internet. If I was alive fifty years ago, I wouldn't have this opportunity that I have today.

CML: The big changes, they always seem to come to society, not from incremental changes but from the huge quantum leaps, like the Internet. Nobody could have predicted that. It just happened. And powered transportation before that came. Any hunches about the kind of big, discontinuous leaps mankind might face in the future?

Yanik: That's a real tough one, Charles. The biggest thing that I can see is, hopefully, exploring new worlds outside of our solar system. That would be really exciting. I'm an adventurer at heart. I'd love to be one of those people.

CML: Any parting words of special advice to the readers who are still floundering around trying to get out of the starting gate?

Yanik: Yes. In the words of Nike, "Just do it." You'll achieve much more through action than through meditation. For instance, maybe you're in a fog and you walk ten yards because that's all you can see in front of you. Once you walk those ten yards, you see the next ten

yards. And people don't want to take action because they can't see how they could possibly reach their end result. If you take action, certain things are attracted to you, and things fall into place that really make it possible for you.

CML: The universe helps those who help themselves, to rephrase it slightly.

Yanik: Yeah, natural law.

CML: Well, Yanik, thanks for being with us today.

For our listeners, you can visit Yanik's websites at [Instant Sales Letters dot com](http://www.instantsalesletters.com) and Instant [Internet Profits dot com](http://www.instantinternetprofits.com). And what's the newest website?

Yanik: Auto [Responder Magic dot com](http://www.respondermagic.com).

CML: No hyphens, right?

Yanik: Right.

CML: And there, you can receive useful advice on how to make your Internet business a success.

Yanik: For your listeners here, actually we can give them a free course at [Internet Money Train dot com](http://www.internetmoneytrain.com). A free course on how to make money online.

CML: Terrific! Yanik, our time is up. I'd like to thank you again for being with us today.

Yanik: My pleasure. I'd like to thank you for all these thought provoking questions that we had.

Hot on the heels of Yanik Silver's first Internet project (<http://www.instantsalesletters.com>), he's released the new "Instant Internet Profits" course. Yanik is now spilling the beans and revealing his simple blue print that nearly anyone can follow to achieve online success. Check it out at <http://www.instantinternetprofits.com>

Chapter 9

Interview with Don McAvinchey

Author of *God is Here Right Now... and Now... and Now*

May 6, 2001

America's Spiritual Coach

To hear free audio samples from this interview, click on:

<http://www.inside-the-minds-of-winners.com/samples/>

Command More Luck (CML): We're talking today with Coach Don McAvinchey. On his business card, his job title is listed as Spiritual Coach. And his website is [Your Spirit Coach dot com](#). Welcome, Don. Glad to have you with us today.

Don McAvinchey: It's great to be here, Charles. Thanks for inviting me.

CML: Don, what's a spiritual coach?

Don: A spiritual coach is a coach who not only works on people's personal performance but also brings into play the depth of meaning in their life, and their own spiritual and higher values, so that becomes part of the conversation and part of the work that happens.

And a spiritual coach, in my vein, is really dedicated to having life be fun and exciting, so that's part of what I really enjoy about it.

CML: Okay, so you coach people not only on their business success but their success as a person, too.

Don: That's right.

CML: Some of our listeners may not be familiar with your name. Could you tell us something about yourself and your career?

Don: I've been a therapist for a little over twenty-four years, and started teaching and training other therapists about five or six years ago. I mentored with some really wonderful people: David Epston and Michael White from New Zealand and Australia.

And I decided about three or four years ago to pursue coaching, move out of being a therapist. I hired a wonderful guy, Jeff Reim, who is one of the first presidents of the International Coach Federation to coach me to become a coach, to make the transition from being a therapist to a coach.

CML: So coaches need coaching, too.

Don: Coaches need coaching, too. Sure. Practice what you preach.

CML: Somebody to help you keep focused.

Don: Yeah, somebody to pull out the important things about where it is that I want to go in my life, how it is that I want to get there, maybe some of the more subtle difficulties that might be in my way that maybe I can't see, some specific strategies and practices about making the moves that I want to make in my life and doing them successfully, as quickly as possible.

CML: By the way, you're in the process of writing a book now, aren't you?

Don: A couple of them.

CML: What's the title and when will they be available?

Don: The title of the first one is *God is Here Right Now . . . and Now . . . and Now* and that should be available within the next couple of months, probably as an eBook first.

The second book is probably going to be titled *The Two Most Powerful Practical Spiritual Principles I Learned from Millionaires*.

CML: Interesting title.

Don: It also should be available at least by the middle of the summer, I would expect.

CML: Wow, you sound like a busy guy.

Don: Yeah, that's two of about six or seven books that are in the works.

CML: Six or seven that are in the works. You have them outlined and waiting in the assembly line?

Don: That's right. They're saying, "Okay, when's my turn, when's my turn?"

CML: Do you have any kind of working definition for luck or fortune or success that you use in your own daily life?

Don: When it comes to luck and success, I think a lot about serendipity and synchronicity, those two ideas.

Serendipity I think of as situations that come about that are totally unexpected, that I can take advantage of, that may come up because of the intentions that I have about my life,

the purposes that are clear for me about where I want to go and who it is that I am.

And synchronicity is pretty similar, but it's more when people show up, that's what synchronicity to me. When people show up in my life presenting to me possibilities that I just had no idea were going to be coming my way.

CML: So luck and serendipity and synchronicity, these words have slightly different meanings to you.

Don: Just slightly different, yeah. They're all kind of in the same category, but serendipity to me is more around circumstances, and synchronicity is more around people.

CML: And luck?

Don: Well, I was buying some lottery tickets there for a little while, back in the summer.

I kind of think of luck as being an all-encompassing term of both of those ideas, serendipity and synchronicity.

CML: So luck is the overall term.

Don: Yeah, that's what I would say. I think somebody who's lucky is really living at the edge of the wave of their life. That's how I think about it, and synchronous and serendipitous are where events and people come into their life because of that. They place themselves there.

CML: Interesting distinction.

You help people get positive results more quickly, but Don, have you ever gone through a bad-luck phase? A time when it seemed like you were blocked or thwarted in everything you tried to do?

Don: I've certainly had challenges in my life along that way. Certainly had times when I've felt like there wasn't much sense in pursuing particular directions because it looked like, despite my dreams and despite my passion for pursuing a particular goal, it just seemed like the cards might be stacked against it, or I just didn't have it within me to make it happen. Sure I've had those times.

CML: Can you give a couple of examples of how this affected you, and what you did about it?

Don: Sometimes I've ended up feeling like the rug was pulled out from underneath me. Maybe some of your listeners might have experienced that.

CML: This sounds familiar.

Don: Or that, just like I don't get it. There are these moments sometimes in life where I just don't get it somehow, what it is that's happened, how it is that this didn't work out the right way.

I could tell you what I do. I probably do two or three real specific practices that I've learned over the years, some of which I teach to my clients, or that I've learned from my own coaches.

One thing that I do is just sit with it. I just stop and just sit with whatever is happening, and practice acceptance: this is where things are at right now. I check it out with myself, within my own self: how does this feel? Not just an emotional sort of feeling but like deep inside.

CML: So instead of fighting it, you sit and commune with it?

Don: Yeah, just kind of be with it, right, just kind of commune with it. Whether it's a feeling or a sense of failure or feeling blocked, whatever that feeling is, and try to put up to the surface whatever inner direction I have about that situation. That's a powerful practice for me, and I do it pretty regularly when I come up against a snag or a block that seems like it might get in the way bigger if I don't do that.

CML: You said you have a couple of different practices you use. That's one. What else might you try?

Don: I try writing. I read the Conversations with God books a couple of years ago, by Neil Donald Walsh, which I highly recommend.

CML: Yes, they're terrific books.

Don: Yeah, they're great books. And I just decided that if Neil Walsh can do it, another Irishman like me can do it. God's right there for us Irish folks, you know.

So I pulled out a pad and I started writing. I wrote down my questions. I said, "What should I do about this?" And immediately, I had answers coming out of the pen. Just immediately. And they were answers that I didn't expect. They were very wise.

CML: Will this work for Italians or Russians or . . . ?

Don: I'm sure it would, with maybe a little twist here or there of course.

But yeah, I think that's a really wonderful way to sit down and get some inner directions, some inner guidance when luck seems to have turned away from you.

The other thing that I've done, and I still do, I have a spiritual coach that I work with, still, T.R. Day in Michigan. He's just a wonderful guy, and I've worked with him for a

few years now.

CML: So you go to somebody to help you clear things up.

Don: Yeah. I talk with him on a monthly basis now. Before, I worked a couple times a month with Jeff Reim, like I mentioned. And now Mr. Day and I are in pretty close contact. If there are any questions that come up for me in between our conversations, I call him. I highly recommend it. I'm in the profession, but I also use it.

CML: I know that sometimes, if I was in a really bad phase of my life, I was always reluctant to go to family members, people I knew, because from experience, I knew that a lot of times they wouldn't understand. So you suggest going to somebody outside your immediate circle?

Don: Well, it's certainly what I do. There are times when I'll talk with my own father. I come from a big family; there are ten kids in my family, so if I tried to keep everybody up to date on everything that's going on, I'd be on the phone all the time.

CML: I guess it depends on the family how understanding they might be.

Don: I think so. Certainly, in my years of working as a therapist, and now as a coach, different people have different relationships with family members. Some people say that their mother or their father, their brother, their sister are their best friends.

I say access whatever works for you; this is what I try to encourage people to do.

CML: I remember one time, a friend told me that he was in a really depressed phase of his life. He was at a point where he just didn't feel like he could move forward. He couldn't talk to anybody. After several days or weeks of this, he worked up the courage to go to his wife and said to her, "I need help."

And he said she laughed at him and said, "Aw, there's nothing wrong with you."

First, of course, it crushed him. And he spent two or three days deeper than he'd ever thought he could possibly be. But then, he started getting mad. And he said getting mad got him out of it. He decided, "Well, I'll show you. I don't need your help."

And as it turned out, he didn't. So who knows, maybe she did help him. Maybe that was what he needed. But that was a pretty brutal way to do it. I hope spiritual coaches don't work that way.

Don: I've heard about some spiritual gurus who give that kind of advice to their followers. Kind of spiritually blast them between the eyes. But that's not what I do, and I'd certainly highly recommend for people – I mean, if there was a situation like that with a client of mine, I would highly recommend they sit down with their spouse and try to

connect with them in a different way, a little more clear way, to try to get through that, so that person can be a resource for them.

I think that's what love between couples is about, being able to hear and connect with people in that sort of way.

CML: We talked about when things are down. These days, though, things are different for you, aren't they? Can you give some examples of when good luck or unexpected openings have helped move you toward you goals?

Don: One big example in this particular year, I decided after some deep thought, starting January first, to move from promoting myself as a personal coach and promote myself as a spiritual coach.

I felt like that was much more in speaking with my own truth about who I am and the kind of work that I do.

When I made that shift, I was totally terrified. I thought people would think I'm some sort of palm reader or somebody.

My intention was very, very clear, starting January first, that I would have a full practice. My practice actually dwindled down to two people. I was freaking out. I had just signed a letter of intent to buy a house. It was a pretty scary time for me for a few weeks.

I followed my own guidance from within about some of the decisions that I needed to make while promoting myself and connecting with people, and some advice from a good friend. And within two weeks after that point where I got down to two clients, I was back up to fifteen clients.

CML: Terrific.

Don: So that was pretty lucky (if you want to use that term) time for me.

CML: How did these clients turn up in your life?

Don: A couple of different things happened. I went to a conference, where I met you, Charles. Quite a few people came through that conference to me and said they'd like to work with me.

At the same time, three or four other people just approached me, called me, and said, "I heard about you as a coach. What do you do and how do you do it?" So I had some nice conversations with them.

Through some connections with other folks, I got a couple of articles out into the Internet in people's e-zine newsletters. I got probably a dozen different phone calls

because of those articles, people appreciated my thoughts. It started snowballing, and it hasn't stopped.

CML: So first of all, you did some things.

Don: I took some action.

CML: You took some action, and then some results came from that.

Don: I took some action after I declared my intention. I think that's the important point.

CML: You took some action after you declared your intention. Can you explain that a little bit more?

Don: Well, I got really clear on my intention. I really believe that the universe gets behind a hundred percent, a hundred and fifty percent, when we are really, really clear on our intentions, and we state them in a way where they're already happening.

So I did that back in January, February, and I started a free intention group here in Santa Fe called an "intenders' circle" and said my intentions publicly about my practice, the kind of move I was making from personal coaching to spiritual coaching. And within two or three weeks after I did that, I had a full practice.

CML: Let's back up. You said you started an intention circle?

Don: Intenders' Circle.

CML: How do you do that?

Don: How do you start one, or how do . . .

CML: Yes, what's involved? That's new to me.

Don: There are a lot of different ways to talk about this. You and I met Robert Sheinfeld in Atlanta. Robert has written a book on this same kind of idea. Place your intentions clearly out into the world, put them into a "magic box."

CML: Yes, I love his set of lessons. They're terrific.

Don: He's a very cool guy.

I had been exposed to Intenders for the Highest Good, which is an organization that, I believe, started here in New Mexico. Basically, what it is, it's a circle of people who get together once a week or once every two weeks. We meet every two weeks here in Santa Fe. And just get really clear. You just take some time together and get really clear on

what your intentions are.

You use the group process, the group energy that's always there when people get together with the purpose of being supportive of each other and for themselves. They use that energy to get behind your intention in order to open up – I believe – in order to open up to that manifesting quicker.

CML: So they tend to reinforce your intentions by agreeing with you.

Don: By agreeing, by supporting, by acknowledging the movement and change that's happened. Every week we get together and people talk about what's happened along their intentions since the last time we met.

CML: Napoleon Hill talks about a mastermind group. Is this anything similar to that?

Don: I think it's very similar to Napoleon Hill's idea. The difference for me is that there's a spiritual component to it, with the idea that you're directly accessing the power of the universe, the power of God, people's higher power to really get behind your intentions so that they come quickly, they come for the highest good of all concerned.

CML: It sounds like a very powerful to put some extra power into what you're doing.

Don: I think so. If people are interested in checking it out, they have a website, the folks who started this.

CML: Oh really? What's the URL?

Don: It's Intenders dot com... interesting. It gives guidelines about how to start a group, how to have the group format happen, the kind of intentions that they use, and a few ideas about what not to say in your intentions. It's pretty nice.

CML: What originally moved you to go into coaching, Don?

Don: I had been working as a family therapist for quite a few years, about 12-13 years, and as a therapist for about 20 years at that point, and I had a full time job in a private practice. Then I saw this ad for Coach University in one of the family therapy journals that I got. It talked about having an intro course.

I thought, "Well, that sounds kind of interesting, so I called up and enrolled in the intro course and learned about what coaching is about. That's where I met my first coach, Jeff Reim.

CML: You called it a Coach University?

Don: Yeah, there's a virtual university called Coach University. All the classes are held over

the telephone. They use the Internet for materials and for connections between teachers and students.

I decided not to take the Coach University course. My coach, Jeff, said, “You could take this, but seventy-five percent of it is probably going to be redundant because you have so many years as a therapist. A lot of it is about listening, learning how to really listen actively to people.

So what I did is, I hired Jeff to coach me to make the transition into being a coach.

Charles:

Can you tell us a little bit more about your experiences coaching. Some of the people you’ve worked with. I know you probably can’t mention names, but can you tell us some of your experiences?

Don: I’ve worked with an awful lot of people over the last couple of years. It’s been about two and a half years, I guess, that I’ve been coaching, and I’ve done everything – from working with people individually to get real clear about their own path, their own purpose in life and how to align their work and their relationships, their own behavior and actions with their purpose – through working with agencies I’ve coached employees within agencies. I’ve coached executive directors of organizations and companies to try to make the best decisions that they can for their employees, and working with their people to make transitions.

A lot of the organizations that have contacted me are organizations that are making changes in this kind of new world, this new economy that we’re working in. And they want to advocate that in a good way and have that happen for them, for their company, their organization, for the employees that they supervise. So it has been really beneficial for them, I think, to have a coach, to be able to talk through steps, what seems to be the best thing to do and what directions to avoid.

I’ve worked a lot with couples, had a lot of couples call me up. They get on two different telephones within their house. And we do couples coaching. We bring their spiritual life right into the conversation directly.

CML: But you’re not a minister.

Don: I’m not a minister, no.

CML: How do you differ from, say, a preacher or a minister or priest.

Don: I don’t have a particular belief system that I’m trying to teach people in terms of spirituality or religion. I have shied away from organized religion for a few years, and I think it has really benefited me in my life. And I just really acknowledge that the individual person has that relationship with however they think about a greater sense of

themselves or greater sense of the world or the universe.

My purpose with my clients is to really bring that into the conversation as a partnership that they have with that aspect of who they are, to move.

CML: You put people more in partnership with themselves?

Don: With themselves; with their higher power; with God; with their own spirit. However they think about it.

CML: You serve almost as a muse for your clients, don't you?

Don: I like that. I'd never heard that idea. Yeah, I like that. I'd say that's true.

CML: Basically, you find what's in them and help them to become aware of it.

Don: Yeah, I would alter that just a little bit. I help them find what's in them, and I also help them find what's in the story of their life.

CML: Hmm, I like that phrase.

Don: I really believe that people move according to the stories that they tell. So I help them find that theme, that thread within the story of their life that maybe gets submerged by problems or bad luck – getting back to the topic of luck.

CML: Yes, you can get sort of overwhelmed so that you can't see beyond the thing that's standing right in front of you, blocking you.

Don: Sure. People get into funks in life, you know. People often describe that experience as having a dark cloud settling over them, or everything looks gray to them.

CML: Yeah, I lived there for years. I know about this.

Don: Everybody knows about that. You're not alone in that, Charles.

And it's hard to be optimistic, it's hard to see anything worthwhile, it's hard to see the future as being positive. That's really my job. I really feel like that's a big aspect of what I do is to surface that other story line that's really been covered up.

CML: You bring them back to a view of true perspective.

Don: Yeah, and a preferred perspective. What it is that they value in their life, what is it that means the most to them, and how can we make that multiply.

CML: Where do you get most of your ideas for your clients? Do you have a special

brainstorming process you rely on?

Don: I listen really, really closely to what they say. I believe that ninety-nine percent of the time clients that I work with know what next step is best for them to do. So I really try to bring that up to the top of their consciousness.

CML: But sometimes they don't know that they know it

Do you have a lot of people where they resist knowing what they know? You tell them, "How about this and this," and they say, "No, absolutely not"?

Don: Well, I have some pretty powerful clients, so they have a lot of strong ideas, and I like that about them. So I may make a suggestion, and I always try to ask permission before I do that. I don't want to assume that I'm smarter about their particular life than they are.

I sometimes get people who say they don't want to do a particular thing, or maybe they will agree to a request that I make to go off between our conversations, and for one reason or another they will end up not going forward with that request. What I do with that is, I just try to talk with them about what got in the way, if anything, or did they just decide it wasn't appropriate. How did they decide that, what seemed like a better idea. And just try to pursue that from a sense of respect for them, for their own knowledge, and their own wisdom.

I don't pretend to be an expert about people's lives. I'm pretty good at listening, pulling out the wisdom that people have and making really good questions.

CML: Do you also develop new products or services of your own?

Don: Yes. There's that book list we were talking about. That's my next wave of new products.

I also do group coaching, like I mentioned before, within organizations, companies or human service agencies, which is kind of my background. I'm hired by a number of those kind of folks. So in terms of product, in terms of service product, I don't just do individual coaching. I also do, as I mentioned, that kind of teaching or training work.

This couples thing is somewhat new, so that's kind of fun for me, to do coaching with couples.

And I have a number of other ideas that are popping away.

CML: I won't ask you to give those away because ideas are the coin of the realm.

But how do you recognize when a new idea is a really good one? Do you have a way of testing your ideas, or do you just get the feeling, boy, this one's a winner?

Don: Well, I certainly get excited and passionate about particular kinds of ideas. Ideas that I think are very supportive to people's lives. Those kind of ideas just really get me going.

I really think that testing within a particular market, a particular realm of people's experience is the true test, and I try to do that as much as I possibly can. I'm learning how to do that more through my partnership with Clay Cotton.

CML: We'll get back to Clay in a little while. This is an interesting aspect of what you're doing. I'd like to discuss this a little more, too.

Pursuing this thing about your own ideas, how do you go about testing your ideas? Or do you just throw them on the wall and see what sticks?

Don: There are a few different things that I do. Within coaching, the obvious thing is that my business runs on clients coming to me. So it's pretty immediate, the kind of response of whether an idea is a good one or not. People will either show up and ask me to be their coach, or they won't. So that's a pretty quick and easy one to test to see whether things fit or not for people.

And the fit that comes is much more of an idea about how I'm approaching clients and approaching my marketing to prospective clients. So it's pretty clear, it's pretty quick and easy, and if it doesn't work, people say no.

CML: Just like selling Fuller Brush.

Don: That's right. It's pretty direct.

CML: Even today, do you sometimes have days or a week at a time where you go through a phase of feeling like, "Whoa, I just don't want to motivate myself today." Or a period of not such good luck. If so, how do you put yourself back together?

Don: I totally believe in extreme self-care. I think it's something in our culture here in the United States that we don't do so well. We think it's a pretty revolutionary idea.

I try to think of extreme self-care in terms of reserves; personal reserve accounts in a number of different areas. One of the things that I try to do if I'm feeling down or not very motivated, I realize that it's kind of a signal for me, that I'm not taking care of myself in a particular area of my life, either like through physical exercise or getting support from friends, taking time to myself to rejuvenate and connect with my own spiritual life. Doing work, being clear that my work in and of itself, whether it's writing or working with clients, is a lot of what brings me a sense of connection with my own spirituality, my own sense of purpose.

So what I'll try to do if I'm starting to feel a little bit out of sorts around these kind of things is, I'll get to the gym and I'll play some basketball, even at the ripe old age of

forty-five, I'll play with a bunch of fellows. It's a lot of fun for me.

CML: So when you're feeling funky, you do something.

Don: I do something, yeah. Coaching is about action. Therapy is a lot about healing. So making that transition has been an interesting one for me, but coaching is really about taking action, and feeling a sense of empowerment from accomplishing things.

So again, I practice what I preach about that, and I say I mean to do something. I'll call up a friend and I'll go spend some time with a friend. I'll take an afternoon or evening off. Yesterday I just sat here and read this wonderful book that I'm reading for probably two hours or so. Fell asleep next to my fireplace. It was a great afternoon.

Those kind of moments, you know, they really build, and I think of those moments as making deposits in my personal reserve accounts. The more I can do that, when those times do come, when I'm feeling challenged or not quite so motivated, or whatever the feeling state is, it's much easier to overcome that and to bounce back to take care of myself if my reserve accounts are up pretty high, if they're pretty full.

CML: So you think in terms of an ongoing peripheral awareness of how you feel and how things are going all the time. You've got like a fuel gauge.

Don: That's a good way of putting it, yes. I've got a fuel gauge for my own spiritual reserve account, for my love and relationship reserve account.

CML: You've got several fuel gauges.

Don: Several of them. My financial fuel account.

CML: And when you see one starting to get a little low, you don't wait for a funky day.

Don: Yeah, I try to keep them up pretty high. Do you know, Charles, the first thing that I started to do this with? It's a very simple way to do it – I'm glad you brought up the fuel gauge idea. I try to fill up my gas tank when it's half full, not when it's on empty. And if I can do that with my car, I can do that with my life.

CML: Good metaphor.

Let's get back to Clay Cotton. I know you're partnering with him and you've got several projects going on right now. Are there some things you can tell us about?

Don: Well, Clay and I are doing some collaboration around a number of these book ideas that I mentioned and a few other ones.

We have a whole series of articles that are going to be coming out on the Internet, and

one of them is the “Now What” series.

We’ve been studying this book together. I don’t know if you know about this book called “The First Hundred Million,” which I think is really such a nice testament. The guy’s name was E. Haldeman-Julius.

CML: Oh, this is a different First Hundred Million, then. There must be two books by that name.

CML: What’s his name? Haldeman?

Don: E. Haldeman-Julius, and it has been put out by Encore Publishing from Mesa, Arizona. This book was written back in 1920-something, I think.

CML: I’d like to know more about this book. Tell me something.

Don: What Haldeman-Julius did is, he published “The Nickel Books” and he ran these full-page ads in major newspapers across the country back in the 1920s and sold hundreds of titles for five cents apiece. You took out the little coupon out of the ad and you sent it in, and you had to buy at least twenty at a time, so he was making a buck on each order.

He sold hundreds of millions of these books for a nickel apiece. They were on all kinds of topics. The beauty of these books was that he could immediately test to see which titles for which books sold the most.

If he had a book that only sold, say, 1,500 copies over two months, he would change the title and it suddenly would 25,000 copies. So it was like a direct marketing research and testing machine that he had going.

That inspired us. Clay and I started thinking about maybe there’s a series that we could start playing around with, and the Now What series was the first one we came up with. It’s the idea that people go through transitions in life.

It could be anything from “So You’re Divorced – Now What” to “So You’re Married – Now What” and everything in between. “So You’re Wealthy – Now What” or “So You’re In Love – Now What” or “So You’re Unemployed – Now What Are You Going To Do.”

CML: I like the implications of that. Most people aim and scrabble and struggle and fight to get a goal, and then once they’ve got it, they’ve seldom looked beyond the goal, how to act, how to behave, what it means. I like that.

Don: A lot of the idea for the books is steeped in that idea you just mentioned about meaning. These milestones that people reach, either through good luck or bad luck, depending on how you look at it, what does it mean to them about themselves as a person, and where

do they want to go from here.

I really believe as a coach that people have the power to direct that process. So that's what the books are about.

CML: And you'll be selling primarily on the Internet? Or also hard copies?

Don: Primarily Internet at first. We'll see how that goes. We're going to be doing some market testing over the next few months.

There's a conference coming up in Las Vegas in June that we're hoping to launch the Now What series at.

That's one of the things that Clay and I are working on. I had him over at my house and said, "Here's a great project." I asked him and he said he would.

He showed up and sat down at the piano for an hour and played this wonderful boogie-woogie music that he plays. We just had a wonderful jam session that night here at my housewarming party.

CML: Any other projects you can tell us about?

Don: Well, probably the other projects would be a little bit more proprietary at this point, so I'll probably hold off on talking about them. They're kind of in the stage of development where they're exciting and we want to get them worked around for a little bit.

CML: And you expect these to be made available when?

Don: Well, some of the first either articles or books, they're going to come out in kind of different pieces, and they'll be ready by the middle of June. We're hoping to have the first eBook, which I mentioned earlier, ready to go at that time as well.

CML: Will you also have an affiliate program worked out with that?

Don: We've been talking about that. I certainly would like to see that happen. I'm starting to really get turned on by this affiliate program idea. I think it's a pretty powerful one. And I think it's one that builds luck, you know. I think it helps serendipity because people put that sort of stuff either in their e-zines or on their websites, or whatever, and I think the kinds of material that we're going to put out really touches people's hearts and their spirits and their souls.

When that's happening, those kinds of ideas tend to get passed on from one person to another through relationships, either the website or the eBook idea. That's the best way to go as far as I'm concerned. So an affiliate program would work pretty well for that, I think.

CML: In your mind, what's the difference between luck or serendipity and success?

Don: Well, success is a little more all-encompassing to me. I heard a great definition of success a few years back by a guy named Dexter Yeager, who actually was an Amway gentleman.

I'll have to paraphrase it because I probably won't quote him exactly, but what I liked about his definition is, he said that "success is the consistent pursuit of a worthwhile dream." What I like about that is that it's not just about reaching it, but it's about pursuing something that's worthwhile.

CML: Say that again. That's worth repeating.

Don: Success is the consistent pursuit of a worthwhile dream.

CML: And luck is the stuff that happens along the way?

Don: Well, luck is the ability to open up and see connections. That's where the serendipity and synchronicity comes in. From my viewpoint. And I think we can train ourselves to look for those. We can train ourselves to be more lucky.

CML: We can train ourselves to be more lucky.

You believe that, and I believe that. I would love it if everybody believed that.

Don: Well, the people who believe that will be the luckiest people. Because I really think it's true. I think the more that you look for synchronous events in your life, the more you're going to see them. You'll attract more of those kind of events to you; more of those kind of people will suddenly show up.

I was listening to a gentleman this morning who was a co-producer on some of the big movies that have been made. Raiders of the Lost Ark, the Indiana Jones Series, and some other ones. He was giving a talk at my church today and he was talking about this wonderful, totally synchronistic event that happened when he went down to South America to The Conference of the World's People or something like that, back when George Bush Senior was president.

He told the story about these amazing connections that happened for him, where he ended up meeting some people that somehow knew him.

He'd never been to South America in his life and these people somehow walked right up to him when he's sitting in the hotel. He was looking for a place to stay and all the rooms were full and a friend of his daughter's walked up and said, "Aren't you so and so's father?" He told them yes, and she said, "Well, do you need a place to stay?"

He said, "I sure do," and so he ended up staying with her family, right on the park where this whole great big event was happening. It just brought tears to my eyes, this story, there were so many synchronistic events that happened for him to be there, to be able to talk and to share his story.

I think those kind of connections happen all the time if we'll just open up our eyes and look for them.

CML: Most of us just simply don't see what's happening. We don't reach out and take what's in front of us.

Don: There's a lot happening.

CML: What teachers or books have helped you grow?

Don: I've had a good share of really wonderful spiritual teachers in my life. Paramahansa Yogananda wrote the book *Autobiography of a Yogi*. That was a wonderful introduction into spiritual life for me.

Lately, the *Conversations with God* books, which I think are really wonderful, powerful, by Neil Walsh.

My coaches, my mentors have helped me a tremendous amount. I'm eternally grateful to them for taking me on and teaching me and drawing out the best in me.

And the community that I'm involved in. I highly recommend people to find a spiritual community that fits for them. The one that I'm involved with is really wonderful. There are some great people in it. I'm finding more and more synchronistic events happening through that community. I think a community in many ways can be a teacher for us if we let it.

CML: These people who have coached or mentored you, could you tell us a bit about your experiences with some of them.

Don: Sure. Jeff Reim, the coach I mentioned, just presented what I thought was a very wonderful way of working with clients that I've in some ways taken on and made my own.

He really believes in speaking the truth as a coach as best he hears it, through his own intuition. He relied very, very strongly on intuitional sense about what was going on for me, so he would just say, "I'm going to say something, and it's the truth as best I see it." And he would just say it and not worry about whether I was going to be offended by it.

When he did that, it almost always struck me totally true, at least some big aspect of

what he was saying, and I was able to take that and to utilize it for my own growth, for my own movement forward. That was a wonderful part of what he does

My current spiritual director (is actually what he calls himself), T.R. Day, is a very wise soul. He's back in Michigan where I used to live, so we talk on the telephone once a month.

His particular bent as a spiritual director is to talk really clearly about what is the most spiritual aspect of what's happened for me since the last time we talked, and how that is influencing the direction of my life, the things that I'm trying to accomplish. He's very, very metaphorical in how he thinks about life.

CML: What does that mean?

Don: What that means is that he can take an insight that he has – it might come at times as a picture or more of a sense about something – and put it into words as a picture kind of format. He'll say, "I'm just getting this picture in my mind, and here's what I'm seeing." It's the kind of thing where we probably all get these. I know that I get these about clients, these kind of intuitional pictures, and suddenly something will open up for me, and we'll have a wonderful conversation that comes out of his sharing that intuitional picture that he just gave me. He calls that a metaphor, and I'm willing to go ahead with that and call it that myself. It's pretty powerful stuff.

CML: Why would anybody decide to mentor another person? What's in it for them?

Don: Well, I've heard it said by a number of coaches that we feel like we've been doing this our whole lives. I think it's true. I remember talking to people about their difficulties when I was in kindergarten.

So I guess, Charles, this is who I am. I've decided to kind of live with it. I don't know that I'll always do this, but mentoring and coaching people is very, very satisfying. I don't think there's a better feeling I've ever had in my life than being in the presence of an individual or a couple, or in the presence of people who are clearly reaching for the highest good for themselves and for those that they love. To walk with people and to be in that conversation, to me, is the definition of holiness on this earth.

CML: I heard a teacher once say that their biggest kick in life was to see somebody take something that she had given them and suddenly make their own. She could just see a light come on in their eyes and it changed something in them, whether it was something about mathematics or something about history, or psychology – whatever – but giving somebody something they can use, and it makes a difference in their life. She said that was the most satisfying thing on earth to her. Is that very similar to what a mentor feels?

Don: I think so. It's certainly a good description of what I feel. It isn't so important that I get a good sense about what people are struggling with, or a good answer for them. I think

what's really a charge and a joy for me is when that light bulb goes on in their mind and their eyes.

Whether it's directly sitting with people as a therapist or talking with people over the telephone, you know when that happens. People go, "Wow, I just never thought about this before," or "I never considered myself as that kind of person before." And things change for people immediately when it happens. They're never the same again. Ever.

CML: So you're a world changer.

Don: One person at a time.

CML: These days are you living a totally freeform life, or is your life fairly carefully planned out now?

Don: That's a very good question. There are some aspects of my life that are fairly planful in terms of the structure of my life. I have days when I work with clients on the telephone a lot. Three of my children are living here in my home, so I provide a nice structure for them, a safe place for them to be.

But within that structure, I try to do as much spontaneous choosing as I possibly can. I like that question about the freeform idea. It would be an interesting thing to explore. Some of the people in coaching who are kind of at the forefront of coaching talk a lot about having a life that is both non-work centered and goal-free.

CML: Sounds like a surfer.

Don: Yeah, a surfer, there you go.

Oooo, that's a good one, thank you. I should write that down.

CML: Yeah, a life surfer.

Don: The goal isn't so much what you do each moment, it's how you're going to get in to the shore.

CML: Do you believe that anybody can improve their life and their luck? Absolutely anybody?

Don: Absolutely anybody.

Charles, you know I've worked as a therapist in for the state of Michigan within the residential care division for juvenile delinquents. One of the centers I worked at for almost three years was the lock-down mental health unit for the juveniles and adolescents who had been in every placement in the state of Michigan and some placements outside of the state and failed at every one of those. So this was the worst of

the worst of the worst situation.

And I can, without any bragging about, I just know that when I worked with people in that situation, with the kids and with their families, that they changed their lives. And If those folks can do it, anybody can do it.

CML: If a person doesn't believe success is possible for them personally, how do you counsel them? What do you do?

Don: One of the things that I do is, I work with them to sort of settle into that feeling, into that belief, and what does it do to them.

What's the effect of that particular idea on their life and on who they see themselves as, on their ability to feel motivated, their ability to dream for the future. So one of the real important aspects of how I think about how those kinds of ideas, or those kinds of states of mind work with people is their impact in one's life.

And once we get clear on that, then I start to talk about when are the times that they have been able to refuse to cooperate with those effects. People at first sometimes have a hard time talking about that, but as soon as we start talking about it, it becomes really clear that there are lots and lots of moments, hidden secret alternative moments, where everybody fights those kind of restraining and debilitating ideas.

So if someone believes that they can't have success in their life, that's a belief, and I don't know about you, but I used to believe in Santa Clause. So beliefs can change, and they can change based on facts.

I just try to help people to see their power in the face of those kind of restrictive ideas about who they are. And then we build a new story, really. The old story doesn't serve people too well.

CML: You build a new story.

Don: We build a new story together, one that's based on the actual success that they have in refusing to cooperate with these restrictive ideas.

CML: So you take their failures and reframe it, and teach them to consider even that a success.

Don: Could be. That could be one thing. Like a lot of people will see a certain situation as a failure, and oftentimes a simple question will free them up from that. A question like, let's just say somebody lost \$50,000 in their business in six months or something.

Let's say that's what they're describing as a failure. I would ask, "How is it that you stopped yourself from losing \$100,000?"

And that's a success all of a sudden, you know. And then, what did you do?

CML: The glass is half full.

Don: Yeah, is it half full or half empty, right.

What did you do to do that?

Well I did this and this and this.

Gosh, how did know that that was the right thing to do to stop it from going any deeper?

Well, I just knew.

What is it about you that knew that? What do you call that aspect of yourself? Suddenly, instead of talking about failure, we're talking about the inner wisdom that they have. And what does that inner wisdom say to do next? And then we're off and running on a new story.

CML: In achieving success, how important is it that a person feel like they deserve good things?

Don: I think that's very important. Not deserving from a sense of handouts, but that they are just as valid a human being as anybody else on the planet, and that they have as much right to stake their claim to the abundance that's all around them as anybody else. That's how I think about deserving.

From a more spiritual aspect, we're all children of God, and we're all part of the great oneness. There isn't anybody who's any different in that way.

CML: How can a person come to feel more like they deserve more? A happy life, good luck, success.

Don: I think one of the chief aspects of doing that is being able to start to imagine it. It's certainly what I do in my coaching. I just get people to start to imagine what life would be like if they had things the way that they would really like to have them be.

CML: Just imagine the future. The future you want.

Don: The future, and start to take some steps to create that. It may sound simple, and kind of almost trite to say that, but I think it's the most powerful thing people can do.

CML: So if somebody is up to their ears in problems, what's the absolute first thing they should do?

Don: Hire a coach.

I laugh, but I think that's really true. The first thing to do is to get some help making decisions. That's the key part. If you need help making decisions to get yourself out of trouble, I think coaches are good people to help you do that.

But in terms of personally what to do, I think sitting down and taking stock is a really wise thing to do. And particularly how is it that in the midst of these problems, how is it that you can take care of yourself at a higher level than what you're doing?

Those times are stressful, those are difficult times when those kind of problems hit. If you don't take care of yourself in the midst of it, they're just going to compound the problems. So the more you take care of yourself in the face of difficulties, I think personally, the more energy you're going to have to deal with the difficulties. And the more possibilities will come to your mind about how to stretch and grow and try new things, make the best decisions.

CML: What was the hardest thing in your own life to change?

Don: Procrastination.

CML: This is a fairly common thing. What did you do?

Don: I started kind of self-coaching myself in little moments where I'd say, "Do it now. Sit down and do it now." A few years back I bought a Franklin Planner, which I think are great tools if you like setting goals and accomplishing them.

I make these lists and I put priorities on certain items on the list, then I go ahead and do my list. And that really changed the way that I take care of my business.

There was an article that I wrote, "The Two Most Powerful Practical Spiritual Principles I Learned from Millionaires." The first one is "get on with it," and that's really what that's about. Make the list and get onto it.

CML: Quit looking at it and handle it.

Don: That's right. Get at it, handle it, accomplish it and move on to the next one. The more that I do that, for me personally, especially – I can say this – the more that I do this, the less procrastination has a hold on me, and the more I feel a sense of momentum and progress towards my own preferred future.

CML: Do you feel like you've entered a "coasting" phase, or are you still on an uphill climb? Still learning lots of new stuff?

Don: Oh, I feel like I'm on a learning curve that's about as steep as Mount Everest,

sometimes. I feel like I'm really learning a lot these days.

CML: So you're not coasting these days?

Don: No, I don't feel like I'm coasting. I feel like things are happening. That may be one sense of the coasting idea. There's a lot that's going on and lots and lots of new doors are opening up for me. But I don't feel like I'm coasting just kind of on automatic pilot. I'm out there creating and learning.

CML: Does learning get any easier for you, the farther you go?

Don: I think so. What I've been noticing for myself is that I'm getting more excited about the learning that's happening for me, and I feel like I can apply it quicker when I learn something new.

Working with Clay Cotton has been a wonderful experience because he's, in many ways, from a totally different realm than I'm from in terms of professional experience.

CML: Yeah, his music background, his creativity.

Don: His marketing savvy; I mean, he's so smart about this marketing stuff and this web marketing stuff. I'm very green in that area, it's all totally new territory for me, but I've been learning it, and I get it. I think part of why I get it is because I'm willing to say, "I don't know that; teach me." After hitting forty or so (I'm forty-five now), I decided pretty consciously that it was time to really admit that I don't know something, and to let that be a freedom rather than a weakness.

CML: When I came to Japan sixteen years ago, I had a bad habit. If I didn't know something, I would just sort of put up a quiet front and pretend that I sort of knew and try to get the other person to say some stuff so I could catch on to what was going on.

I came to Japan and I didn't have the verbal skills to do that. So I learned to give an apologetic smile and a shrug and just ask. And it's amazing how much more I have learned since I started not being defensive.

Don: I had the same sort of thing. I would just make up answers when I was younger. I'll be honest about it. I'd lie about stuff, just flat out lie about it. I knew how to do this, I knew that about that. And lately, I just say, "I have no idea what you're even talking about. Why don't you try teaching me? I'm happy to learn."

CML: Don't you feel a lot freer now?

Don: Yeah. I don't have to pretend.

CML: And you're learning more besides.

Don: It's much easier to pick up something new – I think – when you're not holding on, like you say, Charles, to that defensive kind of stance, trying to impress people.

CML: Or cover up that you don't know.

Some people still find learning a pretty stressful experience. Do you think we ever reach a point where we can enjoy every new learning experience?

Don: I think it's possible to do that. I think you really have to follow what we're talking about right now, this whole idea of letting go, and having it be okay to not know.

CML: Do you have any advice for people who don't really enjoy learning? People who don't like new stuff coming in their life?

Don: I would say that there's definitely a way to change that. I think in order to be alive, we have to be able to learn. I used to hear this from one of my spiritual teachers in my twenties. There's a quick little story about a guy's gravestone. This was a guy who decided at a young age that he couldn't or wouldn't learn any more, that he had the answers. His gravestone said, "Here lies Joe Smith. He was born in 1940, died in 1970, and was buried in the year 2000."

I like that. It's a good description of what happens when we don't learn.

Gregory Bateson, one of the famous philosophers and anthropologists said that if we refuse to admit that we're wrong, and won't put ourselves in the place of learning something, all we can ever become is a technician.

CML: We'll never be an artist. Never be a master. Interesting viewpoint.

Let's take a quick peek into the future, a little change of pace. There are many spiritual teachers these days saying that the earth experience is about to change significantly. How do you envision our daily life changing in the next fifty or a hundred years? In the next five hundred years? This is far out stuff.

Don: Okay, well I'll go far out with you. I think that we suddenly have the means, through the Internet and the World Wide Web, to communicate across the world instantaneously without restrictions, without the friction of censorship or corporate ideas about what's right or wrong, or government ideas about what's right or wrong. In some ways that's frightening to people, but I think freedom is always kind of frightening to people at certain levels. It takes a tremendous amount of personal responsibility to handle that.

I think what's going to happen from this new state that we're in is that the original ideas that fed the United States' birth, the ideas of sovereign citizenship and freedom and liberty, are going to take hold again. We haven't had them in our country for coming up

on a hundred years now.

We live in a kind of pseudo-freedom. I think that people across the world have always admired that aspect of what America stood for and how we promoted that amongst our citizens.

I don't think there's any way to hold back now that people can talk to each other and communicate with each other without restrictive forces.

So one of the big things that I see happening for people is that freedom and liberty in their greatest senses are going to spread across the world.

CML: A rebirth of libertarianism.

Don: Yeah, I think so.

CML: I hate to put labels on things, but . . .

Don: I'm not always so sure about libertarians in terms of their political stance, that party that's here. I like a lot of what they say, but I don't think, once people taste freedom, that there's any turning back.

And there are a lot of people in our country and across the world who are really examining this and saying, "There's no reason not to have this sense of sovereign citizenship." We don't have that in our country much anymore. I don't know what life is like in Japan, but I think those ideas are really going to grow.

With that, in terms of spiritual life, I don't think there's any way to have spiritual freedom without that kind of sense of sovereignty and liberty. I really think there's no stopping it. And that is going to change an awful lot of what happens in our world.

CML: I like your vision.

This has been interesting. Do you have any final words of special advice for readers who are still trying to get themselves moving forward?

Don: I think if people will just sort of stop and sit down with themselves. Take ten or fifteen minutes, and sit down, be willing to kind of pull out their soul and examine it, see where they'd like to go in their life, that could make a huge amount of difference.

Then find a mentor to help you get there. Somebody that you respect, somebody that you may see as already being in that kind of position, and work with them. Be honest, courageous, and work with them.

CML: Don. Thanks for being with us today, it's been great. I've enjoyed it, and I'm sure our

listeners have enjoyed your advice.

Don: Charles, you're very welcome. I appreciate the invitation, and good luck to you and to all your listeners.

CML: For our listeners, you can visit his website at [Your Spirit Coach dot com](http://www.yourspiritcoach.com).

Thanks for being with us, Coach Don McAvinchey, Your Spirit Coach. Thanks very much.

Don: You're very welcome, Charles. My pleasure.

Don McAvinchey, America's Spiritual Coach, resides in Santa Fe, New Mexico with his three children, a dog, a cat, and an exceedingly busy schedule. Originally a traditional therapist, Don switched his practice to specialize in family therapy nearly 15 years ago. Then, about three years ago, he felt the call to change his practice again, this time with the emphasis on coaching clients to achieve greater levels of success. Thus, he went from healing dysfunctions and illnesses to healing mediocrity. You can visit Don's website at: <http://www.yourspiritcoach.com>

Chapter 10

Interview with Rick Beneteau

Author of *Branding You and Breaking the Bank*

May 17, 2001

Opportunity May Come Gift-Wrapped in Tragedy

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Command More Luck (CML): We have with us today a person who has successfully made the leap from the offline, bricks-and-mortar business world to the Internet. Rick Beneteau is a successful author and rapidly rising Internet entrepreneur. He also has an amazing grasp of how to use publicity to build a business.

Rick, I know your schedule is extremely busy these days. Thanks for joining us.

Rick Beneteau: My pleasure, Charles.

CML: Before we start, could you tell us a couple of your websites, where our listeners can find you online?

Rick: Sure. First of all, they can go to my name dot com – that's [Rick Beneteau dot com](http://RickBeneteau.com), and that pretty well leads to everything that I do.

CML: For readers who are not familiar with your name, could you give us a few words of background about yourself, your business and your career?

Rick: Sure. Right after high school, I decided to get into business. My family had a dry cleaning business, and I went to work for my dad. It wasn't long thereafter that I really began to like business. A few years later, I ended up buying my father out at fair market value and building that dry cleaning business.

All during that time, my passion in life, Charles, as you already know, is writing and producing music. And during the early years of my dry cleaning days, I was just song writing, had simple recording equipment, and I was sending my songs out to publishers and record companies and recording artists.

I started to enjoy some great success; won the Billboard Magazine song writing competition the first two years, and people were beginning to record my songs. I just had general acceptance of the work I was doing.

I decided in the late eighties to sell the dry cleaning business because I had enjoyed that success, and to enter a full-time career in music, writing and producing. In the mid-nineties I sold the dry cleaning business in order to pursue music.

What ended up happening, I lost a lot of – this interview is about luck, but in a period of bad luck, I was divorced as soon as I sold the dry cleaning business, and I lost my asset base in which to start the music production company. And as you probably are aware, it takes substantial financial resources to launch such a venture.

I was essentially broke and really morally devastated, and I had to go on and do something new. My friends had talked about how great and glorious the World Wide Web was, so I decided to take a look, and after about a week of looking around (I really didn't know what I was looking for), but I felt that with forty million people connected to the Internet (which there was at that time), that if I couldn't make a living in cyberspace, then I deserved to sell shoes. So that's essentially how I ended up on the Internet.

CML: Not a simple story.

Rick: Not at all. Actually, I tell the whole story in my brand new eBook “Branding You and Breaking the Bank.” I tell it in very much detail because it backs up a lot of the points I make in the book.

CML: And the name of the book, again, is

Rick: It's *Branding You and Breaking the Bank* And it can be found at [Branding Yourself dot com](http://BrandingYourself.com).

CML: Branding Yourself dot com. So if visitors just type that in, they'll find your book.

Rick: They sure will.

CML: You've had some “downs,” but you've also had your share of “ups,” too. Do you have any kind of working definition for luck or fortune or success that you use in your daily life?

Rick: Well, I totally subscribe to the laws of attraction. What you put out, you get back. If you put out good, for the good of others, you're going to get great. Pure and simple.

CML: I've read your inspirational poem, “I Will,” and I loved that. How did you come to write it?

Rick: Actually, that's a song lyric from a motivational album I co-wrote and produced with my close friend Larry Thompson just prior to my leaving the music business. So it was a project that ended up with nothing really being done with it. But we are going to release

that in a revamped edition at the end of the year.

CML: Oh, really!

Rick: Yes. I'm very, very excited about this project. It's kind of my re-entry back into music.

CML: You'll be selling that on the Internet?

Rick: Absolutely. But that lyric really is one of my core beliefs. And it goes: "I will because I can. I'll do 'cause I believe the strength I need to make the change is deep inside of me. I'll walk where I have crawled, I'll run till I can fly. My wings will fill with winds of change the moment I decide – I will." That's one of my fundamental beliefs.

CML: Every time I hear that, something in me just wants to sing. I love that poem.

Rick: Well, thank you.

CML: Since you've gone through a couple of bad luck periods, I assume it looked like life was trying to thwart you every way you turned. Can you tell us what you learned from those times?

Rick: Probably the best way I can do that is – I'm building a catalog of quotes as I write new books and go out on speaking engagements, there are just little things that come to you; I just call them quotes. They're my own personal pearls of wisdom (or "bizdom"), and one of those is: "our shoulders are never so narrow that we cannot carry the weight of our own world."

CML: Every man is his own Atlas.

Rick: Absolutely. I believe that whatever setbacks or problems we're given in this life, we have the capacity to overcome – actually not only overcome them – but learn and grow from them.

I think all of us would agree that life is both fair and unfair. At times it seems like the laws of karma are just not in place, only to find that somewhere down the road they were just a little late getting there. There's a cliché; everything happens for a reason, and I believe that's one of those universal truths, and it's very hard to believe sometimes.

CML: Could you give us a couple of examples from your own experiences?

Rick: One of the toughest periods of my life was when I realized I had to give up music, and that was just in order to live. I considered that a very, very bad luck period of time.

The thing that I went to after that was the Internet. I wasn't happy about it, and again, I thought it was the worst luck in the world. But that transition happened for the great

reason that I'm enjoying tremendous success today, being able to help people make a living online.

I was blessed to have been forced into that bad situation in order to be brought to the Internet and doing what I'm doing now.

CML: That sounds like the old quote: "In every adversity there is the seed of an equivalent or greater advantage."

Rick: That's exactly it. I didn't know then. I didn't know then. But today I know the reason.

CML: Do you now feel like you've come out the other side of those bad luck periods?

Rick: Oh, for sure. That period of time was a couple of years, and I've been pretty fortunate, Charles. I've not had many periods of my life like that.

CML: Anybody who has visited your website or read your articles and books knows you're a realist. You specialize in getting results. And yet there's a kind of thread running through most of your writing that reveals a deep awareness of the spiritual side of human relations. Did this come naturally to you? Or was it something you gradually developed?

Rick: A combination of both. I think I've always had that spiritual side. I know I ran my dry cleaning business a lot differently than my competitors did. I had more of a friendship relationship with my staff, and just my customer policies and different things. I was very, very successful. I think I had the best bottom line for a lot of miles, just because of how I operated that business. There were some spiritual principles involved in doing that.

I am very much right-brained. You couple that with spiritual tendencies, and I think you're always wide open to receiving new ideas and concepts, and therefore, grow more quickly than a lot of people.

Another thing I've said is the learning curve never flatlines.

CML: How much of this outlook do you feel like you got from your father?

Rick: You know what? I think I got a lot. My father passed away in 1996, and I've written about him in my new book. Whenever I go back to think and to see the growth that he went through as a human being and a father and a spouse and everything, I think a lot of that came from my father. My father was very religious, and I'm not religious; I consider myself very spiritual, but I think that those seeds are sown in the way you're raised, and then also the way you see "icons" in your life grow through their life.

CML: You know, this is a theme that has cropped up in several of the Interviews – this difference between being religious and being spiritual. Could you maybe discuss that for a second?

Rick: I don't want to get your readers upset with me.

CML: No no. That's fine. If they've read my book, they've already . . .

Rick: Okay . . . I don't subscribe to the concept of organized religion whatsoever.

What I find missing in the ones that I am aware of (and I'm aware of a lot of them; I studied world religions in high school), mostly the Christian denominations, I really, really miss the true essence of spirituality. To me, religion is not something outpouring. It's not something you go to do at a certain time.

Religion is internal. It's from the heart and it's from the soul and from the mind. I find that missing a lot in religions. I've seen the history, just the terrible history in this world, the wars and famines and needless slaughter and starvation that were all in the name of religion.

CML: I don't think this is a new thing. Jesus, two thousand years ago, called it "whited sepulchers."

Rick: Yes sir. And he also did not (in my belief and in my limited reading of the Bible) envision the churches. He envisioned people helping one another and religion being internal. And I don't think he envisioned at all the structure and what it has come down to in this world now.

CML: Getting back to our main theme here, you're very much a creative, idea-oriented person. You write songs and books. You build new businesses. How do you recognize when a new idea is a really good one? Do you have a procedure for testing your ideas, or do you just somehow "know"?

Rick: You know what, it's more a "know" thing, Charles. A gut feeling.

Let me tell you a little process I go through. This happened in designing ad campaigns for my dry cleaners, writing music, writing somebody's album, and lately, writing my informational products. And I think most creators go through this.

Near the tail-end, when my product (be it a song, be it whatever) is done, I usually go through a period of uncertainty and sometimes self-doubt.

CML: Sounds familiar.

Rick: I did that with the "E-Zine Marketing Machine" just prior to release, and that book, after nearly two years, still sells like hotcakes.

Same thing recently with "Branding You and Breaking the Bank." As a matter of fact, I

delayed the release about a month because it just didn't feel like the time, and it was that uncertainty about it. I released it a week and a half ago, and it's taken off like a rocket. I think this serves to keep the creator humble, and serves to keep creators – myself – grounded.

What the truth here is, all during the creation process, from the moment you get the idea, all the way up to when this happens, that's the truth. Not the small period of time when you have the jitters. But I'm a realist and I also know my next product could totally flop, and I would have to adjust to what could be perceived as a failure, but more, it would be a lesson in perhaps a little bad judgment. And I would learn and grow from that.

CML: I read somewhere that the typical businessman who releases new products on the Internet has a success rate of about one-in-four to one-in-seven. It sounds like you're beating the odds.

Rick: I haven't flopped yet.

CML: When I read that, I thought, "Wow, that's a bad suggestion!"

Rick: Well, you know, I'm very blessed in that regard, and I didn't mean that comment smugly whatsoever. I am a total realist, and I've got three or four more products that I'm working on right now. And I do realize that, be it timing, be it a bad idea on my part, for whatever reason, I could have a flop. What you do is, you pick up and go on to the next.

CML: Where do you get most of your ideas for new products or services?

Rick: Well, I'm half crazy. Put it that way right now. Sorry, I'll let you finish your question.

CML: Specifically, do you have some kind of brainstorming process you rely on, or do your ideas come from things your customers ask you about?

Rick: Hmm. That's a two-fold answer.

One of my favorite quotes in the world is from Bob Proctor, and I know Bob. The first "self-growth" book I read was "You Were Born Rich." I haven't read many, but I did read that an awful long time ago.

There were three quotes that, up until I had my wallet stolen about four years ago, I kept on a piece of paper. I wrote them and I kept them for, I bet, twenty years.

The quote that just floored me, Bob said, "I am grateful for the idea that has used me." It's like every idea, from the light bulb to the Slinky, was already out there in the universe circulating, and it was just up for someone to have their antenna up and be ready to receive the idea. That is how ideas come to me, by and large.

There's also the practical side, which is part two of the answer.

My history and my true story of writing articles on the Internet was so successful, I had no choice but to write my first book, "The E-Zine Marketing Machine." That was a "no-brainer." It worked so well and I could help so many other people do the same thing. And it has. It was just there. It had to be done. And actually, my new book, "Branding You and Breaking the Bank," was the same thing. It's the logical sequel to "E-Zine Marketing Machine."

Then, sometimes your customers will tell you. And that was part of your question. There are two pieces that I've written that have become extremely popular. One is the "Entrepreneur's Prayer" and the other is "The Legacy You Leave." I've had countless people tell me, "Put those out, Rick." There are many major corporations that have asked permission to have the "Entrepreneur's Prayer," which is a lot older than "Legacy," hanging in their corporate offices. And just an infinite number of entrepreneurs and small businesses and what-not have asked for permission to do the same thing. I had enough of those requests that my customers actually told me to put that product out, and within a week or two, they're going to be out.

CML: Where can customers find that? Or are you ready to announce that yet?

Rick: Well, I'm just working up the logistics right now with my programmers. I believe it's going to be on the [Rick Beneteau dot com](http://RickBeneteau.com) domain. But if they go either there or [Interniche dot net](http://Interniche.net), they're going to be able to find that.

CML: Getting back to the subject of luck, do you still sometimes find yourself getting into a slump period, or a time when you feel like, "Oh, man, I just don't feel like motivating myself"? And if you do, do you have a set of techniques for putting things back on track?

Rick: I just told you about those periods just prior to release of products. I'm really glad that happens. I do believe that keeps you grounded. Keeps you humble. And also, it makes a success so much more spectacular because you've been from – I wouldn't call it a low point – but it's less than your normal optimistic thinking. I was so delighted when my new book just shot like a rocket, and coming out of that period, it just made that victory so much sweeter.

You and I were at the [SuperSeminar 2001](http://SuperSeminar2001.com) conference that John Harricharan put together, and I don't know if you recall me saying that when things get a little tough or I need to be motivated I do what's called "the blessings count." I take a very good look at all the great things in my life. My family, my friends, my health, my successful business, the talent that I have, and the ability to help a lot of people and make a good living while doing it. That serves to center me very much. All ego aside, I will read my "Entrepreneur's Prayer" and lately, I will read "The Legacy You Leave." That really, really seems to center me.

CML: It sounds like you actually work at keeping your attitude and your mind centered on what you're doing.

Rick: I wouldn't call it work. For the most part, I'm very self-motivated. I'm a positive thinker. I mean, we all have our bad days. You're on the Internet, and you know how bad a bad Internet day can be. Whatever little periods I have now, aside from just prior to releasing a product (because that seems to be a pattern in the last several weeks or a month), for a little pick-me-up I'll just read something, or think of a good quote, or take a look around me, like how much good I have in my life and how fortunate I am to be alive at this time and be thriving. So be it a momentary thing or a bad day, I do my blessings count.

CML: What's the difference between success and luck?

Rick: Well, you will always find luck when you're in a success state of mind. By that I mean, you could be like I was three years ago, dead flat broke, but as long as you're working on your success, you are successful. As long as you believe you are successful and you put that vibe out there, luck will find you.

So many people consider successful people lucky, but it's the other way around. They first created that success mindset that in turn created the success reality where luck comes knocking on your door all the time.

CML: Interesting viewpoint. I haven't heard it said that way. That's good.

How big a role in your successes do you actually feel is played by luck. I know you've partially answered that question just before, but the unexpected breaks, the unplanned-for introductions to just the right persons, suddenly coming across a piece of information or a book that moves your project forward, that kind of thing?

Rick: Putting yourself in the position to receive that luck is what's key here. Luck will happen if you do that. To me it's a law as sure as gravity. That luck could be a book or a person you meet, or a flash idea that comes to you. But you put yourself in that position to buy that book, run into that person, or receive that great idea.

I've had an article half-written for a long time; I just never had the time to complete, called "What's Luck Got to Do with It?" and it's about this very concept.

CML: What books or teachers have helped you grow?

Rick: I mentioned Bob Proctor and "You Were Born Rich." That was a very powerful read for me. It opened my eyes to the power that we all have in us, and that it's simply a matter of finding out how to utilize it.

Have you heard of Wallace D. Wattles?

CML: Yes!

Rick: Oh my gosh! Just my favorite, favorite modern-day teacher. He was born in the late 1800s, and I believe he died in 1903 – the early 1900s anyway – and the most amazing, amazing teachings that all the present-day self growth authors and speakers build on.

I've not read as many of those great books as I would like to have. I've always been so darn busy. But the thing I find in the ones I have read and speakers I've listened to is, everything boils down to a couple of really simple truths. It's just how the teachers put a twist on that truth, their ability to create that thing in you where it's like a light switch and finally you get it. The "ah-ha moment."

Wallace D. Wattles just totally, totally amazes me.

CML: When I read his stuff, I found it was just incredibly condensed. He didn't spend a lot of time giving illustrations and stories and for-instances. He just simply stated one principle right after another.

Rick: You got it. You know the law of attraction and that you deserve good things. That whole concept is so important.

CML: Have there been certain people who either knowingly or unknowingly served as mentors to you along the way?

Rick: You know, one person I've admired ever since I was in my early twenties getting into business is Lee Iacoca. From the inception of the Mustang, to saving Chrysler. That man should be president of the United States. He would never get unelected. They would change the voting laws and just keep him. Just an amazing man with an ability to motivate huge volumes of people to share in a single vision and turn everything around. That man has just always impressed me.

Jimmy Carter is another man. I wasn't really into politics. I'm not now, but I was less into politics when he was president, and he really didn't impress me as a president. But I always felt that he was a very sincere man, maybe too sincere for that job (if there is such a thing). What that man is doing now just impresses me. Habitats for Humanity. He's just using his influence to make a lot of positive change in the world.

CML: He is one of the most active ex-presidents I've seen.

Rick: Absolutely. And you know, that is selfless. He doesn't need it. That is just concern for humankind, and I truly, truly admire people like that.

John Harricharan has become a friend to both of us just recently, and John and I have become especially close in the last half year. John is a wonderful human being, and I've

learned a lot from John.

CML: Looking at it from the other side of the relationship, why do you think somebody would decide to mentor another person? What's in it for them?

Rick: Success. We all learn from one another, so why not learn from those who are successful in their personal and business lives? I'm not talking about tips, tricks and tactics here; if you mentor a successful person, be it business or be it personal, you discover how they think, how they act, what happens as a result.

CML: Why do you think they do it? Why does the teacher adopt somebody to teach. What do they get out of it?

Rick: Well, that's an interesting question. You know, perhaps it's a need. About six months into my entrepreneurship on the Internet, I was flabbergasted, even red-faced and embarrassed by a lot of the e-mail, communications, phone calls, by how much influence I was having on people.

When I really started to find out that, be it an article or be it, lately, my book, they were really helping to change people's lives. It almost feels like a responsibility now.

In the music business, I was always in the background; writer, producer. I would never be onstage. My name would never be a household name – didn't want it.

On the Internet, without even knowing that this was going to happen, all of a sudden, you're the one writing the articles; it's your name, it's your book, it's this interview. And I just think it becomes almost a moral responsibility.

CML: Do you find yourself reaching deeper into yourself to pull out more of this to give now?

Rick: Another good question. Yes.

I go into very reflective periods of time. Usually just prior to starting a new project or creating a new book or whatever, and I analyze that very, very carefully. It's almost like meditation. And you question all the reasons you're doing this and making sure that all your reasons are noble, that your intentions are correct, that you're very, very centered on why you're doing this, the direction you're moving, although from day to day (you know, the Internet's so crazy) different things happen. But you make sure that your prime reasons for doing what you're doing are good, solid reasons.

CML: So it's more than just "throw out a product and sell it."

Rick: Well, for me it is. I'm sure you've noticed, my products are quite different than everybody else's, be that good or be that bad. I'm friends with just about everybody that's putting out marketing products and are successful doing it. But there is a common

spirituality between us all, though. My products are not really how-to. I mean, I do give some steps and things, but it's always more the approach of doing, which is what I center on, and which is largely responsible for my success.

I'm friends with Marlon (Sanders) and Yanik (Silver) is a new friend now, and Declan (Dunn), and Michel Fortin. There's a real common thread there that runs through all of us. Even though our products are different, we have this internal thing that lets people know that we're doing this for good reasons. Oh yeah, we want to make money, for sure, but these are good products. These are going to help you, and we're honest. I always go back and revisit that.

CML: Your life today – are you living totally freeform, or do you carefully structure and plan out your life?

Rick: I'd say it's a combination of both. I'm currently, as I told you, developing several new products, and I need to have a more structured setting while I'm doing that. I've already admitted to the fact that I'm right-brained. I'm also a Virgo, and they sometimes fight one another, but while I'm in this product mode and really working intensely, I try to accomplish more in each day than I set out to do. I'm pretty hard on myself in that area, but I don't consider myself anal about it. If the day goes by and there are some interruptions, I don't beat myself up. I pick up and go on the next day.

And during the process, even when I'm working in the structured setting, and as disciplined as I get, I still am pretty freeform within that. I don't beat myself up to get certain things done, and if a problem comes my way, or we're working on the software program and something comes up, I'm very, very easy when it comes to problems like that.

My programmer can't believe me, sometimes. We'll crash and the ordering system goes down and it's twelve hours later, and I'm not flying off the handle. I've been through stuff way worse than that, and so have you, Charles, so it's always going to come back to you. I fully believe that stuff always happens for a reason.

CML: You're talking about perspective.

Rick: Yes, absolutely.

CML: For a person who's practically buried in problems, what do you suggest they do first?

Rick: Okay, that's pretty easy. First and foremost, they need to know their own thinking process. That is absolutely key. They will discover the root of their "problem attraction" right there.

CML: Their problem attraction?

Rick: Yeah, you attract problems. You attract luck. So they have an attraction problem. Most likely they're thinking negative thoughts; they're thinking negative thoughts most of the day; they're surrounded by a lot of (or at least some) negative people. And I would say, most likely they buy into the creed that life is controlling them as opposed to what's really the truth, that they control their own life. And they are attracting into their own life these exact results.

We talked about Wallace D. Wattles. There's a book that I believe everyone should read, but especially people who feel they're down on their luck. It's called "The Science of Becoming Excellent." It was written by Wallace D. Wattles way, way back and rewritten, I think, just in more modern-day language, by Dr. Judith Powell. Everybody should have this book. It's an eye-and-mind-opener.

CML: Can they get it at [Amazon dot com](https://www.amazon.com)?

Rick: I wish I could tell you that. I don't know.

CML: But they can do a search.

Rick: Do a search. It's "The Science of Becoming Excellent."

CML: It sounds like what you're saying is: until you take responsibility for creating the bad stuff in your life, you won't have the power to create the good stuff in your life.

Rick: That it absolutely true.

CML: Do you believe that every person can improve their life and their luck?

Rick: Again, absolutely. We're masters of our own destiny. I also believe that, as human beings, we are totally boundless and we're full of potential. What it really takes is true desire to improve our lives and make the necessary changes in your life. It's not always easy, but it is always doable.

CML: How does a person who has maybe been raised in a very rigid, negative early childhood – and they don't believe all this stuff – how do they turn their mind around?

Rick: In a lot of cases, Charles, I think people really have to bottom out. They have to reach a point where they're just so unhappy that they know something has to change. They have to make the decision to change, and then go on a course to try to find that light switch, that "ah ha" that I talked about. It is not hard to find. Just go and seek it.

Reading. Read that book. Go into Barnes and Noble or whatever the bookstores are in your area, and just go to the self-help or personal growth section and just read as much as you can get.

If a top speaker comes to your town, go and see that speaker. Somewhere along the way you're going to find something that turns that light switch on. Just desire it, and that will happen.

CML: I read an interesting illustration recently. It said, "Your mind is a bucket of water; if the bucket is full of dirty water, all you have to do is turn on a slow trickle of clear water, and eventually the bucket will be filled with clean water."

Rick: That applies. That applies. Surround yourself with good stuff.

CML: And just keep at it.

Rick: Keep at it. You know, I can't stress this enough, and it's very, very unfortunate: the world is full of negativity (turn on the news). Get rid of most of that, as much of that as you can.

CML: What? You mean don't listen to the news first thing in the morning?

Rick: Yes, that's what I mean. Absolutely. I mean that. You know what? I'm being a hypocrite here because I love CNN. I love the technology. I love how "on the fly" that whole thing is. I'm like the next person; when a big story breaks I like to go see what's happening.

CML: But that's not your only diet.

Rick: Absolutely. And I know how to filter that. A lot of people don't know how to filter that. And what also is fundamental is negative influences from other people, from relationships in your life.

We all have them, and it's important to shelter yourself from them as much as possible. As much as that may seem cruel, that is fundamental to experiencing good growth.

CML: So instead of battling people you feel are negative in your life, what's a more effective way?

Rick: Well, removing. And that may sound harsh. Just not letting the negativity influence you. You know, you have to be strong to battle it, okay? But a lot of people just don't have the strength to battle it. So therefore, they get sucked into that whole negative way of thinking, and that can be a very, very destructive force.

CML: How important a part of success is the feeling that you deserve good things?

Rick: Oh, that's infinitely important. I wrote "The Entrepreneur's Prayer" just because I believe in that concept so much. I know that in every success story, be it Lee Iacoca, Jimmy Carter, whomever, you're going to find that deep-rooted belief.

CML: In your experience, what's the best way for a person to begin building in that feeling of deserving good things.

Rick: I think they simply have to believe that they do deserve good things.

CML: And how do they build that?

Rick: The reading that I spoke about before. Also, I think you'll find that very truth in every major world religion. Again, it's echoed by all the modern-day personal growth speakers and authors.

You talked about us being raised with negative philosophies (and most of us were), which is in direct opposition to this thinking, but if you desire to change, you're unhappy with your life (you have to desire to change it, okay?). You have to get rid of that prior baggage, and it's not always easy but it is doable. And you will arrive at the point where you believe that you deserve all the happiness and all the riches and all the success that you could possibly handle.

CML: Do you have some kind of special technique for going out and seizing good luck instead of waiting around for it to find you? Or do you just simply feel like it's attracted to you like a magnet?

Rick: Well, I scream loud clear: it's there. It's there; it's there to happen; it's there to happen in your life. Whenever you try to force it, it probably won't happen.

When I've tried to force it, what I realized is that I wasn't focusing on me. Whenever I focused on helping other people and I work with a sincere heart and lots of integrity, I've almost always enjoyed success.

CML: It has been said: "Life helps those who help themselves," but it's also true that life helps you even more when you help others.

Rick: So true.

CML: What was the hardest thing in your life to change?

Rick: Oh, I guess that would be my address.

CML: Your address?

Rick: I'll explain that one. I had spent about two years building a great recording studio in my home prior to selling my dry cleaning business. I had planned to sell the business, and the two years prior Larry Thompson, my dear friend and music mentor and I worked very hard putting the studio together.

As part of the divorce, I was ordered out. There's quite a long story here, but there were custody issues and everything else involved, but that time was just very, very difficult for me.

CML: Changing your address actually included a lot more than just the physical address.

Rick: Oh yes.

CML: Your dreams, your plans for the future.

Rick: Absolutely.

CML: Do you feel like you've finally arrived at something like a coasting phase in life, or are you still on an uphill track, still learning lots of new stuff?

Rick: Coast? Who me? No way. Charles, I've always said that if a day goes by and we don't learn something new, it's a wasted day. Uphill is good; Dan Hill bores me. Sorry, that's a bad music joke. Probably only some of your readers will get that. But seriously, I think that if you ever think you've got it all figured out, you're going to go downhill.

CML: Does learning ever get any easier the farther you go?

Rick: Yeah, sure it does. The more you learn, the more you grow and the more open you become to new ideas and concepts. To me it's very cyclic, and it's the entire reason we're put on this earth. I already talked to you about my dad, and I saw him grow so much in his latter years. It was wonderful.

CML: So being open to learning is something like a skill that you can polish and get better at?

Rick: You know, I think as long as you're open and receptive, new things come to our attention every day, and most of it's not worth learning, but there are going to be a few things that are. As long as you're receptive to that and apply that knowledge to your life in a positive way, it's a great thing.

CML: Do you have any advice for people who don't really like to learn new stuff?

Rick: To me, it's one thing to not like learning, but it's a whole other thing to refuse to learn. For those who refuse to learn, I think: enjoy your day job.

But everybody is capable of learning, both from their past and new things that come their way. If you're not happy with where you are, it's only new things such as changing thinking patterns that will move you on to something better.

CML: A lot of teachers say that the earth experience is about to undergo a big change. How do you envision our daily life changing over the next, say, fifty or hundred years, or in the

next five hundred years?

Rick: Oh my heck! Charles, I'm no Jules Verne here, but technologically, I guess things like flying cars, communities on the moon and Mars and who knows where. Maybe even transporting people like they do in Star Trek will be commonplace in fifty to a hundred years. I couldn't even begin to imagine five hundred years from now. I have imagination, but it's not that vivid.

I think, too, most of us will work from home as most manufacturing jobs will be robotized.

CML: It seems like the big changes in society have always come from huge quantum leaps rather than the incremental changes. The Internet was a big leap, for example. Got any hunches about the kind of big, discontinuous leaps mankind may face in the future?

Rick: You know, Charles, I see some really, really great things. I don't know about technological leaps, but I see great advancements in medicine. I don't think we have a clue what scientists are capable of doing right now, but I know very soon most of the major diseases will not only be curable but preventable by treating people at the genetic level. Birth defects will be all but eradicated. Our life spans are going to grow a lot. People will be healthier and feel a lot better.

I pray, though, that whatever advancements are made for the benefit of humankind that they spread all over the world, and they're not just isolated to the industrialized part of the world that we're very fortunate to be in.

Another thing I see, and this is probably a more direct answer to your question; I see a great movement in spirituality coming.

I'm not talking about a new world religion but a leaderless, higher consciousness and awareness of the real truth of the world. And people will begin migrating to this. As such, I think the power of politics and money will play less and less of a role as people will demand real justice, and just people will come into the power positions.

I think it's through this higher consciousness that the injustices all over the world will begin to diminish. I don't think this is going to happen quickly, though. I think it's going to evolve slowly over decades. But what I see the Internet doing is being a facilitator of this.

CML: Interesting viewpoint. I like that. Any parting words of special advice to readers who are still floundering around trying to get out of the starting gate?

Rick: I think the bottom line here to this whole interview, and the reason you're doing it, is just to let people know what is really simply, the truth. You make your own luck. The world does not dish it out to you. If you find yourself in a rut, you can dig yourself out. Easy?

Nope.

Among my quotes is one that says, “Mountains do move, one stone at a time.” And that’s the truth.

Another thing. I’ve written an article and I’ve done a lot of thinking on the concept of fear because I believe fear is the greatest crippler to success. It’s what I call the dividing line between success and failure.

It’s very, very natural to be afraid of something new. Natural to be afraid of changing. Getting out of your comfort zone is must uncomfortable, but unless you do, your life will most likely stagnate.

CML: You know, I’m not sure why people call that “comfort zone” because most people are not comfortable in their comfort zone. How about “familiarity zone” or . . .

Rick: That is absolutely the truth. And bottom line? Not a single person has ever accomplished anything of significance without first feeling scared to death.

CML: I’ve heard it said that it’s very hard to move a comfortable person.

Rick: Ain’t that the truth! You know, this has been a wonderful interview, Charles, and if there’s only just one more thing that I can leave your readers with, it’s that becoming successful is not a matter of luck. Luck comes with creating the thinking environment within yourself for luck to find you.

CML: Terrific wrap-up. Rick, thanks for being with us today. I’m sure our listeners have discovered some great ideas in your advice and suggestions.

Listeners can visit Rick Beneteau’s main website at [Rick Beneteau dot com](#) and also [Interniche dot net](#). And where can they find your products that you’re promoting?

Rick: I have three affiliate programs right now, Charles. My first book *E-Zine Marketing Machine* is at [Ezine Money dot net](#). My new book *Branding Yourself and Breaking the Bank* can be found at [Branding Yourself dot com](#).

And I also have a very cool product called [ID It Plates dot net](#). They’re elegant chrome plates that go on the back of your car and promote your web business: ID It Plates dot net.

CML: Listeners can find your products there?

Rick: Absolutely.

CML: Rick, thanks for talking with us today. It’s been fun.

Rick: My pleasure, Charles. It sure has been fun.

Rick Beneteau is the highly acclaimed author of the new, top-selling eBook *Branding You and Breaking the Bank*.

Spend what he guarantees will be the most important few minutes you'll spend on the Internet and Start Branding you and Breaking the Bank: <http://www.brandingyourself.com/?10181>

Chapter 11

Interview with Clay Cotton

Author of *Value Worthy of Devotion - The Irresistibility of Love-Based Marketing in a Wired, Wired Age*

May 6, 2001

It's All Inside

To hear free audio samples from this interview, click on:

<http://www.inside-the-minds-of-winners.com/samples/>

Command More Luck (CML): Visiting with us today is Clay Cotton. If you're familiar with the professional music scene, you'll recognize this name because Clay has been around forever. He's played with Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendricks, Chuck Berry, Etta James, Aurora Cotton, Bonnie Rait and I've left out hundreds of others.

And if you've ever heard his particular brand of boogie-woogie, you will never forget it.

Now Clay has moved in to the Internet with the same fierce passion that has always marked his musical performances.

You'll find his website at [Clay Cotton dot com](#) and his newest website, [Marketer's Hall of Fame dot com](#).

Clay, thanks for being with us today.

Clay Cotton: It's my pleasure, Charles. Thank you for calling me.

CML: For readers who are not familiar with your name, could you give a bit of background about yourself, your business, your career?

Clay: Well, my initial career was as a piano player, though I didn't go into music as a career. I just did it because I had a passion for it. That particular type of music, that boogie-woogie rock-n-roll piano, Jerry Lee Lewis type style. And then I went on to the progenitors of that style of music. And I was so passionate about it that I just did it more and more and better and better, and ended up being a worthy enough player that I was asked to join some professional bands after high school. I did that, and that was a career that I got pleasure from for thirty years.

Around the early nineties, I became involved with an organization that was paying attention to direct response marketing, so I attended some conferences by Dan Kennedy and the like and made good buddies with Mike Enlow and Jeff Paul, two other persons

that were at those conferences, that people might know of.

CML: Powerful names, yeah.

Clay: They are good names and great people.

I played around with direct response for three or four years and had some success in promoting workshops and seminars to teach people how to play piano by ear. So I got used to writing headlines and body copy. Short little paragraphs because I was putting them in college and university continuing education brochures, so I had to make it really short and sweet. I only had about a paragraph to make the point.

So I got used to writing really as powerful copy as I possibly could with the best headlines I could, in order to fill up these classrooms. And I got used to “engineering the circumstances” so that the people there would want to purchase a \$200 back-of-the-room package, even though I was prevented from selling by my contract with the college. Teachers cannot sell in many colleges and universities. So I had to engineer the psychology of the situation to where the people in the class would want to seek out a purchase of these things, even though I was unable to sell it to them by my contract in the classroom. It was a really interesting challenge, and I rose to the occasion – after a lot of mistakes and goof-ups.

Then around the end of 1994, I decided I wanted to move on from that, and a pal of mine was active in the insurance industry. So I started paying attention to financial services, looking at the success that this fellow had had.

I had already had, at one point in my life, a stockbroker’s license, a series seven exam, and I knew that financial services could be very lucrative. I figured that I would take my direct response marketing skills and apply them to financial services. I did that and was relatively successful for a couple of years in the mid-nineties.

Then, even though I’d had e-mail since 1991, the Internet was not really very active for me. But in late 1996, early 1997 I decided I would take my experience from the financial services realm offline, and I would put it online so that people that were doing investigation of certain products online would end up coming to one of my websites. I now have a cluster of websites around the niche that is the most powerful for me right now.

CML: Your career touches a lot of different areas. Going back to the music where you started, did you love music from day one, or were you forced to take piano lessons by your mom, or how did you start?

Clay: Well, I liked music as much as any kid likes music, little songs you whistle and sing, and what-not.

And at age nine, I was going to visit my grandmother, and as my mother and I walked up the stairs, we heard the old upright piano in the parlor being banged out with this fun, rollicking sort of boogie-woogie style music. A gentleman was there that was visiting my grandmother, and he was playing this sort of music. My mom and I both started smiling, and my grandma started smiling when we walked in the room, and the piano player was smiling. Everybody was just having such a good time that it really impressed me.

CML: So it was like love at first sight.

Clay: Love at first sight. Precocious kid that I am, I just got glued to the keyboard and I said, "Can you teach me how to do that? Show me how to do it!" He did volunteer to teach me the left hand, and then I came back the week after that and I got him to show me the right hand, and then I had my little song to play. And I've basically been playing that one song for forty years. Same old song, same thing, just different keys, different styles, different speeds, different grooves, different feels. But it's pretty much the same one universal song. It's so much fun, such great music.

CML: You're lucky. So many people never find their career. Their whole life, they flounder around, they look here, they look there. And never really find IT.

But you found yours at age nine.

Clay: Yeah, I found that at age nine. It was just a passion. I just loved it, and I really think if you're alert to your passions and you allow yourself to live the passion, you can find things to be passionate about all day long, every day. It just so happened that that was the one that picked me at the right time.

It picked me, did you hear me say that?

CML: Uh huh, it was a piece of luck.

Clay: It was a piece of luck, and it picked me, and there was no question that I was just totally fascinated by that.

I mean, I was fascinated by model airplanes, too, but that didn't grab me the way this did. And chemistry experiments and Little Professor stuff around that same age, nine-ten. There were lots of things to capture my attention, but nothing really got me like the music did.

And I have turned out to have that same passion for direct response marketing and promotion. I really have a passion for it, especially if it's done right, because it's a lot like music. You're delivering value to people and capturing, sustaining and directing their attention to things that are in their best interest.

CML: Even before you went into direct marketing, you kind of had a knack for selling, didn't you? Presenting things to people, getting results you needed from them?

Clay: I don't know. I guess I did. I was a clumsy manipulator, a clumsy salesperson, a clumsy predator, in my own way.

You know, like kids are.

CML: You had the instinct but you needed the polish?

Clay: Yeah! I had the instinct, but I mean, everybody has the instinct to get their own way. Everybody wants to get their own way. That's what we get when we're in the crib. You know, change my diapers, get me some food, I'm uncomfortable, I'm too hot, I'm too warm, my tummy hurts. That's where you start communicating your wants and your needs, trying to get your needs met. So I think pretty much all our lives, all of us in one way or another, are trying to promote to the world to help meet our needs, to influence and persuade people to do what we would like them to do.

CML: Do you have any kind of working definition for good luck or fortune, or success, that you actually use in your daily life?

Clay: Yeah, well, those are all different words. Good fortune. Good luck. Success. I don't really equate success with luck and good fortune – I mean, consciously, I don't. Maybe unconsciously I do because I believe that it's hooked to the lessons we need to learn in this particular life, and to the Great Spirit, God, the lessons that we're given in this life, and either the good fortune or bad fortune or whatever it may be.

But I don't really equate my success so much with good luck. I think the good luck that I've had in my life, you know where things have plopped down in my lap, have really been more like lessons that I needed to learn.

CML: Opportunities and challenges plopped down in your lap?

Clay: Yeah, when I get an opportunity, I have to rise to the occasion, and you know, I've read things about wealthy people who decide not to give their wealth to their children because they don't want their children to be burdened with unearned wealth.

CML: This is a really important distinction. Could you go back and say that again? The difference between good luck and success, where good luck – I'm going to rephrase now, but this sounds important – where good luck is often an opportunity, but you have to rise to the occasion.

Clay: Yeah, and good luck is often a curse because now, all of a sudden, you have the responsibility for something that has plopped down in your lap that maybe you don't have the skills or the perceptions or the experience to handle it properly. I've known

people that have received inheritances and it's gone.

I know a guy that won a lawsuit for \$8 million when he was injured in an accident, and he's not as happy now as he was before. Much sadder now, and with the ability to indulge his sadnesses. Good luck is really masked, you know. It's a trick.

Success is something that's passion related, and if you have a passion and you move with your passion and you can share your passion with others in a way that helps them get their needs met, then you might have success. But it's not so much financial success; it's value success. Providing value to other people.

So I sort of tend to think of success as delivering or issuing value worthy of devotion.

CML: That's a wonderful definition.

Clay: I like those words, value worthy of devotion, because if you can figure out a way to follow your passion, and through the following of that passion, understand that other people have related needs or related passions and you can figure out a way or discover the way to issue value worthy of their devotion, for the highest good of all concerned, that would be the magic formula. Because you're passionate about it, and the people that you are issuing the value to are getting excited and finding value there that is worthy of their devotion.

CML: I have here in front of me a quote you sent me about two weeks ago.

"Just an e-mail. Thought you might like this:
To be lucky, you need skills."

That's from Dr. David Campbell.

Clay: That's a good one, huh?

CML: Uh huh. I think you've just said the same thing.

Clay: Well, you know, there are opportunities in every day. You know, you walk out the door and you look at something. You read a newspaper and you see that a certain event is taking place. There is going to be opportunity there for the person that is sensitive to it. And you need to have skills. You have to be scanning for value, scanning for opportunities, and to train yourself to the point where you're an effective scanner for opportunities and values.

What value are these people going to need? What value is not going to be delivered to them? Say there's going to be – I live in Santa Fe, New Mexico now, and down on the Plaza there are events that take place. Community Day and Indian Market and Spanish Market and all of these different things take place in the Plaza that are gatherings of huge

amounts of people.

So you say you read that in the paper. What value might those people need that they're not currently getting? How might you be able to offer them some value that is worthy of them acting upon it because it so meets their needs? There are the needs of the craftspeople, the needs of the food providers, the needs of the police, the needs of the merchants around the Plaza that are not involved in this fair in the middle.

There are the needs of the consumers. Some of them are going to have to park places. What are they going to need to eat? What are they going to be thinking? When are they going to get tired? What are they going to want as a diversion after their senses are overloaded from standing up so much and walking around the Plaza so much.

I mean, you just think about all these different things and you'll figure out some way to maybe provide value in that circumstances. Maybe that would be a limited context in which to apply this.

CML: Meanwhile, most of us are walking around sensitive only to our own needs.

Clay: Yeah, right, thinking about ourselves. Well, I do a goodly amount of that, too, but at the same time . . .

CML: We all do, but you're talking becoming more sensitive to other people. And when you do that, you become luckier.

Clay: Yeah, I think so because then you see the openings.

CML: You see the openings. There's a title for a book

Clay: You see the openings. You pierce the veil, you know, the veil of illusion in a way. And you see the opportunities through the curtain, through the veil, that there are opportunities and value that can be provided.

And a wonderful context for this is the Internet because if you can find an opening where value can be delivered on the Internet, you have not only a little Plaza filled with a thousand people, you have a hundred million people globally, of which there is going to be a healthy percentage of them perhaps interested in the particular niche or the particular value where you're going to address them. And because of that huge moving parade, there'll be enough of them on a daily basis that you can make a living off of it.

CML: A hundred million people in a parade. That's cool.

Clay: Right. So if you have a lemonade stand, or even a castor oil stand . . . let's say you were going to take castor oil to a hundred million people, now most people don't like castor oil, but then there's a fraction of a percentage of people who find it of high value. Castor

oil is great to swallow and to put on your skin.

You know, my wife uses it. She puts it on packs and packs it on her skin, and it has internal benefits for her.

You know, a lemonade stand and you set up a castor oil stand right next to it, I'm making a joke about this, but the fact is, there'll be enough of a percentage of people in a hundred million that will happen to be interested in castor oil and decide that they want some right at that time, that you'll make a tidy little profit. You'll do well. You'll be serving their needs. It's a small niche but there are enough people.

CML: And this applies to virtually any kind of niche possible.

Clay: I would think so. That's the way I think about it.

CML: Have you ever gone through a "bad luck period" when it seemed like life was trying to thwart you at everything you tried to do?

Clay: I don't blame life. And I don't look at life. I think I've gone through dark periods where I did not rise to the occasion – I didn't meet my potential – and where I couldn't find a context in which I would allow myself to bring value or deliver passion. And it was primarily emotional or ego-centric, about my life and my needs, and me, me, me. When I was embroiled in those things and living in my confusion, I wasn't inspired.

Fortunately, I was a musician at those times and I could go play music at night and talk with God, walk with God, playing the music, so I always had that connection where I could come and bring out that value for the listeners and experience the blessing of playing music myself.

But then, sometimes I found in the daytime that I just didn't have, I suppose you'd call it depression, I don't know. I just didn't have – I wasn't so depressed as I just was kind of confused and couldn't find something to do during the day. I'd watch Andy of Mayberry and Leave It To Beaver and Donna Reed reruns, Bonanza and stuff on TV.

CML: A fulfilling day.

Clay: And just wonder what am I supposed to be doing, you know, I don't get it. Is this all there is to life? But that was me. It wasn't life. I wouldn't call it bad luck or live getting me down. I don't blame life. Life's always there. Life is rich. Life is passion. You know, if you come to life with passion, it won't disappoint you.

CML: I hear you telling me that life is neutral and it's what each person makes of it.

Clay: Yeah, I could say neutral. But I think life is brilliantly exciting. Life is just awesome, the most awesome display of opportunities. It's not even neutral. Neutral is kind of gray, but

yeah, right, it could be. You could see it neutral. Yeah, life is neutral. You know, experiences are neutral.

CML: Extremely rich, but it doesn't care what you do with it.

Clay: Yeah. You come to the table with your own tools and your own skills and your own set of beliefs and value abilities. You come to the table, bring your own deck of cards. You're bringing your own cards to the table. You can't blame the dealer cause you brought the deck, you know.

CML: I also hear you saying another thing here. You don't blame life for things.

Clay: In my life, I've come to realize that I have to take responsibility for everything that happens. For everything that I experience. It's all internal. It doesn't really matter so much what happens on the outside. That's not the reality. The reality is the way I perceive it and organize the experience, process and bring meaning to the experience from within my perceptual set and my storehouse of histories and myths and stories and all the filters I use (that we all use).

When something happens on the outside – or doesn't happen on the outside – I can't get angry. It doesn't have to trigger an anger or a disappointment or a frustration in me. I'm the manager of my experiences, and so are we all. I've just learned to take responsibility for the fact that it's all internal.

CML: This is really important. I hope the listeners are really paying attention. Can you sum this up in one quick, like a punchline?

Clay: It's all inside, baby.

CML: That's as close as it gets.

Clay: My good friend, Dr. Robert Weiss in Santa Fe, New Mexico and has the Milton Erickson Institute, said to me just yesterday, "Every single thing that you think you want or need is completely and ultimately present right this very instant."

CML: It already exists.

Clay: It already is. And the meaning that I'm bringing to it right now is that they're all internal experiences, so if I think I want a grilled cheese sandwich, when I get the grilled cheese sandwich, so then I'll be satisfied and content, well satisfaction and content are manufacturable by me right now, even though I don't have a grilled cheese sandwich. I'm responsible for finding the satisfaction and contentment that I can experience right now.

Like I'm satisfied and content that I'm not living in a drainpipe, and I'm satisfied and

content that I'm not stuck out on the desert without any water. I'm satisfied and content about lots of things, whether or not the grilled cheese sandwich could trigger it.

You know, I'm not dependent on a grilled cheese sandwich, just because I think I want it. That's just a fantasy. I think I want a grilled cheese sandwich. I just can't live without it.

I haven't had a grilled cheese sandwich for years, and I used to love them when I was in high school, so I do want a grilled cheese sandwich, but I'm not going to have one. I know that's not on my diet right now.

CML: Do you feel like your life is controllable? So many people walk around feeling like their life is out of control; they have no say in what happens to them.

Clay: Oh, I know that's not the case. No, I have all the say in what happens. See, I take a proactive stance that I'm responsible for what happens to me because what happens, there can be any number of external things that could happen. There could be a police raid on the house, and they could come storming in here and accuse me of some sort of crime and drag me off to jail. That could happen. Anything could happen, but my response to that is my fault.

One time, way back when I was twenty years old and a young buck playing music down near Los Angeles and Santa Monica, I had a can of beer in my hand. So I was one month under age, under 21, and I had a can of beer. In the nightclub where I was working and performing onstage.

It was Ike and Tina Turner Review, and Ike and Tina were back there in the dressing rooms and the Ikettes and our band. It was backstage, man. I could have a beer if I wanted to backstage. That's what happens backstage.

But these Alcoholic Beverage Control policemen came in and they dragged me off to this little holding cell – right in the middle of my set. I was getting ready to go onstage.

So here I was, stuck in a six-by-six-foot room, an isolation, solitary cell, and I could have been worried, and I could have been sad, and I could have been – life could have treated me wrongly and I could have been indignant or any number of things.

But what I did is I noticed that there was an echo in the room, and I found the resonance point by going “oooo, oooo, oooo” till I found where it would resonate. And I started chanting and singing and resonating along with the resonance of the room, and that's what I did until my friends came and got me out of there.

It's interesting to me because I always look back at that, and I say, “Gees, I could have been really unhappy; that could have been a very stressful couple of hours.” But instead, I just found this little thing and “ooooooo.”

CML: Most of us, at any age, would have been sitting there obsessing about, “Oh my God, what am I going to do now,” and you’re finding the resonance point of the room.

Clay: Yeah. Well, that’s what it was at the time, you know. I mean, in a way that’s very Buddhist, it’s very Zen in a way I think. You know, at peace in presence with what is. Well, what was that there was a room there, and I was in it, and that was the end of that. I can groove with it or I can have a bad time.

CML: It sounds like this is a metaphor for your whole life.

Clay: Well, it’s not that I don’t have difficult times. We have difficult times. We have challenges, and I get upset.

CML: What do you do in times like that. For instance, if you have a day when you’re upset or you get off track, or maybe you feel like, “Oh, man, I just don’t want to motivate myself today.” What do you do? How do you get back on track?

Clay: Oh I don’t know, I take a nap. But that doesn’t happen very often, you know. Life is very exciting for me now and so I don’t get really – you know, I can go on the Internet and find something. I have piles of things that are interesting to me all over my office. There are three computers within my sight right here, and piles of courses of psychology and Neuro Linguistic Programming and Internet and marketing and I just have a tremendous amount of resources around me. Bookcase by bookcase after bookcase of books that I can hardly wait to read about all sorts of fascinating topics. Most of them are non-fiction books, amazingly enough. You’d think that I might want to bury myself in fiction.

Fiction works when you’re sad and depressed, you know. I used to get involved in fiction, and that’s a nice distraction. I’d go into a fiction book. If I was in a period of depression or feeling like life was getting me down, I’d find a fiction book, but not one that was depressing and that was going to end up as a tragedy. I’d try to find something that would have some sort of a happy ending in one way or another.

But with most books, part of it is the tension. You know, the tension of the challenge and the tension in the conflict. It’s the way books are written. They can’t just open up the first page and say, “Once upon a time, they lived happily ever after.” That’s the way books go, you know. There are some difficulties to overcome. It’s between the “once upon a time” and the “happily ever after.”

CML: What originally prompted you to jump into direct response marketing?

Clay: Actually, I was with a fellow who owned a company who was doing these piano trainings, and I started working with him as kind of a sales person, and we got to be friends and he said, “What do you think, should we go to this conference? You know, it might be good for the business.” And though I didn’t have equity in this business, he felt

it was worth it for him to pay for my ticket.

CML: Another piece of luck.

Clay: Well, I guess you'd call it luck, but I said, "Yes! Let's go for it!"

I could have said, "Oh, I don't think that's going to matter. That means I have to go all the way to Orlando, Florida." But I rose to the occasion. I stepped up and I said, "Yes, absolutely." And it was Dan Kennedy. I went to a Dan Kennedy seminar, and I think he was charging \$1,200 or something for it at the time, and Jerry Ballanger was there, as I recall. Jeff Paul was there, and Mike Enlow was there, and all of these interesting people.

You get a roomful of people that are that passionate and that involved and that interested with systems like this that are human nature systems, you know: this is how we handle human nature in the world of direct response marketing. That's so interesting to me.

It's a lot like music. You play these notes, they act that way. You play country music, they start kicking up their boots. You play Jewish wedding music, they act another way. You play sad little love ballads, then they act another way. Play rock-n-roll, and they start dancing. It's really interesting. You play music, people react.

And in direct response marketing, it's pretty much the same thing. You say these words, they do this. These things work, these other things don't work.

CML: Gosh, are people really that predictable?

Clay: En mass they are. You know, it's not like we're going to hypnotize them, though there's a great deal of hypnosis in copy writing, as you know. Conversational hypnosis, remote hypnosis. That's why I'm attracted to Neuro Linguistic Programming, because it seems to be a natural extension of the power of words from copy writing. It's just ever more subtle refinements of the music of the words, and you've got to hand it to the great shaman of all times, and orators, lawyers and religious people and tribal leaders and what-not that move crowds with their passion. You know, it's not the logic always that moves the crowd.

Napoleon once said, "We rule men with our words."

CML: Here was a man of military might, and he said . . .

Clay: "We rule men with our words."

CML: Interesting, isn't it? He knew where the real power was.

Clay: Yeah, he didn't say, "With our sabres," you know, or "with our ships, with our troops,

with our military law, and our enforcement.” He said, “We rule men with our words.”

And you know, you only have to look to the stuff that’s coming out of the White House and the Congress and stuff like that to know that that’s what’s going on around here, too. Kind of like The Matrix, only it’s a matrix of words, not necessarily of agents with guns and dark glasses and black suits.

CML: So do you think we can learn to use these words for affecting ourselves?

Clay: Affect my own life? My own life is the words that I . . . the map that I construct through which I navigate the world is my choice. I build my own map. The map is not the territory. The territory is what is realistically out there, but I draw my own map.

We’re using the words. I call this my “computer monitor”; I call that a “photograph”; I call this another thing, and I have feelings attached to these words that I use to describe what my senses experience. The way I process what comes in through my senses is all the words – that map that I make. Because there is just sensory input: what I feel, see, hear, touch, taste. You know, that’s pretty much sensory. There are no words attached to it when it comes in through the senses, but how I organize and represent those experiences to myself is all up to me.

CML: Returning to your website, you have a surprising array of products and services. Where do you get most of your ideas for your new products? Do you brainstorm, or do you just hear customers asking for them?

Clay: I suppose you can quiz customers. When you have traffic, I wouldn’t call them customers. I call them visitors or guests. We’re more like the hospitality industry, you know. Our valued guests come around and you could quiz them. What are you interested in? What do you like? What do you want?

CML: You just ask.

Clay: Yeah, just ask.

CML: It’s that simple.

Clay: I think I would do that, yeah. Please complain; what aren’t you getting? What am I not giving you? Why are you disappointed at my web site? What could it offer you that you don’t see here? What is the problem on your mind that needs solving? Because I mean, gosh, if that isn’t going to tell you what a new product ought to do, I don’t know what would.

CML: How do you recognize a winning idea? Do you test them or is it all gut-level feeling?

Clay: Well, for most people I’d say you test them. You don’t want to ever roll out any money

or spend any money or put any effort behind an idea that you think is going to work. Because that's for sure a ticket to failure. Just because I think it's going to work, and maybe my wife or girlfriend thinks it's going to work, and a couple of friends of mine think it's going to work, that's a prescription for failure because if we go off thinking that it's going to work – look what happened with the dot-com era in year 2000. At the beginning of 2000, everybody had an idea they thought was going to work, and millions in venture capital that came behind these nifty ideas they thought were going to work that were never tested and did not have a sensible business model or revenue model or what I call a value model. They just hallucinated that there was going to be a value. It was a fantasy.

Most of life is a hallucination or a fantasy for most people. They think they're right. Their ego won't take that. Their ego insists that "I'm right, I'm right, I'm right, I know, I know what's right, I know everything." Ego needs to tell itself that so that it can continue to bark orders at you. Ego's trying to bark all these orders and telling you that it thinks it knows what's right, what's best for you. And so you get to believing your ego all the time, and then when the ego has a hallucination or a fantasy that it presents to you, you pretty much believe it.

The thing is that you've got to test it out. You can't believe your ego or your own ideas – until you get a certain degree of successes behind you, and a degree of confidence. I'm pretty confident that that some of the new ideas will work because I think I've paid attention to a value model and human behavior and human nature long enough to know what might be needed.

By the time people are exposed to this interview, I will have up the website [Marketers Hall of Fame dot com](#) and on that website, I will be providing tremendous value to marketers, whether they are old, dyed-in-the-wool, brick-and-mortar marketers, or whether they're newcomers, or whether they're on the Internet, whether they use direct mail, whether they're in the traditional corporate advertising community, Madison Avenue, whatever – anybody that's in marketing is going to find some value there because I'm going to go find exhibits about the great progenitors of marketing.

And it's not going to be "I just want to sell you a tape cassette course on John Caples or Claude Hopkins or Dan Kennedy as an affiliate," something like that. I'm not just going to be out there pushing product. I'm going to really have biographies there, and interviews there, and just where you can go into like a reference library all about marketing. Where else can you find that?

CML: This sounds powerful.

Clay: Right. You can't go into your library and find a little bit on every marketer, living or dead. You can't find it. And you can't go any other place and get it without somebody trying to sell you a hundred dollar course or a forty dollar book or something. You know what I'm saying? You can't. So why not put it up there so that newcomers and

oldcomers alike can come in there and converse and have some discussion boards and some chat rooms and some exhibits where we can be proud of what we do and exalt the higher impulses of marketing rather than the lower, predatory, hit-and-run marketing that some people have done in the past. You know. The kind of militaristic, “get them in your targets and shoot them like sitting ducks” or “fish in a barrel, ha ha ha.” That’s more like piracy.

And that’s okay. Marketing and promotion and sales have worked like that for years and years and years, but it saddens and depletes the good energy that can be brought by serving people’s needs.

CML: So you feel like there’s an alternate model that might serve other people more.

Clay: Right, and that’s where I come up with this “Value Worthy of Devotion” and these terms “Love Based Marketing.” Love Based Marketing is a term that just fits for me, and it’s irresistible. Love is irresistible, and if you can demonstrate that you love somebody, you care enough about them to bring them things that will please them and enrich their lives and meet their needs, then they’ll be grateful to you rather than thinking of you as an intrusive pest that just came to sell another vacuum cleaner.

You know, you only should offer vacuum cleaners to people that have an expressed interest in vacuum cleaners. And then you’re a savior. You give them the best vacuum cleaner that you can find for them, and they say, “Oh, thank you.” Rather than running around saying, “Hey, you gotta buy this vacuum cleaner. It’s the newest model with a cyclone in it.” You know, you don’t take it to people that don’t have an interest in it.

CML: Same customer – same product – same salesman. But totally different motivation.

Clay: Right. You have to have a passion for the vacuum cleaner and a passion for the people that are in the vacuum cleaner market. And if that product and that market is passion-worthy to you (you’ve got to find something that’s passion-worthy). If it’s worthy of your passion, go into it, man, and learn everything you can about it, and become an expert. Become a lover; love your market. Fall in love with your market, and not with your product or your company or your agenda.

Go fall in love with the market and then listen to it very carefully: “What do you want? Do you want me to bring you flowers? Do you want me to blow in your ear? Do you want me to kiss on your neck? Or do you want me to take you for a ride? Would you like to walk? Do you want to go in the meadow today?” Whatever. You just ask your market, you know, you just be really sensitive to whatever they would like, and treat it as if you were a lover and just be intoxicated with your love for your market.

CML: After years and years of being indoctrinated with the quasi-military metaphor for selling, campaigns and so on, do you have any tips on how to switch over to the love octave?

Clay: Octave! That's a great one! I don't have the tips on the tip of my tongue right now. I'm developing those, and you'll find those at [Clay Cotton dot com](#), where I have a nice e-zine, and the newsletter will be keeping everybody informed with my research in this realm, and I believe everybody will be really interested. So I'm passionate for finding this roadway.

How do you get out of the military model? Break those old paradigms and rise to the new era of market-centric, love-centric, value-centric promotion.

CML: I'm looking forward to this.

Clay: Yeah, I know. I might even get away from the word "marketing" and instead talk about "valuing" or "value-centric promotions." Because you want to promote those things that are only of value to the people that you're promoting them to.

This is an awesome concept. I'm so excited I just about wet my pants. I mean, really, I'm really quite – and I say that because I know the effect it'll have, but who hasn't gotten so excited as a kid that they wet their diapers. I mean, doggies do it, you know. Kitty cats and doggies get excited and their bladders let go. I know, that's the way beings are. But I get so excited about this I'm enraptured by the concept.

And there are already people that are making inroads about this. It's sort of "the hundredth monkey" syndrome, where once one gets a hint that this thing is coming down the pike, other people get it, too. There are people that speak about "attraction marketing," and that's where, instead of running around trying to be everything to everybody, with attraction marketing, you stand in your truth like a lighthouse (Jan Brogniez and Stacey Hall are pioneering in this with their [Perfect Customers dot com](#), to where you attract the perfect customer that's just right for you because you stand in your truth and shine your light as bright as you can and say, "This is what I do; this is who I am; I am not going to put on different masks for you and pretend to be something else; this is what I stand for." And that way, only the people that are the most perfect for you will be attracted to you.

CML: Most people who go into selling, especially newcomers, like on the Internet, have this notion – they forget that everybody out there is actually looking for something, looking for a lot of things, and they concentrate on "what can I get them to buy."

Clay: Right. How can I manipulate them into buying the product that I happen to be carrying in my belt today or in my pack today.

CML: Instead of saying, "How can I get them what they want."

Clay: How can I serve them. How can I serve them. How can I issue value worthy of their devotion. Instead, often people will say, "I have this widget, and everybody ought to have this widget. Oh boy, widget, widget, I'm in love with my widget. Yep, man I've got

a green widget, and I've got a blue widget. Which one do you want? You want the widget today? It's a great widget. Today's a good day to buy a widget. I've got a sale on widgets. You can get two for the price of one today."

And it's just widget, widget, widget. It's so product-centric that people turn off to it, you know. They say, "This guy doesn't care about me; he doesn't love me; he's in love with his product. It's like he's walking around narcissistically looking at himself in the mirror, talking to himself, blasting and trying to trick me into being trapped. You're trying to trap me."

And then, maybe if he's successful, he does trap me. "Okay, I bought it. Oh, I really thought it was great. I bought it." And now you have buyer's remorse the next day.

What do you think the seller feels like when they go home and go to sleep at night. "Yeah, I bagged another dozen people today. Oh boy, am I hot."

It's like he can't feel very good about himself or herself when they're just shooting them like sitting ducks or fish in a barrel. Just because they were able to dominate – dominate – in the adversarial dance. Just because they were able to dominate as the seller today. That can't feel very good. It didn't feel very good to me when I was doing that in my little stint in sales, just because I won.

When they say "the rat race," hey, if you win the rat race, you're still a rat.

CML: You're still a rat.

Clay: Think about it. Isn't there some other race we could be running? Isn't there a more heartfelt delivery that we can do now? Giving people value? Bringing them something out of respect for them? Out of devotion to their interests? Out of wanting to enrich their lives?

And if I can't bring you something that enriches your life, then I don't have any business speaking with you. If I'm not delivering you a value, I should go someplace where I can deliver some value, where I will really be of true value. And that's passion driven. I've found something that's passion-worthy, and I'm passionate about, I'll go find the people that are passionate about the same thing or that have a need in that area, and that'll be a perfect match, rather than trying to go up and down the street where I live and try to sell them air compressors.

These people don't need air compressors. They're my neighbors. I don't need to sell them air compressors. Why would I go to them? You know, I should go quiz them. What do my neighbors want and need? Maybe I'll find something. Maybe there's some way I can if I'm passionate about delivering value to my neighbors. I'm not that involved with my neighbors, but if I was, then that's who I'd ask. I go quiz them and find out, "what do you need, what do you want, how can I help you, how can I be of service?" And you'll

turn up some very interesting things.

Some of those things will rise in your breast in a passionate way. And when that happens, it's unstoppable. Now you're on a mission. Now you're obsessed, fixated, compulsive to deliver that value to people, and that's a nicer way to live.

CML: What books or teachers have helped you grow?

Clay: Well, that's a long list, and there's a lot of different ones. I'm drawn to a mystic by the name of Meher Baba. He's been a big influence on me because of a couple of quotes that he had. He was very eloquent about love and devotion, and that really hit me.

Another guy is Rumi, the twelfth century Arabian Poet. Awesome. I've been listening to Rumi recently, and he's just awesome, he's so passionately in love, so intoxicated with love. It's just amazing that he could be so eloquent about that.

Then in sales and marketing, Dan Kennedy has got a lot of great tools. Claude Hopkins was a progenitor of direct response marketing and accountable advertising. That only makes sense, these things, when we think about them now.

The great copy writers. Eugene Schwartz was a copy writer that I was really attracted to for some time.

Dr. Robert Cialdini is an academic who analyzes social psychology and elements that are present when influence works – stuff like that.

But that's more like that manipulative, predatory paradigm. We have examples of people that can study direct response marketing and study influence and persuasion.

I don't want to get involved in political things, but when people move the hearts of masses, you've got to think hey, something's working here; somebody's doing something right because millions of people don't move and change their lives unless somebody's pulling some strings that are working. You know, they're doing something that's working.

Religious people are able to inspire the devotion of people, and I look to those people, especially when they're doing it for the highest good of all concerned.

CML: Have there been certain people who either knowingly or unknowingly served as mentors to you along the way? For example, your first piano teacher was obviously an important mentor.

Clay: Yeah, the guy that was playing piano there who was kind enough to see the spark in my breast and the twinkle in my eye, and knew that I wanted to do that, and he took time out of his life to show me. He didn't charge me money, he just did it as a mentor, as a giver.

He gave to me. He provided this value to me. Bless his heart; Leon Myers was his name, and he's passed on now.

Then I did actually have some lessons from a jazz piano teacher by the name of Wilbert Barranco, and I think Mr. Barranco has passed on now. But I owe him everything, you know what I mean. I owe him because they gave and gave and gave, and showed me that, God bless their hearts, they put a good model in my heart. If somebody's interested and wants to talk to me and demonstrate a real genuine, heartfelt interest and I have the time, I'll give them everything I've got.

CML: Why do you think somebody would agree to mentor another person? What's in it for them?

Clay: Well, most mentors are appreciative because were given to at some point, and they want to turn around and give back. At least that's the way I feel about it. You know, I'm so grateful to be blessed with the visions and perspectives that I have gained from life. I'm more than happy to give them back to other people. I'm so excited about them I want to show – “Hey! Look at this!”

It's like I'm in a sandbox, you know? “Hey, look at this shovel. Wow! I don't know where it came from, but this shovel is great! And now we can put it with the bucket. See the bucket! Look what happens with the shovel and bucket and the sand! This is great! Isn't this fun? Aren't we having fun!”

CML: Fun . . . this is why people share. This is why people mentor. This is what you're telling me, right?

Clay: Isn't this fun? Isn't this fun?

A few years ago I was playing in a country and western band that I just couldn't help but do it. The guy that ran this band was so thrilled to be up on stage. He was a beautiful singer. You know, he had learned how to play guitar in the last year. I mean, he wasn't really a guitar player or performer, but he loved to sing so much that he learned how to play guitar and he put a band together so he could do it a couple of times a week.

And man! I loved to play with this guy because of the joy in his heart when I would look up from the piano and see him up there singing, and his voice sounding so pretty. And this is life. This is living, you know! And this guy was so happy to be there. And we would play at a little crummy bar and not make but twenty bucks apiece. It wasn't professional. I've had gigs where I made a lot more money than that, but this wasn't for the money. It was because of the passion this guy had. And he leaned over to me the second time we played together, and he winked at me and he smiled, and he said, “Clay, isn't this fun?”

And you know, after forty years, I had to absolutely say, “You got it, man! Yeah, man,

you're right! This is so much fun."

CML: After forty years, still fun. How many people in their careers can say that?

Clay: Well, it has to do with really being totally present and stepping into the passion for it. You know, you have to step up and step in, and stay there. And if it isn't passion-worthy, you're in the wrong gig, man. You go find some other gig that you like better.

That's what I love about jazz. I think a good thing for people to do is to go out and buy the whole entire series of Ken Burns' "Jazz: A History of America's Music." Put yourself in those guys' shoes. They wouldn't have been there if they didn't have passion. And if there wasn't passion, it wouldn't be jazz. And if it ain't jazz, what is it?

You know, what are you doing it for, if it doesn't jazz you? If it doesn't enlighten your passion in this life? Really, that's the way I feel about it.

As Basey says, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing." I think that was Basey; it might be Ellington. I think he was quoted on that, "Hey man, it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing."

Well, life doesn't mean a thing if it doesn't have that swing, and it won't have that swing if you're not passionate about it. So go out and find that place where you can offer up the passion that's in your soul.

CML: The difference between a star and a hack.

Clay: Yeah, right. A star and a hack. The star is passionate. A hack is jaded and bitter and cynical. Who wants to be a hack?

The old "flat-lander" marketers were hacks in a way. When I say flat-lander, it's kind of competitive and jaded and using gimmicks and tricks. A lot of people these days are enticed and excited about the new tricks and techniques and tools. Especially with the Internet, there are all sorts of new ways to track people's behavior, and of course that is exciting.

And there are now new ways to trick them. I get these things come through, these spam things that are telling me I'm going to get this or that if I take this action, and they're often very compelling copy. Good headlines. Good first paragraph. An interesting offer and a good call to action. A reason to act today because of scarcity and urgency. And it's all very passionate. But I just think, "Man, this is a great conglomeration of tricks. This person doesn't really care about this; they're just using all the tricks that are known to work. These people just want to trick me. I smell it; a lot of people don't smell it. And sometimes I have to just say, "I really want this; oh, they really got me now and I really want to buy this." But I just have to say, "No, put that credit card away. This guy just knows those predatory – what I call "flat-lander" – tricks.

CML: Any hints on how to recognize the difference?

Clay: Boy, the ones that are good, they're just too good to recognize. You just have to ask yourself, "Do I really want this? Is this something I got up this morning saying I was going to be on the lookout for?"

CML: Am I pulling my strings or are they?

Clay: Yeah, right. Is this something that I know I wanted this morning, and that I will want tomorrow, because it is in congruence and alignment with where I'm headed and what I want from my life?

And if it really is, and this is the best way to get it, then you might want to take advantage of it. But I store those things away sometimes, and I'll say well, "They'll come back to me tomorrow, or come look at this tomorrow."

If it's really that worthy, I'll remember it and I'll come back. I don't have to act instantaneously today, just because they got my juices up. Because a lot of people are learning how to get your juices up now.

The thing is, what we want to do is, we want to get other people's juices up about what is passion-worthy and is value worthy of their devotion. If I can go to a market and say, "Look, I believe this to be worthy of your devotion, and I'm not going to bring it to you unless I feel it's worthy of my devotion and of your devotion." Because there are plenty of things out there that are devotion-worthy and passion-worthy.

And if it gets my passion up, I can go out there and stand in my truth and be a lighthouse, shining the light out there for other people to see: "I believe this is worthy of your devotion. I believe this is passion-worthy. That's why I'm here. That's what I'm doing."

I will stand here in this truth until I have exhausted my passion and my ability to continue to shine this light, and then I'll either retire and rest or because another thing has captured my passion and my truth.

CML: I have heard you use this phrase "worthy of devotion" a number of times. This seems to be almost a guiding principle for you.

Clay: It's the title of the new book.

CML: Oh really? Tell me about your book.

Clay: It seems to be a theme that I've been carrying with me for a year now, and also it just seems to define a lot of things I've noticed throughout my life. And I'm in my fifties

now, so I've had a lot of life to observe. But I believe if you can offer or deliver or issue value, that's a nice way of putting it. "I'm not selling you a product; I'm just trying to issue you a value."

If you find value in this product or this service, or this offer that I happen to have, then I can only hope that it will be worthy of your devotion. If the product is not worthy of your devotion, then it's not worthy of my offering it to you. If it's not a good match, it might be a worthy product to other people, or a worthy service, or a worthy offer to some other people, but not for you. In that case, that's perfectly fine. Move on, my friend, and I'll move on, too.

There are enough people in this planet that we can reach through our beautiful Internet, that I don't have to pretend to be something that I'm not, or that this product is something that it's not, or this service, or this offer is something that it's not. I only wish to reach the people to whom it will be valuable – and so valuable that it's worthy of their devotion.

I don't mean devotion in some kind of puppy love thing. I mean because it was a worthy product. They bought it, they liked it, it was worthy. They will be interested in the next thing I have to offer because of the value of this one.

On the Internet, we have learned that the list is everything, and in direct mail, they learn that the list is everything. You wish to build a list of people that have expressed a desire in a certain topic, and maybe you delivered them something that satisfied their interest and enriched their lives. And if they already bought a product from you that was related to this interest that they expressed, or this desire that they expressed, and you provide them value, that's the only way you can keep them in your opt-in list. It's opt-in. They can opt out at any time. They can click away or tell you to stop sending these things.

So the only way you can sustain yourself and your longevity is through delivering value. It's the human attention that is the currency of our age. This is a wired, wired age, and attention is everything.

They used to call it eyeballs. "Yeah, man, we got eyeballs."

How rude. How disrespectful. To call people eyeballs. But in a way it is, it's their eyeballs.

CML: Years ago I heard salesmen talking about "needing a certain number of bodies." It was the same sort of dehumanizing . . .

Clay: I had a guy that was selling cars. I bought a car from him one time, and we became acquaintances. And he said, "Yep, I got more peeps. I want more peeps." The peeps were the people. He would call them the bodies, the peeps, the chumps, the marks. In a con it's called a mark. Or, I guess they even call them that in a carnival lingo.

But they're dehumanizing words. Maybe that makes those people feel okay and better when they go home at night, but it really desensitizes and dehumanizes because they're not really offering value worthy of devotion. They're not really impassioned by what they're doing. They're jaded and cynical and they have to use these words in order to help them feel better about the heartless way they're treating their fellow human beings.

I try to think of things more like a tribe, that these are my tribal brothers and sisters. This is my tribe.

CML: There is a refreshing viewpoint.

Clay: All you have to do is just look at these people as tribal members, and I kind of get that from the Internet, because on the net, every node of a network is as valuable as the other nodes. We're all very valuable. And I bring the best I can bring, and I offer it up to the network. I bring the best I can bring, my best value. And if my neighboring node brings the best of his value, maybe he knows about plumbing. Maybe another person knows about chiropractic, and maybe another person knows about publishing books, and another one knows about massage or something.

If we all bring our knowledge and our experiences and our values and skills to the network, then every new node to the network increases exponentially the value of the network for all the other members, all the other nodes.

Well, this is the way networks operates, and that's the way the Internet operates, and so this starts to bring these issues into these sort of collaborative, communal, cooperative, sharing, models. It throws it right up in our face.

You've got to treat the next node as if it were the hut right next to your hut. You don't go over and smash the hut down or pee on that hut, or go defecate over where that hut is, because that's your neighbor. And you're dependent upon that neighbor.

It's as if we were synapses in the same big brain, all one huge brain. I'm one brain cell. It's an organism and we're all one big living tribe.

CML: This resonates beautifully with an illustration I used in my book. Take two towns.

One of the towns: a lot of the people are very poor. They don't have a trade; they don't have a shop; and only a few of the people are extremely rich, and everybody else, to survive, either has to fall back on government welfare, or they have to beg, or they have to steal, in order just to stay alive.

Take a second town. Everybody there, every single person has learned a trade, or they have a shop, or they have some kind of professional skill, such as music. And everybody has a way to trade something with other people so that they can make their way, earn

their living.

And then I ask the question: Which town would you rather live in? Which town would you feel safer in?

And it sounds like you're describing exactly the same experience.

Clay: Yeah, where people deliver or issue value worthy of the devotion of the other members of the tribe – as best they can. Even if you're just trying, that encourages devotion, too.

In the world of music, if somebody shows up with a horn to the jam session, they bring their horn, but they're just a kid, or they're a newcomer, and they really don't know how to blow their horn very well, the seasoned old veterans will say, "Yeah, man. Bring out your horn, man, and blow with us a little bit."

And they give this guy a chance to blow, even though he's not really a great player yet. But you give them an opportunity to blow, and you say, "Yeah, thanks man. That's cool." And it'll teach them some things and give them a chance to get up there.

It's very much like in a tribal situation where the young women and the young men are brought into the subculture of the gender that they're in, or the stage in their age development that they're in.

Whether they're good at hunting with the bow or not, they go out with the men and they hunt with the bow. And that's what we do. "We're the men. We go hunt with the bow." Or whatever they do.

It's like, in a way, everybody's encouraged to develop a value to bring back to the tribe, and everybody gets to eat. It's not just the people that are wealthy, or that own the land, that get to eat. It's everybody that went out on a hunting party, even if they didn't bring anything back. They'll still eat some grubs or something that they found, because it's a tribal thing.

And so, I try to treat people in my business life as if we're all members of a tribe, and you can't despoil any particular member, or cheat, or poison. You can't go around poisoning your neighbors just because they might eat up some of their deer when they bring the deer back. Or the lion or the elk or whatever.

These are the people who're going to have to be living with you for the rest of your life.

As Mike Enlow would say, "Prove your worth." A give-first kind of guy. Those Mike's words.

CML: It's what I call "priming your pump."

Clay: Yeah, prime your pump. Give first. Prove your worth. And the Internet sort of demands that. If you don't give first and prove your worth, your neighbor or somebody else will. Your competitor will.

CML: Regarding your life today – now this may seem like a silly question. You're an extremely intuitive, go-with-the-flow type of guy, but I've got to ask. Are you living totally freeform, or is your life fairly carefully planned out now?

Clay: Well, there are larger plans. I'm planning to move to Santa Barbara from where I'm living now, and that's going to happen. I've got a schedule. I'm going to speak at this conference and whatnot, so there are large things like that.

And I have things that I do on a daily basis, as far as diet and exercises and obligations that I have. But not very many of them. And I resist them, and I throw them over, and I ignore them, and in some cases, I am so intuitive and so go-with-the-flowish that I have to be reminded in some of my business relationships now. But this is not for everybody. I think it's just the nature of the way I've designed my life.

I'll be in a business conversation with somebody and I'll say, "Now look, you're going to have to remind me of these ideas. I'm not going to write them down, and I'm not going to put the responsibility on myself to remember them or act on them. It's your responsibility, okay?" And they'll agree to that and then we'll go on talking. For me to have to put the overlay of having to remember these things, or to write them down, or act upon them and whatnot, that would put a cloud over my intuition. That would be a kind of responsibility; I don't want to carry a burden around like that. It kind of brings a cloud into it.

I just tell other people to do it.

CML: So you delegate part of that.

Clay: I delegate the remembering of it and the writing it down of it to other people.

CML: Okay, so you have a system that works for you well.

Clay: They're not always used to doing that, and they don't know exactly what I mean and what I want. So some of the ideas and some of the conversations just go off into the ether. But that's okay, too, because there'll be more. I have a coach . . .

CML: Wait, come back. Come back. I want to hear this again. Say that again.

Clay: I don't know. About going out to the ether, some of the ideas will go off into the ether?

CML: "But that's okay, because there will be more."

Clay: There will be more.

CML: I love that. There will be more.

Clay: There will be more. We don't have to cling to anything, because there'll be more. The emptier we are, the more we will be filled.

The way I believe, I know without a doubt that I have unlimited access to an inexhaustible fountainhead of magnificent inspirations.

CML: Is this true for everybody, do you think?

Clay: I believe everybody has it. They just don't know it. They don't allow it to happen. But I work always to remind myself I have unlimited access to an inexhaustible fountainhead of magnificent inspirations.

And when you walk through life telling yourself that, when you walk around with that kind of a map in your head: "Wow, I don't know what's happening down in the Plaza with all those people there, but I know that I'll come up with an idea because I have an unlimited access to an inexhaustible fountainhead of magnificent inspirations.

Right. Okay, I'll think up some way to monetize the crowd down at the Plaza. Okay, I'm going to do a website. Well, let me see, what am I going to do? I don't know, but it doesn't matter because I know I have an unlimited access to an inexhaustible fountainhead of magnificent inspirations.

So the answer will be there. I don't worry about the answer, and I don't beat myself up or try to force the answers because I just know that as long as I keep that pipeline (or I call it "The Golden Tube") which gives me my unlimited access.

And it's not me. It's not my ego coming up with the answers and with the intuitions. It's the fountainhead. And that fountainhead can't be described in any other way except that there's some great spirit or some God (God is the word; Spirit is the word). We don't have to worry or shy away from those words. It's the universal mind, the supreme being. That's really where it all comes from, you know. We're just puny little humans.

CML: You know, a lot of people have trouble with the concept of "deserving success." How important a part of success is the feeling that you deserve good things?

Clay: I think that matters of deserving or not deserving are really pretty much early childhood, self-esteem matters, and that the people that are having difficulty with even using the word deserving probably would be well advised to pick up a relation with a psychologist. I wouldn't necessarily go to a therapist, a family therapist or an MSW, though they're very good. I would probably go to a real doctor of psychology and strike up a friendship with them and explore some of these issues of worth or not worth.

Not a psychiatrist. I didn't say psychiatrist, who wants to analyze. I would say a psychologist, because those are probably self-worth, self-issue things that have to do with childhood. I don't know why, but I just think I deserve the world, you know. I deserve everything, and everybody around me deserves it, and we all deserve it. You deserve it, and let's all deserve it. Why would we diminish ourselves in any way and say that we didn't deserve it. We're children of God. God gives to those, and if you're doing worthy works, if you're doing passion-worthy work, then you're on a mission to do good. You're going to get paid for doing good, too, but you're not going to do harm. And then everything you do is deserving. You're deserving of success because you're working with goodness for the highest good of all concerned.

I think a lot of people are not necessarily working for the highest good of all concerned. They're working for their own good, and they're trying to trick people, or go out there and do something under a militaristic model where they're going to "capture the market" or "dominate the market" or something like that, or "target these individuals" and use guerrilla marketing to target and capture. I don't know, all those words, naturally they feel like they're not deserving of success because they're guilty about using these harmful, hurtful metaphors and images in their life.

I try to think more about what some people would call "airy-fairy, hippy-dippy" words like love. Love power. Love based marketing. How can I serve these people? How can I enrich their lives? That is my desire. I wouldn't want to be here if I wasn't able to enrich your life in some way. That's what mine's devoted to. Why would I not?

The only other way would be selfish and closed off, and then all I am is selfish and closed off. Then I'm a miser going home with all my own ideas and my own miserly hoard of value that I'm keeping all to myself. That doesn't feel very good. I've never met anybody that felt that way that was very happy. People are happy when they give and enrich other people naturally and spontaneously.

Earl Nightingale or Zig Zigler, or one of those guys, is quoted as saying, "The way to get what you want is by helping other people get what they want." When you help other people get what they want, you're going to get what you want.

Well, am I not saying exactly the same thing?

CML: Exactly the same thing. They've been saying this since how many decades before? And people still aren't listening.

Clay: And do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Is it the Golden Rule or not? You do unto others as you would have them do, and you will see. Most people don't realize that that is the secret to financial success. They just think that's a nice way. Your parents told you how to act: be real nice, don't hurt other kids.

CML: That'll "get you to heaven."

Clay: It'll make you rich, too. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Give to them the way you would like to be given to. Treat them with honor and respect. Think about their needs ahead of time. All you have to do is find a little niche and figure out what do these people really, really want. What are they hurting for? What's going on? What's lacking? And you just figure out, "Oh, I don't know; I think maybe they might like this; let's ask them. Do they want this? Are they getting this thing or that thing?" Just interview them and find out where their pain is and then solve some of that pain. Find a way. You know, do the effort. Put in the effort to solve a problem for them, and then deliver the answer.

In a lot of cases you'll be able to find that somebody else has already solved that problem in some other place. You can go find the solution and then just deliver it to these people and make money off of connecting the people that are in pain with the people that have the solution.

CML: Let's take a different example. The person whose life is not working. For the listener, say who is up to his ears in problems. What should they do first?

Clay: Probably what I would do if I was really stuck like that is, I would turn to spiritual study of some nature.

Now, I have found that a little meditation can do wonders. And the simplest meditation I've found is what's called Buddhist mindfulness. There's a kind of mindfulness meditation that some people call insight meditation or mindfulness meditation that has been developed over all these centuries.

Buddhism is not a religion. It's just a practice, a practice of techniques. So you can be a Christian Buddhist, or a Jewish Buddhist, or anything. It just means you're using Buddhist techniques in order to promote your faith.

CML: Interesting distinction.

Clay: Yeah, it's just a practice. So you can use Buddhist meditation without it having any religious overtones or devotional overtones, or any of that stuff, okay.

It means that you start to observe the mind. You want to observe your mind. And the way they typically do that is (and I'm not qualified to instruct people about this at all), but from my understanding, you just focus on your breath.

So if you've got all kinds of problems, you start focusing on your breath, and whenever your mind wanders away from your breath, you bring it back to your breath. And pretty soon your mind will start wandering away to your problems, and then you bring it back to your breath, because that's just a problem.

You start noticing your mind and how often your mind goes to what it desires or what it rejects and is trying to get away from.

CML: In NLP we would call that interrupting the pattern.

Clay: You interrupt the pattern, right. And you bring it always back. Don't let the pattern snowball its way on and create a difficulty for you that hinders you from acting in your truth and light.

When you say the person is inundated with problems, well obviously, they don't have mind control. They don't understand their mind, and they're overwhelmed by the so-called problems and snowballing and feeding on one another. You know, that's like quicksand.

So if a person is overwhelmed with problems or perceived problems (they're all perceived problems because they aren't necessarily real problems) . . .

CML: This is important. Say that again.

Clay: They're all perceived problems. They aren't necessarily real problems. You know, they're just events. Neutral events that are going on, and you perceive them as a problem, perceive them as a hindrance, and say, "Oh, woe is me, this problem, this hindrance." And the more you say "oh woe is me, I'm powerless against this problem, oh the problem" then the more you feed the problem and the more you get inundated by the problem.

I mean, that's just a spiral, man. That'll just end being spiraled down into problem land, where you're hindered and you can't see the light and you can't do anything.

So you want to disarm the problems and say, "That is just my mind telling me that there's a problem there, and that is just mind. That is not my breath."

And back to my breath. Back to my breath.

And oh, I wish I had this thing. Oh, if I had this thing everything would be okay. I'll run over here and try to get this thing. And now you're desiring some new thing. That grilled cheese sandwich that I was talking about.

And then your mind is chasing after this new thing. Now you're not thinking about your problems and trying to avoid the problem. Now you're trying to chase after the new thing.

Well, that's just your mind again. So in this sort of meditation world, you would be just noticing where your mind is going, and very gently acknowledging that and then

bringing your attention back to your breath, which was the goal, and reminding your mind that that's the goal, not to wander off into what you're clutching after and desiring after, or not wandering off into the things that you're rejecting and fearing and worried about, but just being present, right now, and monitoring your breath. Monitoring the breath.

For me, this whole idea of this mindfulness activity, this being-present activity, hints of value to me. I can't say that I'm a good practitioner of this or anything. I just have been there a little bit. I've been studying it.

And that's the first thing I would do. When you asked me what would I tell somebody to do, I think a little meditation might be helpful. That helps to move you toward studying your own mind, and your own mind is where all the problems are coming from.

CML: That's where all the action is.

Clay: That's where all the action is, man, it's all inside, baby.

That's what marketing is, too. Marketing is all inside your own head, and you're running around with a brain, just like everybody else has got a brain. They're clutching after and desiring things, and they're trying to avoid things.

You know how your brain works. You know how your emotions work. You know how the desires work. Fears and desires. Fears and desires. Fears and desires. Oooooo, never stops.

All you have to do is just notice it, and then you know everybody's brain in the world. You know everybody's heart and mind. All humans throughout all time. You know everything that's going on with everybody, and when you know what's inside of everybody's mind, you can certainly begin to deliver value worthy of their devotion because now you know what they're thinking.

It's almost like being a mind reader, but you're reading your own mind and just assuming that everybody else's mind is exactly like yours, which is the case. There is only one mind. It all works the same way.

CML: In your own life, what was the hardest thing to change?

Clay: It was hard to change my attitude for a while because I didn't have a path. I didn't have a model that worked for me. So there were times, way back twenty years ago, where I was stuck and I couldn't see the light. I couldn't change because I didn't know I wanted to change.

So I don't know, that was hard. I was in pain. It was sad.

CML: You didn't want to change.

Clay: I probably could have if I had known about it, but I don't know, I was wallowing in the pain, wallowing in my ignorance, wallowing in my resentment and my rage and my angst.

CML: What did you do?

Clay: I moved. I moved to a different city. And then that didn't help so much either. And I just changed things.

Actually, one of the things I did that helped me out really well is, I went to a transformational growth program. This one was called Insight, and it took, oh I don't know, three days or something. I went to the initial program and went for the weekend. It had to do with transforming, growing, accountability, communication, responsibility, and they'd have a bunch of exercises and group things. It was love. It's all about heartfelt stuff and love stuff and communication, and that really helped to break me out of my pattern.

I went on to the second stage of that program and the third stage and they were all good for me.

That was ten years ago. Now I'm finally going back to another one about two weeks from now, one called The Forum.

The one I'm going to is, I think, pretty much similar. Transformational growth, communication, responsibility, self honesty, stuff like that. And it's in groups of a hundred people or whatnot. Sometimes you pair off, and you triple up, and you get in different groups of people. Then other times you just sit and listen to the speaker.

But it's challenging. They give you challenges, and you have to face your limitations and face your limited thinking. And in the long run you end up growing. And loving people all the more, and embracing your own beauty and worth all the more.

CML: Do you feel like you've finally hit a coasting phase, or are you still headed uphill? Still learning lots of new stuff?

Clay: I doubt that I will ever learn all the stuff that I want to learn. I have so many books and so many arts and fiction and poetry and things, and so many loves to have, that I'll never stop.

No, I'm not coasting. Kimberly would rather have me coast more often. She says, "Normal people, Clay, would just relax. Normal people would be happy with what we've got. A lot of people would just kick back."

CML: But normal people would be normal.

Clay: Yeah. I'm not complacent. You know, I'm not driven by money or success in that way. I'm driven by passion and love, and there's more to love, and there's more passion, there's more value. Love and value and passion.

Love and value and passion, and love and value and passion, and love and value and passion. That's just my marching orders, you know, and so it never stops. There's more love, there's more value, there's more passion.

There are more ways to connect people together. There's more compassion. I really am driven more by loving kindness and compassion – as much as I can be. You know, I'm still a frail human being with my incarnational defects and sins and all of the character flaws that all of us are prone to.

But I'm drawn toward my loving kindness and compassion.

And value and passion and love, and love and value and passion.

How can I coast, you know?

CML: Does learning get any easier, the farther you go?

Clay: I hope I get better at it. Yeah, there's more exciting because there are more synapses connecting together. There are more synapses.

It was pretty darn exciting when I was an infant and I discovered that I could move my own fingers and grasp something. Whoa! That was so awesome. Isn't that exciting?

And I learned that pretty well. I wouldn't say I'm any better at learning than I was then when I was trying to learn how to grasp a rattle.

I guess I'm getting a little bit better at ways of learning. My difficulty now is, which thing will I learn today? What game do I want to play today? What game shall we play today?

CML: There are so many options.

Clay: There are so many options, and they're all so exciting.

CML: A lot of people find learning new things to be stressful. Can we ever learn to just relax and enjoy every learning experience?

Clay: I recommend it.

CML: Beautiful answer.

Clay: You know, the learnings that are stressful are the artificial learnings that you're doing not out of your passion but for some artificial goal. An alien system for an alien goal.

I've heard about people that didn't like learning organic chemistry. Well, organic chemistry is tough, but why were they learning it, if wasn't passion-worthy? Because they wanted to propel their way on to some sort of a degree.

Okay, well then that's artificial. Why did they want the degree?

Because they wanted this or that. If you have a passion for organic chemistry, it'd be the most exciting thing in the world and it wouldn't be stressful because you would take it at your own pace. You wouldn't do it at some artificial pace.

You'd take it at your own pace and gather the information as you can. If you don't pass the course this semester, you take it next semester or next year. You keep taking it over and over. Keep reading it over and over, and enriching yourself more and more each time.

The stress comes in the artificial timetable, or the artificial reasons, motivations, for doing it.

CML: Good distinction.

Clay: Learning is easy as soon as it's passion-driven, curiosity-driven, self-directed learning.

CML: Many teachers say that the earth experience is about to change significantly. How do you envision our daily life changing in the next, say, fifty or a hundred years? Or in the next five hundred years?

Clay: I don't know, and I'm just speculating, but I think that people will honor themselves as fellow beings more. They'll be more honoring.

I think we'll have a last gasp of the greed glands, the greed and the manipulative dominator paradigms. Manipulative, dominating, military, resource-guarding. That's kind of flatlander. I call that flatland, where it's a jungle, you know. The last jungle consciousness where you've got to duke it out and fight it out for scarce resources with your competitive paradigms.

I think those will fall away and that things will be more and more efficient, better and better technology, and less and less reason to fight your fellow tribal members, your fellow beings. And I think we'll embrace our globalness.

As the language barriers fall away, it'll be difficult to maintain the diversity that now we

think is kind of a hindrance; we're going to come to honor the diversity. You know, if we can find a little tribal culture that doesn't know how to speak English, we're going to love them because it's diversity.

We will have come to honor that diversity as we grow more closely together and become more homogenized. We won't be ridiculing diversity or marginalizing diversity. We'll be honoring diversity wherever it comes up.

CML: I like your vision of the future.

Clay: Oh, it's good, man. It's going to be a good ride.

CML: Do you have any parting words of special advice to our listeners who are still maybe floundering around, trying to get out of the starting gate?

Clay: This is a quote by Avatar Meher Baba. This is the fellow that first said the words, "Don't worry, be happy." The song was not the first time those came in. That's Meher Baba's slogan: don't worry, be happy.

Now, that's really good advice. Don't worry, be happy, it's your choice.

Whatever it is, don't worry, be happy. Happiness is really a choice.

But here's the other quote I want to say by him.

"Love has to spring spontaneously from within, and it is in no way amenable to any form of inner or outer force. Love and coercion can never go together, and although love cannot be forced on anyone, it can be awakened in him through love itself. Love is essentially self-communicative.

Those who do not have it catch it from those who have it. True love is unconquerable and irresistible, and it goes on gathering power and spreading itself until, eventually, it transforms everyone whom it touches."

CML: Beautiful final words.

Clay: That's good advice for marketers. That's where I'm heading in marketing. That's what I think marketing will eventually become.

CML: Clay, we've more than filled our time slot today. Thanks for sticking with us despite your incredibly busy schedule. This was a very long one-hour interview, and I appreciate your patience.

Clay: I'm grateful to be here.

CML: For our listeners, you can find Clay online at [Clay Cotton dot com](http://www.claycotton.com), or his newest website [Marketers Hall of Fame dot com](http://www.marketers-hall-of-fame.com).

Clay, thanks so much.

Clay: It's my pleasure, Charles.

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Chapter 12

Interview with Robert Scheinfeld

Author of *The Invisible Path to Success*

May 23, 2001

The Invisible Path

To hear free audio samples from this interview, click on:

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Command More Luck (CML): Today we're talking with Robert Scheinfeld, whose book, *The Invisible Path to Success*, is literally changing people's lives.

Robert's website is [Invisible Path dot com](http://www.invisible-path.com).

I've read your book, Bob, and listened to the tapes that came with it, and I was impressed. I love that entire concept you've developed, representing our world as a theme park and each person living out a sort of movie. But when I first read it, I have to tell you, I thought it was a little goofy – it was that different.

Then, the farther I read, the more I could see the internal logic. I could see it all holding together just beautifully. And I ended up, as I say, impressed. This stuff is brilliant.

Bob Scheinfeld: Glad it had impact on you.

CML: Oh it had, yes. And still is.

Before we get into the specifics, let's back up for a minute. For the readers who don't already know your name, could you give a bit of background about yourself, your business and your career?

Bob: Well, I had, I guess in many ways, an ordinary career until I was about 31. I worked in the corporate arena in sales and marketing, pretty much in the computer retail field, and had learned some entrepreneurial secrets from my grandfather, who had been very, very successful in business and had applied them and had done very well.

By the time I was 31, I was very wealthy in a material sense and was living kind of high and riding kind of high. Then, all of a sudden, when I hit 31, I hit a wall and proceeded to have seven years that I now humorously refer to as my Murphy's Law phase.

My father used to call me "Lucky Pierre," and all of a sudden Lucky Pierre wasn't so lucky any more and couldn't seem to get anything right. I lost all my money and I lost all

my stuff and went \$150,000-something into debt and didn't understand why and was very confused and very angry. I had to kind of go back to the drawing board to try and understand what's really going on behind the scenes and what's really controlling what happens in our lives.

I had to revisit everything, including some of the things my grandfather taught me. As a result of those seven years and diving back in to try and understand some of these mysteries, I ended up coming up with a completely new system that I now call "The Invisible Path to Success" or sometimes "The Invisible Factor."

I used it to dig myself out of the hole and rebuild my financial world and my career and have been soaring ever since.

CML: Digging yourself out – that came rather rapidly, didn't it, once you got started?

Bob: Well, I guess it depends how you look at it. The whole journey from making the discoveries, starting to apply them, digging out of the hole, and getting totally out of the hole and on a positive role again was probably four years.

There was immediate progress, but before I really would say my life had transformed itself, I would say it was three or four years.

CML: This all started with your grandfather, but where did he learn it?

Bob: I don't know, to tell you the truth. The information that he passed along to me, he passed along when I was quite young, and I wasn't old enough and didn't really have the wherewithall to question him to the degree that I would have, had I been an adult when he taught me these things. And at the time he taught me these things, I never asked him. So I don't know whether someone else passed it along to him, or he had some amazing revelation one day, or what the cause was.

My belief is that he probably met somebody somewhere along the way that shared some of these secrets with him. But he may have discovered certain things himself. I really don't know the answer to that.

CML: Did he teach this concept to the whole family? Does everybody in your family use his ideas?

Bob: No. He didn't really share all of it with anybody else to the degree that he did with me. We had a special kind of a relationship and an identification.

He wrote a little pamphlet that was called something like "What We Believe." My grandmother shared the philosophy and the ideas, the part of it that he shared with me. Probably a bunch of people have that pamphlet, but none of them really embraced it. None of them really got the detail, and none of them really use it. I'm the only one that

really does. Which is kind of surprising, considering what he did with it, but this kind of information is not for everyone. And everyone is not going to embrace it. And everyone isn't going to what I call "resonate with it." I think the people that know this kind of information reserve it for people that they feel are going to really resonate with it and use it. And perhaps I'm the only one in the family that he felt would.

CML: Your grandfather had a pretty good success record of his own. He started a very large business, didn't he?

Bob: He started a company that is called Manpower, which is the world's largest temporary help service. I think last year it was number 177 on the Fortune 500 and did \$10.8 billion in sales last year.

It all started as an idea that he got walking on the docks of Chicago in 1957. So an idea literally turned into a billion-dollar company and a personal fortune and a lot of crazy, wonderful, positive stuff in his own life as a result. And he swears that it was the Invisible Factor stuff – the Invisible Path stuff.

Although, if you were to take what I now teach and – just to be general let's say that there are five core ideas in it – he passed along one of them to me, and the other four I've kind of added on my own, that kind of give it a little bit more modern feel and add a couple of components that I discovered that I did not have when my Murphy's Law phase started.

He may have known them, and he may not have, but when I hit my Murphy's Law stage he had died, and he was not there. He had died I think seven years before that or something, and he was not there for me to ask. So it's possible he knew some of this, although I use a metaphor of the Internet, and I use a metaphor of the movies. And I don't know that he would have used those metaphors, given when he grew up. But it's very powerful stuff, and literally everyone (and I'm talking thousands of people now all over the world) everyone who resonates with it enough to apply it has gotten tremendous results in terms of what they've been able to achieve in their lives.

CML: Without going into any details, in my own personal experience, I've had some really good results from applying the things that you teach in your book.

What's your working definition for luck or success? What do you use in your own daily life?

Bob: Well, see, I don't really believe in luck. And I don't know how much detail you want me to go into right now,

CML: No, go ahead.

Bob: The Internet has become a very powerful force in our worldwide economy. What the

Internet really is, is a network of millions of computers that link us all together all over the world and allow us to communicate and share information at very high speed.

The part of the puzzle that my grandfather passed along to me is that there is actually an Invisible Internet. There's an "unconscious Internet" that connects all of the people on the planet together from behind the scenes. Messages just like e-mails or classified ads, or however you want to look at them, that go into this Invisible Network, are flashing all around the globe all day long, just like e-mails on the Internet. And it's the flow of unconscious communication through this Invisible Network that really drives and creates and shapes everything that happens to us in our day-to-day lives.

We think it's everything that we're doing on the surface, if you will, but to me it's really this behind-the-scenes network where all of the work is getting done and the real power is.

To me, what we look at as "luck" is the result of very clear communications that went into this Invisible Network asking for help to produce particular results that are in alignment with what our life purpose is. Because I believe we all came into this life with a particular mission, a particular purpose, and it shapes and colors and limits and creates what happens to us. It's a filter that shapes what happens to us every day, and I think luck is a combination of requests going into this Invisible Network that are in alignment with our life purpose.

So it appears to be magical, and sometimes it appears to be effortless, and sometimes it appears to be that someone is very, very powerful and talented and skilled. And sometimes they are, but again, to me, it's the combination of life purpose and a really clear request going into this network asking for help.

CML: You talk about coming here with a life purpose, but you don't believe that the earth plane is a school.

Bob: No. I compare it – and you mentioned this earlier – I compare it to an amusement park.

CML: People come here for experience and fun?

Bob: Yeah. Experience and fun. I mean, again, if you look at a school (and some of this is semantics, you know, different people have different perspectives of school), but most times, when you look at a school, you look at somebody else is telling you what you're going to learn, and someone else is telling you what you're going to do, and somebody else is telling you how well you did, and someone else is giving you the permission to go on to the next grade or not.

And everything is kind of forced on you and controlled on you. There are a lot of games that are played, and you're somewhat at the mercy of other forces.

Whereas, if you look at something like a Disney World, you can go on rides that are pure fun. You can go on rides that are pure emotion, adrenaline rushes. You can go to pavilions where you can learn things intellectually. And you go there only because you want to. You go there with people that you want to go there with, no one forcing you to. You can go whenever you want. You can leave whenever you want. You can go back whenever you want. You can do some of the rides, or all of the rides, or you can do the same ride five times.

You're totally in control, and it's all for the experience, whether it's the learning or it's the joy or it's the emotion. And I look at our lives as being the same thing.

CML: This is what I meant when I commented on the internal logic holding together. This is a beautiful picture.

Bob: Well, it is to me, and to me it really gets to be so simple when you look at it this way. It just makes everything so clear. And when you're trying to make decisions and you're trying to understand things, and you go back to this core model, it makes it much more easy to understand and to manage what's going on. To me it answers a lot of these mysterious, deep issue questions that we all ask, especially when we're having tough times or we're confused. It has been real magical for me, and – again – the people that I've shared it with who resonate with it.

CML: This sort of removes the excuse of people claiming, "I'm a victim," doesn't it?

Bob: Yeah. To me, everything that happens to you in your life is either . . . well I guess I need to plant another seed here.

There's this Invisible Network that I talked about, and it operates at the unconscious level, which is a place where you and I don't live and you and I don't spend a lot of time. So there's another part of us that I compare either to the Director of a movie and I call it Director if I'm dealing with individuals, or I call it Inner CEO if I'm dealing with a business audience.

It's another part of your mind, it's another part of your awareness, it's another part of your consciousness, whatever you want to call it. This part of you has, among other responsibilities, managing the flow of communication in and out of this Invisible Network, and this part of you is also the gatekeeper. If you want a message to go into this Invisible Network to help you produce a particular result, it's got to go to this other part of you first. And then, if this part of you feels that it's in alignment with your life purpose and that it would be a really good thing for this project to go, or for this thing to happen, then it goes into the Invisible Network and magic happens.

CML: So the Director or the Inner CEO is sort of like a management and communication department. Serves a lot of different functions.

Bob: Right. So everything that happens in your life is the result of one of two things. It's either the result of a request or a message that your Inner CEO (or your Director) sent in to the Invisible Network in order to set something into motion in your life, or it's the result of a request that you wanted to get sent into the network and that your Director or Inner CEO approved. And those are the only two causes of the things that happen to you in your life. It has major impact.

So to one degree or another, everything that happens to you in your life is choice. It isn't always "positive" so to speak, in the way that we look at it. It isn't always fun. It isn't always pleasant. But it always sets something into motion that is beneficial to you, and you may not always see that consciously, or maybe you'll see it ten years from now, or maybe you'll see it a month from now, but everything that happens, happens with intelligence and it happens with choice, and there's a benefit to you whether you see it consciously or not.

And when you look at that, yeah, there are absolutely no longer any victims, because on some level you asked for it.

CML: That's going to be hard for some people to swallow, especially the ones that are up to their nose in problems.

Bob: Absolutely.

CML: Most people in problems, myself included, say, "Man, I would never have asked for this!"

Bob: I see that all the time. You know, it gets back to that famous saying about the tip of the iceberg. We see a very small part of what's really going on, and we have a very limited perspective. The Inner CEO or the Director part of us has a very broad, big picture. A much wiser, if you will, and plugged-in kind of a perspective, and understands what our life purpose is, and knows why we came here, and knows why what's going on now is going on, and to one degree or another has a pretty good idea what's coming down the road and where we're headed, and is managing all of this stuff for us.

A lot of times, I really believe that what we see from our limited perspective, we just usually don't have a clue about what's really going on from behind the scenes and from the big picture perspective. And that's the way it's meant to be.

CML: In one sense, this says that there is no such thing as victimhood, because one part of us is always controlling things for us. But on the other side, if I personally, say, don't have a choice in what's going to happen because my purpose in coming here was something dreadful, that sort of takes away the element of freedom of choice, and goes back to victimhood. How do we resolve that?

Bob: This is kind of a tough thing to explain in words, but when I say there's this Director or

there's this Inner CEO that's making some of these decisions, it's real easy to look at it as if it's some other person, or it's some other being, or it's some other individual or whatever, that's forcing something on you.

It's really you. It's another part of you. It's a much larger, wiser, more plugged in part of you. But it's you. So nobody other than you is forcing you to do something that you didn't want to do, and you agreed to the whole plan and the whole basic idea in advance.

Now, that doesn't mean that every minute is planned, and it doesn't mean that every second is planned and that every single thing that happened to you was planned in advance. There's a lot of room for a lot of spontaneity. There's a lot of room for things being decided and made up when you're here. But the basic theme, the basic generalities are decided in advance because you had to have been really interested in something to want to come down here and have what I call a "total immersion movie experience" to go through it.

CML: So most people don't come here with the intention of living a tragedy?

Bob: I can't say that. Some people do because it's part of what they wanted to explore. Again, if you go back to the metaphor of a movie, if you look in a given year at all the different movies that are released into the theaters, there are comedies, there are dramas, there are big action films, there are science fiction films, there are dramas, there are tragedies, there are very serious dramas where some really difficult stuff happens to people and there's a lot of pain and there's a lot of grief.

People make those movies, and people go to those movies because, even if there's pain, even if there's so-called "tragedy," even if there's difficulty, people are interested in exploring that.

And the same thing is true in terms of a lifetime. If somebody comes into a lifetime and they have what we would call a tragedy, or they come in with some sort of a physical limitation, or they have a terrible disease, or they have an accident and they're paralyzed or whatever, the only reason that that happens is because something about it helped them to explore something, to grow through something, to learn something, to experience something that they really wanted to experience.

And nobody was forcing them. Nobody made them. They chose it on some level because something about it interested them.

The challenge most people have is that everybody can understand why somebody might want to be a Super Bowl winning quarterback, or president of the United States, or a billionaire, but lots of people have difficulty understanding how somebody could possibly be interested in some of the experiences that we would call negative.

But the truth is, if you look at the world, and if you travel and if you look at a lot of the

stuff that's going on, people are fascinated by just about everything. If you go to different parts of the world, there are things that go on in part of the world where you're living, in the Far East that, to me, are terrible, and they're crazy, and I don't know why anybody would be interested in doing that. But people do.

We're all so different, and we're all interested in different things, and just because we don't understand why somebody else would be interested in something doesn't mean that they're not.

CML: My sense of this is that most of the tragedies we see happening in the world didn't really have to happen. They were selected by mistake.

Bob: See, I don't feel that way. I feel they were selected with intelligence and planning and because they set something into motion that in one way, shape or form, whether we understand it, or ever will understand it, benefited everybody involved.

CML: Benefited everybody involved? That's a strong viewpoint.

Bob: Yeah, and one of the things that I apply in my own life, and it's really difficult sometimes, I'm not going to kid you, there are times that, even though I believe what I'm about to tell you, I have trouble understanding what the benefit is, or what was set in motion. Sometimes I never understand it and I just have to accept it on faith. And sometimes I understand it at some future moment after some other things happen.

CML: I can identify with this, yeah.

Bob: But what I tell people, and what I use in my own life is, if you want to know why something happens, whether it happens to you or to someone else, or it's a story in the news, or it's something you saw in a movie, or a documentary or whatever, look at what it set into motion as a result. And if you're ever going to understand why that thing happened, the clues, the answer will be found in what happened as a result.

For example, there are a lot of documented examples of parents who had a child die at a very young age. It may have been less than one year, it may have been two years old, something like that. We would look at that and we would say that's a horrible thing and it's a tragedy. I'm not judging it in any way, shape or form, but there're a lot of documented situations where, if you look at what that set into motion in the lives of the parents, it created some really dramatic and in some cases miraculous things, that that event set into motion.

Paul Newman, the actor, is very well known for his charitable contributions, and a lot of those charitable contributions came out of his reacting to a son of his that died through problems with drugs.

There are things that happen in all of our lives. My Murphy's Law phase was an

excruciatingly painful experience. Seven years of just horrible, horrible difficult things happening and I hated it, and I screamed and I moaned and I yelled at my Director. You know, I had all kinds of problems with it. And yet, what it set into motion in my life has just been miraculous. If I had to do it all over again, I would go through that excruciating pain again because of what it set into motion.

Now, in my life you can say: “Well, you had a lot of great things going on and then you had a tough seven years, and now a lot of great things are going on. That’s different than somebody that was in a car accident and is paralyzed from the neck down for the rest of their life. You had a blip. Other people just have to live with it, or they were born and they couldn’t walk, or they were blind or whatever it is.”

But to me, the concept is still the same. It’s going on because there’s something about it that interested them at a very deep level, that is enriching them in tremendous ways by them going through it, and it is setting something into motion that is giving them a benefit.

CML: This is why I like your concept, because it doesn’t have to answer the question “why.” It doesn’t have to be entirely logical in the sense of “why would anybody choose this or that.”

Why would anybody go into a scary haunted house ride at a theme park?

Bob: Well, you tell me.

CML: Just for the experience. Because it’s different.

Bob: That’s right. And there are people who come into this life and they have specific experiences, and that is all they’re after. They’re after – I’m just going to exaggerate and generalize and say that they’re after the pure emotional adrenaline rush of having that experience.

There are lots of people who do something like racecar driving that is so risky, and you’re risking your life every time you go out there to do this racecar driving. If you were to ask these people why they do it, or if you were to talk to a lot of rock stars and you were to ask them why they do this, why they perform onstage (I mean, beyond the money), there’s this emotional experience to it. There’s an emotional experience for these racecar drivers and skiers and all these things.

If you pretty much ask anybody (and I do this when I’m doing live seminars), if you get anybody in an audience and you ask, “What’s something that you just absolutely love to do?” And they raise their hand and they tell you what they love to do, and you ask them, “What does it give you from you doing that thing?” It always, always comes down to some emotional something that they’re after. And that’s at the core of what drives all of us. There’s either an emotional experience or set of experiences we’re after, or there’s

some sort of growth and learning and evolution that we're after. And sometimes people do all of it, and sometimes people are just more interested in one part than another.

CML: And you don't have to justify it with a bunch of reasons and logic.

Bob: And you can't. You can't. That's one of the things that I gave up a long time ago, the need to understand the why, because I just really understand how little I see and how limited my perspective is. Sometimes I get a kick out of putting theories together about why I think things happen in my life or in other people's lives, but I always know that I'm probably wrong. Sometimes it's fun to do it, but I just gave up because there's just no way to ever know.

CML: So what most people call "luck" is really just that tip of the iceberg, the event that results from something their higher self or their Director arranged for them.

Bob: Either their Director arranged for them, or the two of them arranged in partnership.

To me, this whole thing is a partnership. This whole thing is a dance. Your Director sets certain things into motion, whether you ask for them or not, whether you knew about them or not, whether you're expecting them or not. Your Director sets certain things into motion because you asked for help. Your Director is constantly watching what's going on in your world and monitoring your thoughts and your feelings, and making decisions, and tweaking things, and making changes, and sending other requests into the network based on what's going on and what you're thinking and feeling, and what you're wanting, and what you're really working for.

But it's a dance and it's a partnership. The ultimate power and decision and authority and connection to this Invisible Network is housed in the Director part of you, but it's a total partnership between you and them in terms of making your life work.

You know, if you look at the concept of Inner CEO, if you look at the CEO of a company, the CEO of the company is the boss. The CEO of the company has the ultimate authority to approve, reject, determine the timing of when things are going to happen, and yet it's a team effort. There's a whole company, and other people have to do their roles, and the CEO makes decisions based on feedback from other people in the company. It's this partnership kind of thing, even though the CEO is ultimately in charge. It's the same thing with us.

CML: We personally have a lot of freedom about the kind of things we can request.

Bob: You can ask for help with anything, and my belief is, all of your requests are given very serious consideration. Some of them are approved as-is. Some of them are slightly tweaked and approved. Some of them are rejected. Some of them are "I understand why you want this, and the timing is really not right, so we're going to table this for a while, and we'll take another look at it in a couple of months or a couple of years or whatever it

is, depending on what's going on."

Same thing in the corporate arena. There are times that you go to your boss or your CEO and you say, "I'd like funding for this particular project and here's why, and here're the results I want to get, and here's why I think we should do this." And the CEO says, "Okay, let's do it." Or the CEO says, "You want a million dollars; I'll give you \$200,000 to test it. If it works, you can have the other \$800,000 and do it." Or sometimes the CEO says, "We've got too much going on right now. We can't do that right now, we don't have the resources. Come back and talk to me about that in six months, after we finish this, this and this."

It's the same kind of thing in our relationships with our Directors.

CML: I hear you actually using two different metaphors here. One is the Director and the theme park thing. And the other is the Inner CEO.

Bob: Yeah. The reason is – Jesus kind of made this famous in many ways. You tailor the way you talk about things to your audience. When I first started sharing these concepts, I was sharing them with individuals from a personal growth perspective. Helping people with personal issues and emotional issues, and creating success in their lives.

And then I woke up one morning, and I said, "You know, I've been using this in business, and I haven't been talking to people about how to use this in business. My grandfather used this in business to make a tremendous success, and I've had tremendous success, and I've never been talking to people about the business application of this."

So I created a whole new stream, if you will, of my work. When you're talking to business people, you use different terms. The movie theme is very, very effective and it's a very rich metaphor, and I use it when I'm talking to individuals, but when I'm talking to business, I want to talk their language, so I slightly translated some of this in order to more easily enter their world.

I am not a religious person, but a lot of the famous stories with Jesus are that whatever audience he was talking in front of, that was the kind of metaphors he used.

If he was talking to people who were farmers, he talked about farming. If he was with people who were fishermen, he talked about fishing.

So when you're dealing with a business audience, you use business metaphors.

CML: It's clear that you've got a real passion for this subject, and yet, you work at it almost like a hobby, don't you? This is not like a full-time thing for you, is it?

Bob: No, I made a deal with myself when I launched this. I had some experiences, many years

ago, where I was involved with sharing another person's personal growth technologies. And everything that you did had an agenda.

You did this event because you needed so many percent of the people that came to this free event or this cheap event to roll over into this very expensive weekend. And then you had to get a certain number of people from that very expensive weekend to roll over into doing something else. Everything had an agenda, and there was pressure. And if you didn't achieve your agenda, some of these other things that you did were a failure

I just didn't like that, so I decided when I was going to launch this Invisible Path work, that I was not going to "need" anything from it, and I was not going to have an agenda, and I was not going to need to pay my bills and support myself off of it, and that I was going to invest whatever time and energy I felt motivated to invest, I was going to let it take on a life of its own. And if it exploded, it exploded, but I was not going to need anything from it.

So I launched this stuff, I guess three or four years ago, in a major way. And I went off and got busy working with clients and working on my own other projects.

I'm a long-time direct response marketer, so I do a lot of direct marketing things for clients and for other people, and my own projects. So I went off and got busy, and I invest maybe at this point – it's been different in the last few years as I've gotten things going – but at this point, I maybe invest an hour or something a day. The rest of it is either automated, or I have a couple of part-time people that help me.

But I just made this deal with myself that I was not going to need anything from this. And I'm really glad I did that because the whole experience has been much more enjoyable, and it's been much more relaxed. I think it comes through in my interactions with people and websites and in the marketing, that I'm not trying to beat you over the head to do something, and I don't need anything from you. I'm offering this and if it interests you great; here's what it is. And if it doesn't interest you, so be it.

CML: Yeah, this was my own reaction to this. When I first ran across your website and your information, I got the feeling, "Gosh, this guy's casual. Where's the pressure?"

Bob: There are a lot of people that like that, and there are a lot of people that want somebody else to tell them what to do, and they want somebody else to push them into doing something. They like that. I just don't. I get tired of it.

I'm a very sensitive person in terms of intuitive and energy, and I don't like people pushing on me that way. And if I don't like it myself, then I'm not going to do it with someone else.

CML: You've had quite a few real successes over the years. Where do you get most of your ideas for new products or services? Is it brainstorming? Or do your ideas develop out of things your customers mention?

Bob: It's a combination of things. I would say that the most original things that I've created, the Invisible Path original materials and the business ones that I'm working on now, literally – if you're into computer stuff – it's almost like somebody downloaded it into my head.

It's really kind of a funny experience. When I wrote my book, *Invisible Path to Success*, it was like somebody opened up a faucet. I'd be sitting there at dinner, and I'd have to get up from dinner to go over to my computer because this whole thing was popping into my head.

I just sometimes get these creative bursts where things just pop into my head, and so I always have a tape recorder or a pad of paper or a computer there to capture it when it happens. I would say that most of the most original and most powerful and impactful things that are products or services that I've created have just literally, in one way, shape or form, popped into my head. Sometimes it's driving and sometimes it's in the shower, and sometimes it's shaving, and sometimes it's when I'm sitting in a movie or something else, and my mind's relaxed.

But most of the stuff that I do has come from that.

And then there've been other tributaries and offshoots from that that have come from seeing what other people have done and I like. I've had a number of people who are what you'd call "information marketers," "info-preneurs," whatever you want to call it, and I've seen them do certain things, and I've thought, "Well, I like that. I'll do something like that myself, except I'll translate it into my own way."

So it's either been literal kind of inspiration or it's been mirroring or modeling something that I saw somebody else do that I liked.

CML: When you get a new idea, how do you recognize it's a really good one? Do you go out and test ideas, or is it more like a gut feeling that, "Oh boy, this one's a winner"?

Bob: Well, again, I've got a lot of direct response marketing in my blood. There's a very famous direct marketing guru in the United States, whose name is Jay Abraham, and this guy is like the highest paid marketing consultant in the world.

CML: Right. I've got a shelf of his books and tapes.

Bob: Yeah, and he's generated billions of dollars in sales for himself and other people. When I was first learning direct response marketing, he was my first mentor in that. He taught me something that I've never forgotten. You've got to understand; this is a brilliant man who's had a tremendously successful track record and makes huge amounts of money.

He said to me, "Never presuppose to understand what the marketplace wants or what's

going to be successful.” It doesn’t matter how smart you are. It doesn’t matter how successful you are. It doesn’t matter what your track record is. Never presuppose that you know. You use your experience, you use your intelligence, you use your track record in order to throw something out there that’s the best you can do, and you test it.

And then you let the marketplace vote and tell you what do they want, what don’t they want, what’s the best approach, what isn’t the best approach.

So there are times that I’ll get an idea and I will have a hunch that it’s a winner, but I always suspend that, and then I test it. You let the marketplace tell you. I would say maybe 70-80 percent of the time my hunch is correct, but there are also times it’s not.

If you talk to a lot of entrepreneurs, you’ll hear the same thing: “I was convinced this thing was just going to be a mega-hit, and it flopped.” And other people will say, “I never even thought this thing would work; I just kind of half-assed and threw this thing out there, and it shocked the hell out of me when I saw that all these people wanted it and they ate it up.”

So I’m a big believer in testing, and I’m a big believer in dipping your toe in the water before you dive in, because you just don’t know.

CML: It starts with a gut feeling and then you go out and ask everybody else.

Bob: Yeah. And again, there are other people that are more in tune – for example, there’s a client that I’ve had, a software company, for the last three years, and the term that the guy uses for this thing (you might call it intuition or gut or whatever), he uses the word “instinct.” Anytime he has really been receiving a message from his instinct, he has been uncannily accurate.

There are times where he thinks that something is his instinct and it’s not; it’s an old fear, or it’s what I call “a neurotic something,” or it’s programming, or it’s whatever it is. It isn’t really his instinct.

He’s very good in general at sorting through what is a message like that and what isn’t. Some people are and some people aren’t. There are people that get instinct, they’ll get gut things, they’ll get feelings all the time and they ignore them. And there are people that get things that they think are hunches and that they think are gut feelings, and they’re not, they’re some old fear or some neurotic something, or some whatever. So it’s an art and it’s a skill, being able to sort through the different kind of stuff that comes into your head to know what’s really a message from your Director, to know what’s really instinct, to know what’s really gut, to know what’s really coming from intuition versus somewhere else.

And some people are better at that than others.

CML: Do you get better at it with more experience? Do most people?

Bob: I think it starts out with an intent. I think you'll probably remember from my book, there's a chapter that called "Tap All Your Resources." In that chapter I'm telling the people that whatever you call it (I use the word "intuition"; that's my preferred word), I believe it's the ultimate power. I believe that if you're going to spend time and energy trying to develop some skill, that that really ought to be high on your priority list because it's just so powerful to be able to get information through that. I focus on it, and I encourage other people to focus on it. That's where it starts.

You have to want to. A lot of people don't care. They have absolutely no desire to open up that channel and to be getting information from there. So the first thing is, you've got to want to.

Then, two is, you have to work at it. One of the things I always say in my Invisible Path work is, there are no rules, there are no formulas. Everything is customized to each of us as a unique individual. So if you want to awaken your intuition, it's possible that you and I could do it the exact same way, but the odds are, the best way for you to do it would be very different than the best way for me to do it. The real power comes from you finding the best way for you, for whatever it is, not just intuition.

So, when anybody wants to awaken their intuition, or they want to produce any result, I always say to send a request into the Invisible Network asking your Director or Inner CEO for help to find the best way for you. Then you've got to be real open to what comes back, and that takes effort.

CML: You've mentioned a couple of times sending a request "into the network." Would you care to say a couple of words about how a person does that?

Bob: Well, there are a lot of different ways. My whole strategy is what I said before: there are no rules, there are no formulas, we're all different, we've got to have our own solutions. So I offer people examples of the ways that I've done things, and I offer people examples of places that they can either do it if they really like it and they'd really like to, or maybe it's a good place to start, and then they'll come up with their own variation down the line.

The challenge is this (and the way that you accomplish this challenge doesn't matter; I'll tell you in a minute the way I do it); if you could tape record what goes on inside your head in one day, and you could play it back, and you could hear everything that you said, and you could hear everything that you thought inside your head, and you could listen to that over a 24-hour period, you would be so confused. You would be so fried. If you didn't know you and you were a stranger listening to this tape, you would have absolutely no idea what you listened to.

We're constantly changing our minds in our stream of consciousness, and we're

constantly doing different things. It's very confusing. So if you put yourself in the position of your Director, who's trying to help you, who's trying to work with you, who's trying to get feedback and input from you in terms of how to help you do things that you want to do and fulfill your life purpose, sometimes it's very difficult for your Director to understand what's really going on and filter through that noise to get to what you really mean and what you really want and what's really important.

The whole key to sending a request into this network, sending a request for help to your Director, is finding a way to get through that noise. It's creating what I call "a code system."

The simplest, easiest and most fun way that I have found, that I use and that I recommend to other people (and it's really simple; some people say, "Gosh, is that all there is, there's not a more complicated, magical, difficult thing?"), you create a box of some kind. It can be anything. It can be something you make; it can be something you buy.

CML: A physical box?

Bob: Yeah, I have two of them. One of them is a wizard cookie jar, like a gigantic face of a wizard with the hat, and the hat comes off and that's the top of the cookie jar.

And I have a purple glass pyramid. One of the sides of the pyramid leans open. I use one at the office, and I use one at home.

It can be anything. The only thing that's important is that it's fun to you and that it has whatever degree of privacy or security that you want if you don't want other people seeing what you put in it.

You kind of make a deal with your Director, with your Inner CEO if you're a business person, that "anything that I put in that box is very important, and I want priority treatment from you."

It's like in the movies there was always this red telephone that lit up. It was the president of the United States and certain people would have this red phone. If the red phone lit up and started ringing, it was from the president of the United States, so you'd pick it up instantly because it was a very important call from president.

I kind of look at it that way. Your Director says, "I don't have to worry about all this stuff that he's thinking, and I don't have to worry about all the noise that's in his head, I'm just going to monitor that box. And when there's something in that box, I'm going to pull it out of there and I'm going to take a look at it and I'm going to give it some serious consideration."

So step one is, you create some way of getting through the noise. Now, there are other

ways to do it. You can tap on your forehead and say some affirmation, and your deal with your Director is, anything that you say after you tap on your forehead. You can do all kinds of different things, but there are other benefits to writing it down.

There's a whole system that I offer people as a starting point or a way to do it if they want, but it starts with that box, which is the way of getting through the noise.

CML: I like this concept. Mentors have played a fairly important role in your life, though, haven't they? Could you tell us a bit about your experiences with some of them?

Bob: I don't know that there're any specific examples that would really be valuable. I think it's just how my whole personality is. If I want to produce a particular result in my life, or I want to learn some new skill, I do two things. One, I send a request in to the network using my system asking for help from my Director to produce the results or develop the skill or whatever it is.

And step two is, I go find a bunch of other people that have done it, and I inhale everything that I can find on that particular thing.

There was a time in my life where I was very interested in becoming masterful at direct response marketing. The journey started with Jay Abraham, but it went on for probably ten years, and I made the rounds of a lot of the gurus and went to all their seminars and inhaled all their stuff.

And when I wanted to learn about Internet marketing, I did something similar. I just inhaled all this stuff and I synthesized it, and I kind of let it incubate in my head. My Director shaped certain things. Then, over time I became masterful at it.

In my life there have been a whole bunch of things like that that I've decided I wanted to become masterful at, so I sent a request in and I went and learned from a bunch of people that were doing it and out of that whole thing, came up with my own take on it.

But there are so many of them, so many people that have had impact on me and they're all kind of a jumble in my head at this point.

CML: On the other side of the relationship, why does somebody decide to mentor another person? What do they get out of it?

Bob: I've got to go back and tell you, no rules and formulas. It's different for everybody. There are some people that – you talk about a life purpose – that's what their life purpose is. They decided that they wanted to come in here and they wanted to help a whole bunch of people to maximize their potential or become really good at a particular thing. They get a lot of joy out of that whole process, and that's why they do it.

There are other people that do it simply to make the money. It's a really good way to

make money. There are other people that do it – and this is kind of the classic thing – you hear that teachers teach stuff that they themselves need to learn more of or more deeply. So there are people that do it because the process is furthering their own education or evolution in some way.

Then there are other people that almost have an obsession to give back something that they feel they were treated very well by life and they've learned some things, and they're almost obsessed with the need to give back and share it with other people.

I'm sure if you could really get inside the total insides of somebody that's a mentor, when you interview a hundred people, you'd find a hundred different reasons for why they do it. There would be patterns, but it still would be unique to each individual as to why they do and what they get out of it.

It comes back to the same thing we talked about before. At its core, there's an emotional feeling that they're after. Or it's evolution and growth. To me it's always one of those two things.

CML: Do you still sometimes still find yourself getting into a “slump” period, like a day when maybe you feel like “man, I just don't want to motivate myself today”?

Bob: Absolutely.

CML: What do you do? How do you get back on track?

Bob: At this point in my life, it depends whether it's a blip or whether it lasts longer. If it's just a blip, say I wake up one morning and for no traceable cause I'm just feeling blue, or I have no motivation or I have no energy for anything, I might just ride it through and not even give it a second thought.

If it lingers, then again, the first step would be to send a request into the network asking for help to understand where this is coming from, or what I can do to heal or release or understand the core of what's causing it. Then, like I teach in my work, I'll do what I feel motivated to do, because when you ask for help for something like that, the help and the answer and the response can come in a zillion different ways and you never know how or from where, or what's going to happen.

Then, if there are times, if it persists, I have a whole network of people that are kind of a support structure for me. There are times that I'll call one of these people and I'll say, “You know, for the last two weeks, I have absolutely no idea why, there's nothing that's happened, there's no bad news, there's no anything, I've just been feeling really exhausted, or I've just been feeling really depressed, and I don't know why. I need some help.” And they'll help me get to the core of what's causing it, and in some cases to release what it is or understand what it is. But it just depends on the degree. If it's just a random day, I don't give it a second thought. If it's something that persists, I don't like

feeling that way.

In my Murphy's Law phase, I was miserable constantly. In a lot of my childhood I was miserable constantly, and I just can't tolerate that much any more at this point in my life. So if it lingers, I've got to find out what's going on here and change this because I don't want to feel this way any more.

CML: And yet, in your entire answer, I didn't hear anything about struggle. I didn't hear you saying that you "struggle" with this. You don't turn it into a bitter battle. You seem to look for what's in it for you.

Bob: Well, I would say maybe 70-80 percent of the time, that's really true. I stay pretty sane and I stay pretty balanced, and I handle it. Then there are other times, I just get totally torqued out of shape, and I'll still yell and scream at my Director, and I'll get really mad. Sometimes it almost feels like a tornado flew over me and picked me up and shook me around and twirled me around and threw me out of it onto the floor again. Then it's kind of like "what was that?" I don't know what the storm was, and I don't know where it came from, and I don't know why it came, and I don't know why it ended, but that's the way I feel, like something took me over.

There are times I just get totally nuts about it and get totally lost in the emotion of it, but that happens less and less.

See, one of the things I don't like about the personal growth world and I don't like about a lot of people that teach a lot of things is that they either allow the impression to be communicated, or they intentionally try to communicate the message that they went through this tough time and they learned all this magical stuff, and now their life's perfect. They never struggle, they never have any problems, they're never depressed, of if they're depressed they just use this technique and it's gone in two seconds, and they live this magical, perfect life.

CML: And if there's anything that'll make the rest of us feel hopeless it's the idea that somebody's got it all perfect.

Bob: Yeah. And maybe there are people that that's really true, but I'm not one of them.

CML: It's a relief, actually, to hear this.

Bob: Yeah, I'd love to be that way someday. I mean, it's certainly a goal of mine to never let any storm take me over and get me that torqued out. Maybe it'll happen, maybe it won't. My belief is, there are certain emotional (or what I call neurotic) things; they're just part of me, and I'm not going to live long enough to be able to clear out whatever is causing it. Or maybe I don't even care enough to put the effort in. They're just going to be part of me. There are going to be certain buttons people are going to push and I'm going to get unhappy as a result, or I'm going to get depressed, or I'm going to have these mysterious

depressions from time to time, and it's just part of life.

I don't expect I'm ever going to get perfect. I would like to continue to get better and be more in control, be able to manage these things better. But my life is far from perfect. And I'm still, every day, learning to become more masterful at this Invisible Path stuff. I'm much more masterful at it than the people that come to me that want to learn it.

CML: I think this will give our listeners a lot more hope than telling them, "Oh man, I'm perfect now."

Bob: Far from it. You know, if you were to talk to my wife and say, "Boy, it really looks like Bob's got his act together and he's really . . . dah da dah da dah," she'd laugh. She sees the whole side.

But on balance, my life is really good and I'm in a really good place. There are times I get knocked off my center and there are times that these storms take me over, but there was also a time that my whole life was in the storm. Now it's much more a part-time occurrence, because I've done a lot of work and I've made a lot of progress.

My wife and I have been together for six years, and if you were to interview her about the differences that she has seen in me from when we first met to now, or even just from last year to this year, she could tell you amazing stories of what the journey's been like and how she's seen me change and the progress. And it's all been from applying Invisible Path concepts and working with my Director asking for help.

If you were to go into my request box, which is what I call this box we were talking about before, and let's say that any given moment there are forty things in there, there are probably twenty-five of them that have to do with business results, producing earthbound, tangible kinds of things with projects that I'm working on, or clients I'm working with. Or we're moving and I want help to find the perfect house when we move, and stuff like that.

Then the other fifteen of them are about emotional things: "I've noticed the following pattern repeating and I would prefer not to have that repeat any more; I don't want that particular trigger to make me angry; I don't want that particular trigger to make me feel this way; so help me to get to the core of it and change it."

A lot of the biggest leaps that I've made in my life have been asking for help with emotional kinds of things like that. It hasn't been about career, it hasn't been about money, hasn't been about jobs. It's been about what I call "quality of life issues."

In my work with clients, it's one of the things that amazes me and that I have to keep beating up on people for, is to say, "You've got to focus on the quality of life issue and the tangible results that you want." But if you don't ask for help for the quality of life, you can get the results that you want and it can come wrapped in a whole bunch of

different packages. If you ask for it to come in a particular kind of package, you may not get it, or you may not get it exactly the way you want, but if you don't ask, it doesn't happen.

CML: How important a part of success is the feeling that you deserve good things?

Bob: To me, thinking that you deserve something is simply an opinion. It's probably wrong and therefore to me it's irrelevant. I don't think anybody deserves anything, you know. I think the stuff that happens in your life happens because it's part of your movie, because it's part of what you want to explore, because it's part of what you wanted to do or the way you want to do it. And your opinion about it doesn't mean anything.

CML: So you can have anything, and whether you feel like you deserve it or not has little to do with it?

Bob: Yeah. Although, again, this is one statement I'm probably misreading a little bit what you said, but I want to make the point.

There are a lot of self-improvement and personal growth kind of approaches and they basically say, "You've got unlimited power and you can create any result you want if you just use this particular technique.

CML: Okay, good point.

Bob: And you can do anything.

CML: But . . .

Bob: My belief is, you can do anything within the limitations of your life purpose. But the way that I explain that is, my wife and I, for example, we have a two-year-old daughter and we have had date night every week, Saturday night, from the moment she was born. And now, every Saturday night, no matter what's going on, we have our nanny take care of Ali, and we go out, just the two of us.

A lot of times we go to movies. So on a Saturday night we'll open the paper and we'll look at what movie we want to go to. There are twelve different movies, and we make the decision to go and see one of them.

The minute you make the decision to go to one of them, you cut off the option of going to those other ones in that given moment. There's nothing bad about that. No one's hurting you. No one's limiting you. No one's telling you no. But the minute you made a choice, you limited yourself.

Before everybody comes into this life, and they're choosing what they want to have happen in this life, at that moment you could do anything. You could pick anything, you

could be anything, you could produce any result, you could be president, you could be the Super Bowl winning quarterback, you could be Mother Teresa, you could be the scientist that wins the Nobel Prize, you can be a parent of twins. You can do whatever you want at that moment, but the moment you choose: “When I go into this lifetime, when I go into the amusement park, I want to do this thing, or I want to do these four things,” or whatever it is, the minute you make a choice, you limit yourself.

CML: Important distinction here.

Bob: Yeah, and no one else is limiting you. You chose it. If you choose to go on a roller coaster and the roller coaster is going to go up at some times and down at some times and around corners at some times and it’s going to splash you in the water, you’re not in control of that, but you chose to go on the ride and you knew that the ride was going to do certain things. You knew you weren’t going to get to control it, but that was the deal. You’re not upset about it.

So to me, the fact that you can’t produce any result you want and that you’re limited to what your life purpose is, is not bad news. To me it’s really good news, and it’s also just the way it is, whether you look at it as good news or bad news.

CML: Several centuries ago, I think it was Francis Bacon who wrote, “All things are possible, but not everything is allowed.”

Bob: Right. And the only limitation on the allowed – on my website, when I’m talking about this work and I start getting into tangible things – and I say on the website, the only limitation that you have in terms of what you can do or have or be in your life is your life purpose. And you chose it. And you can come back. You know, you can go back to the amusement park. You can come back – I believe in reincarnation. I believe you can come back and have another life.

So if you wanted to do three things and you could only do one of them (and again, we all do more than one thing in each life), but if there’s something that you really wanted to do before you came in here, you can do that later. And if you get here and you get really passionate about something, you can come back later and do that later, just like you can in an amusement park. You just can’t necessarily do it at the same time. I’ll give you a really great example.

I’m in the process of getting my business book published. Anybody that wants to write a book, their ultimate fantasy is that Oprah Winfrey is going to hold it up to her audience and they’re going to become a million-copy best-seller overnight.

Oprah has this tremendous career. She’s very wealthy. She’s very successful. She has a dream career in many people’s minds. And she’s very, very frustrated because she wants to be an actress. She has not been able to become a successful actress.

She's got this unbelievable TV career, and she's one of the wealthiest women on the planet, but she's frustrated – part of her – because she wants to be an actress and it isn't working. But that isn't what her life purpose is, clearly. That is not what she came here to do.

Mother Teresa was not all of a sudden going to decide to be an actress or a TV show host. That's not what she came here to do.

In a lot of people's lives, it's very clear what their life purpose is, and with other people, it's not.

CML: The people who are the most happy are the ones who are most aware of what their purpose is.

Bob: Yeah. Or on some level; they don't ever think about it, they just feel it and they know what they were meant to do.

My belief is, we're all always doing what we were meant to do. We may try and battle it and we may fight it and we may resist it, but my belief is, ultimately whatever your life purpose is, you're going to fulfill it. You may go left in a fork in the road when you were "supposed to go right." You may "make a mistake." You may goof something up and your Director has to do some things from behind the scenes to help you get back on track. But ultimately, if your goal was to get to a particular place and have a certain set of experiences, or learn certain things, or have certain whatevers, you will ultimately end up fulfilling your life purpose. That's just the way it works. You may not always know about it consciously.

From my experience, there are some people, they want to come into a life, they want to just go – forgive my French – they just want to go "balls to the wall" for seventy years, just live like a maniac, never think about anything, never be concerned about the psychology or the "why" or the "how" or "what am I getting." They're just, live-live-live-live. And then, at the end of the lifetime, when they're in some other dimension or whatever, they take a look at all of it. They look at the psychology and they learn. They look at it from a different perspective. But when they're here, they just live.

Then there are other people, of which I'm one, who want to do both. I want to have experiences and I want to live, and I also want to understand the why's. I like understanding the psychological. I like understanding the behind-the-scenes mechanics of things. And so I like to do both.

Then there's everybody in between. But it's all based on what you want to do.

CML: For listeners who, right now, find themselves half buried in problems, what should they do first?

Bob: Well, if they were aware of my system, which is very simple, what I would do is, I would say, "Take a look at what's going on in your life, at those problems, and prioritize them in terms of which ones are having the most (let's just call it) "negative" impact, and rank them in order of, if I could change this one it would have the most instant transformational effect on my quality of life.

And rank them in terms of which ones are having the most impact. Then, one by one, I would go down the list. I would not do it all at once. I'd pick the first one that would have the most impact on your quality of life, and I would send a request into the network asking for help to change it. I would do that over time.

This is what I've been doing over the last ten or twelve years, in effect, going down a list like that. Now I'm at some of the things that aren't as critical as they were ten or twelve years ago, but they still have impact on my quality of life. But they're not the huge, mega ones like they were.

And I would work my way down that list.

CML: How important does something have to be today before you'll use this technique?

Bob: I use it anytime anything is up. And up means there's something that needs attention.

I'll give you an example that happened just recently.

My wife and I live in Florida and we have not decided if we want to stay here, and if so, where we want to live, so we have been renting. We have not owned a house because I didn't want to put any roots down or have any kind of commitment or thing that would be hard to get out of until we knew where we really wanted to be. So we've been renting this place. We signed a new lease from April first of this year to March thirty-first of next year.

Then, all of a sudden, the owners came to us and conveniently forgot that they had signed a lease with us and basically said, "We're moving back to town and we want to move back into our house; you have to get out in sixty days."

We had a couple of options. One is, we could say, "Go stuff it, we have a contract." We decided not to do that because we've had kind of a tough time with these landlords. They've been a little difficult to deal with. And we didn't want to have a miserable year because we did this. So we just decided, if we can find another place that's really good, we'll just move out and let them move back in and make the whole thing easy.

So the first thing I did is, I sent a request into the network saying, "What should we do here? Should we fight these people or shall we let it go?"

And when I need an answer to something, the wording that I use (and this is not in the

course, so this may be new to you) is, “give me a knock-me-over-the-head-so-I-can’t-miss-it sign.”

So I said, “Give me a knock-me-over-the-head-so-I-can’t-miss-it sign” as to whether we ought to fight this thing or let it go. And it became very clear that we should just let this thing go.

The next thing was, all right, well now we’ve got to move. We’re in the Clearwater-Tampa Bay area on the west coast of Florida, and there are a lot of different places that we could live. There are a lot of different complicated things; we need to have access to this, and we need to be near this, and dah da dah da dah, so the next thing I did is, I sent a request in asking for help to find the perfect place to live, the perfect home.

I used the system in terms of the way I worded it, because there’s an art to the way that you ask for help for these things. So I use it for things as simple and tangible as helping me find the perfect house.

If I’m having a pain in my back and it doesn’t seem to go away, I’ll send a request in that says “please guide me to the perfect resource for uncovering and handling this.” If there’s a relationship issue between my wife and I, or a client and I, or a brother or sister and I, I will ask for help.

If anything that is up – meaning there’s a problem, there’s a challenge, there’s something I need help with, there’s something I’m struggling with, there’s a result – there’s nothing too big and there’s nothing too small. Anytime something’s up, a request goes into the network for me.

And when nothing’s up, nothing goes in. There are times I’ll go for months and I won’t write a request on anything, and there are times I’ll put in ten in a week.

CML: So this is not something you sit down and do for fifteen or twenty minutes twice a day like meditating.

Bob: No.

CML: The things you teach, are they anti-religious or anti-church in any way?

Bob: I can’t answer that question. If somebody really gets into this Invisible Path work, they can start and get this, and then they can do this, and then they can do that, and then they can buy this, and then they can do that, if they really want to keep going to deeper levels.

A guy who has traveled pretty deep in the levels of Invisible Path stuff is a Catholic priest who works in the archdiocese in New York. And he told me (and he even gave me a testimonial) saying he finds no conflict between my work and his beliefs. He just believes that we have some different words for describing different things.

I know someone else, a woman who's one of the most wonderful women that I know, just a terrific person, who is a born-again Christian, a very, very religious woman. And she says the same thing: "We just have different words; what you call Director I call Holy Spirit; and what you call network I call this, and so forth."

Then, I have people who buy my course and they return it and ask for a refund. And when they return it, they say, "This violated my religious beliefs."

So it's a very personal thing.

CML: Case by case.

Bob: Yeah. I personally believe that there is no conflict. It really is just words. If somebody is very passionate about God or about Jesus or about Buddha or about any religious figure, and they swap out the word Director in my work for that word (Buddha, Jesus, God, whatever), there's no conflict.

Now, that's not what I believe Director is. I have a different definition of it. But if they swap the word out, the system works.

CML: But basically, this is just a model. This is not "the thing itself."

Bob: No, and it's all a metaphor anyway.

I mean, one of the things that I say in the book, that I really believe, and that I say in my work all over the place is that these kinds of things are what I call "deep issues": why are we here; is there a God; if there is a God, what's his or her role in our daily life; and where do we go after we die? All those kinds of things are very deep issues, and my belief is that while we are here on the earth and we are in our conscious self, or our personality, we're never going to know the answers to those questions. And we're never going to know if we're right or not. I just don't believe it's possible.

So to me, everything's opinion. Everything could be wrong. And the only thing that matters is if the particular opinion, if the particular belief, if the particular way of looking at something works for you. By "works for you" I mean does it help you to produce the result that you want? If the result that you want is less fear, less stress, more confidence, more financial success, better relationships, whatever it is, if the particular system helps you to do that, then you should continue to use it.

And if it doesn't, then maybe you should consider looking at something else. But it's all just opinion, and we never know what's right or wrong anyway.

I just feel that the Invisible Path stuff really works, and so I continue to use it. And the people who get passionate about it continue to use it. There are a lot of people that think

it's a crock, and there are others that think there's no Director, there's no network, that's a bunch of hooley. And there are people that say it violates their religious beliefs.

There are people who are going through a tough time and it's a Monday. And if they get the course on Monday and their problem isn't fixed by Thursday, then the system "doesn't work" and they send it back.

There's all kinds of stuff, but ultimately that's the question: does it work for you? And if does, then keep doing it, and if it doesn't, then jettison everything that you're doing and look for something that will.

CML: What was the hardest thing in your life to change?

Bob: I think the hardest stuff for me has been some of those storms that I talked about before. Something would happen and I would have this intensely negative emotional reaction, and I couldn't stop it. I couldn't get out of it. It's like it totally took me over and I couldn't stop it. I couldn't change it, I couldn't break it, and it's like the storm would run its course and when it was over it would let go of me and I'd have my life back.

I've had, I would say, four or five major storms like that that kept coming and kept just taking hold of me. They were really, really tough. In some cases I'm still working on the last dregs of them, and in other cases they're totally cleared and gone. It took me five years, took me four years, took me two years.

And then there are other times when I did one session with a particular kind of healer or someone that works with emotional release and in one hour or in ten minutes it was gone. But I would say my biggest challenges have been those storms.

CML: How much of that do you feel was personal nature that you brought with you, and how much of it do you feel was habits that you learned in your early childhood?

Bob: I have absolutely no idea.

CML: Now there's an honest answer.

Bob: It's just one of those things that, like I said before, I have no idea; I never will know. So why even bother to speculate?

If you want my personal opinion, if you want my personal theory (and this gets into a book that is going to be my next book after the business book; the working title is "The Invisible Path to Emotional Well-Being" where I will go into this whole model), but I think in simple, common psychological terms, those storms were the result of very deeply repressed emotional stuff from when I was a kid.

And whether there was a past life overlay, or there was something else that intensified it,

I personally believe (although like I said, I could be totally wrong) that it had its origins in my childhood.

But I don't know, and I'm never going to know, and I really don't care. What I do care about – when I was younger, I loved learning. I've talked about doing things for emotional reasons, because of the emotional experience that you get. And learning, to me, is a kind of a high. I love the stimulation of it.

There was a long time ago when I studied a lot of stuff because I was curious and it was interesting. Now, I pretty much don't invest a lot of time and energy into something unless it can have some practical application to improving my quality of life. So if it isn't going to yield that kind of result, I just don't invest a lot of energy.

I don't care what the cause is. If it's troubling me, then I want it to go away. I want to understand or release or heal the core or whatever it is so that I don't have the symptom any more, and get what I need to get out of it. But I don't really care any more where it came from because I don't know. I could go to different therapists, and I could go to different intuitives, and I could go to different people who would give me twenty different opinions on where it came from, but I'll never know. So I just kind of let it go. I'm real practical based at this point in my life.

CML: You mentioned meditation several times in your book, and it's obvious you enjoy it yourself. Do you have any hints for somebody who might be a beginner? What's a good, fairly simple way to start meditating?

Bob: Well see, again . . .

CML: No rules?

Bob: Send a request into the network and say, "I am interested in learning how to meditate." As you know, there's a whole particular way that I suggest structuring your request. But basically you would say: "Dear Director, I'm very interested in learning how to meditate. I recognize that the best way for me to meditate may be very different from someone else to meditate. I would like to produce the following kinds of results."

And then my wording – I have a kind of a template that I use for all my requests, and my wording is: "Please help me yourself . . ." because there are times that your Director can just do something. He or she doesn't need any help from anybody else, doesn't have to send a request into the network asking for help. They can just, boom, do it. So it's "Please help me yourself or guide me to the people, ideas, resources, techniques or strategies that can help me to . . ." and then you fill in the blank. In this case it would be: ". . . to learn the best form of meditation for me."

There are so many different kinds. I was interviewing a person yesterday, a guy named Bill Harris from a company called Centerpointe Research Institute, that has a very high-

tech form of meditation that has been miraculous for a lot of people. You basically listen to a cassette tape with headphones that's got certain frequencies on it that induce a very, very deep state of meditation and creates tremendous benefits. All you do is listen to this tape. There are a lot of people that that's tremendously helpful for.

Then there are other people that use some of the more traditional kinds of Buddhist, Far East kinds of meditation techniques and they get benefits out of that.

There are other people that use the kind of Transcendental Meditation thing that was popular here in the sixties. You just don't know consciously what the best thing for you is, so you ask this Director part of you, who does know what would be best for you, for help.

Again, I really resist (and I know it frustrates a lot of people, and it may frustrate you), but I resist giving people rules and formulas because I think it's dis-empowering.

CML: No, this is fascinating.

Bob: I think the real power comes from finding the customized solution for you.

CML: This is so different. So many teachers and gurus come out with: "This is the one true way." A lot of organizations seem to do that. So this is kind of refreshing to have a guy say, "I don't know what's best for you, but here's how you can find out."

Bob: I don't know what's best for me. That's why I'm always asking for help when I need help in my own life, because I realize that my perspective is so limited.

Now, again, there are times that I have a hunch. There are times that I have an opinion. And there are times when my opinion is accurate. But there are lots of times when it isn't. My general assumption is, I have no idea what the best way to do for this would be.

When we were looking for houses, and we found one this morning (going back to that issue) that we're probably going to end up moving into, I didn't know. To be honest, I was very confused. There were too many options. There were too many variables, and my brain was getting a bit of a headache trying to process the whole thing. I just didn't know. I don't know what's going to happen next year. I don't know what's going to happen six months from now. I don't know which house would be the best house for me. I don't know which location would be the best. I don't know which features of a house would be best for me.

So I ask for help and I release it, and I let this other part of me, that knows a whole lot more about me and where I'm going and what my purpose is and has access to this network, do the work for me.

My trick, and what my work is really about, is helping people to build a relationship with

this Director part of them and to build a communication system back and forth so that you can get this kind of help when you need it. That's really what my work is about at its core. It's learning how to work with that other part of you.

CML: Most people seem to find learning new things stressful. Do you think we, as humans, ever reach a point where we can just relax and enjoy every learning experience?

Bob: Well again, you're asking for generalizations and rules and all of us being the same one day. And I don't think that's ever going to happen.

CML: Good answer.

Bob: I would like to believe that a lot of people would change in this direction, but I don't know.

My belief is that one of the really wonderful things about being down here is that there is so much diversity. People are so different, and they want to explore different things, and they want to do even the same things in different ways, and they have different perspectives, and they have different ideas. I don't think it's ever going to get that homogenized. I think if it did, a lot of people wouldn't want to come to this amusement park anymore because it wouldn't be fun.

CML: Many teachers say the earth experience is about to change significantly. How do you envision our daily life changing, some of the ways it might change in the next, say, fifty or a hundred years? Or five hundred years? Any hunches?

Bob: Absolutely no idea.

My personal belief is that what you might call spirituality is awakening in a lot of people. I think you're going to see a lot of people tapping much more into intuition. I think personally you're going to see a lot more people starting to look at the world from the kind of perspective that the Invisible Path work offers. It doesn't have to be that perspective, but that kind of a "bigger picture" perspective. I think you're going to see people focusing a lot more on quality of life and not be so hypnotized by the getting wealthy and the "living well and fast" life.

But I still think you're going to continue to see this kind of pockets of what we might call "craziness." I really don't know.

If you look at history, there are major times where civilizations go through major changes and there's like a complete change in terms of the whole paradigm. Sometimes, whole civilizations that were thriving for thousands of years just disappear.

My theory is that when that happens, it's because they pretty much milked all of the value out of exploring that particular reality and they all just kind of decided to go on to

something else. I don't think we're in the middle of that, but I think that certainly we're in a time of great change. But I'm not smart enough to try and figure out where it's headed.

CML: Any parting words of special advice to listeners who are still floundering around trying to get out of the starting gate?

Bob: First of all, I would say that that's a myth.

I would say, no matter how difficult it may be for you right now or how lousy you may feel or how hopeless that you may feel, number one, you're not screwing up. You didn't mess up at some point. You're not a terrible person. You didn't make a mistake and now you're in this mess because you screwed up. You're in the middle of a particular series of scenes in a movie that's got a lot of other scenes to film, and that is going to end up, not necessarily with the classic Hollywood ending, but it's going to end up with you getting what you came here for – you fulfilling your life purpose. I guess I'd say that number one.

And number two, you're not alone. There's this other part of you that you can call whatever you want, but which I call Director or Inner CEO, and this part of you is with you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Anything that you're working on, this part of you is working on. It's like the best friend that you could ever have. It's the best ally you could ever have. It's the best partner that you could ever have in business. And you're not alone, because this part of you is there and is constantly looking for ways to help you and constantly, 24-7, looking for ways to help you fulfill your life purpose.

CML: That's a very reassuring concept.

Bob: Yeah. Those are the two things I guess I would like to say.

And the third thing I'd like to say is, it's really important to ask for help. One of the things that I've learned is, there are certain things that your Director (or whatever you want to call it) is working on, on your behalf, and you didn't ask for it. Maybe you didn't even think of it; maybe it wouldn't even have occurred to you. But they're working on certain projects that are just part of your life purpose and they're doing it without you.

There are other things where, if you ask, they'll take a look at it and if it really would benefit you in terms of your long-term goals and everything else, if it wouldn't interfere with some other really important projects that they've got going on for you, you could get it.

But if you don't ask, it isn't going to happen because they're busy working on all these projects, and they're not reading your mind. We talked before about, even if they tried, there's so much noise it's hard to do.

So it's really important to ask for help because the worst thing that could happen if you ask for help is, nothing changes. Then you haven't lost anything.

The best thing that could happen is, you get something to happen in your life that wouldn't have happened if you hadn't asked.

CML: So why not try?

Bob: Yeah, I mean, there's a very famous story. There was a man named Harry Edwards who was very famous, what they called a spiritual healer in England. He had this incredible track record of people who had all these horrible illnesses and were paralyzed and all kinds of problems. They would come to him and he was able to heal them.

He believed (and this is kind of getting "out there" but it's just a great story) that he had some kind of spirit doctors that worked through him. They really did the work and he was just kind of the channel or the vehicle but they really did the work.

CML: That was his model.

Bob: Yeah. And they had some kind of advanced skills or whatever it was, and they lived in the world where I believe our Directors work.

Anyway, he had a best friend – I don't know if it was cancer or whatever – but he had some horrible disease and died. Harry got really mad at these healers and said, "Why didn't you help him?"

And these healers said to him, "You never asked us. You asked us for all these clients that come to you, but you never asked us to help him."

CML: It still comes back to – it's our own responsibility.

Bob: And it's possible that that was part of his movie and it was time to go, and even if he had asked it wouldn't have made a difference, but it's just a very powerful story. There are certain things that if you don't ask, it ain't gonna happen. And if you do ask, there's a possibility. But if you don't ask, there's not even the possibility.

So if there's something that you really want help with, sometimes we think that we're asking but what we're really doing is bitching and moaning and complaining. We're not really asking. So that would be the third thing.

One is, you're not alone. Two is, you didn't screw up. Where you are is just fine, even if it's unpleasant, and it's part of you fulfilling your life purpose, so don't beat yourself up.

And if there's some result that you want to produce (and it doesn't have to be fixing a problem, it doesn't have to be making a "bad" go away, although it can be those things),

if there's a result that you want to produce, if there's something new and good that you want to create, if there's something old and "bad" that you want to change, ask for help.

CML: Bob, thanks for taking the time to visit with us today. This has been exciting. And I'm sure our listeners have learned a lot today.

Tell us again, where can they get your book?

Bob: Well, the book you can get at any online bookstore or any offline bookstore. It's called "The Invisible Path to Success," and they'll either have it or they can get it.

If you want to go deeper or you want to get the home study course version or some of the other kinds of things, if you just go to [Invisible Path dot com](http://InvisiblePath.com) on the Internet, it's kind of a gateway to all the different sites and the things that I'm involved with. You can follow your way from there.

CML: For our listeners, I cannot recommend too strongly. GET THIS BOOK. Read it. Study it. If you'll simply do the things that Bob writes about, you will change things for the better in your life.

Again, thanks for being with us, Robert Scheinfeld, author of *The Invisible Path to Success*.

Bob: Thanks for having me. It's been my pleasure.

Robert Scheinfeld has dedicated more than two decades of his adult life to personal growth. He is an author, speaker, and pioneer in the field of psychospirituality, which blends the best of psychology and spirituality. Visit his **Invisible Path to Success** web site and enroll in his free 5 lesson class to discover the "missing link" in self-help:

<http://www.lifechangetips.com/t.cgi/169737/article2.cgi>

Chapter 13

Interview with Stacey Hall & Jan Brogniez

Co-authors of *Attracting Perfect Customers... The Power of Strategic Synchronicity*

June 25, 2001

Fire 80% of Your Customers for More Success

To hear free audio samples from this interview, click on:

<http://www.inside-the-minds-of-winners.com/samples/>

Command More Luck (CML): We have with us today Jan Brogniez and Stacey Hall, the authors of an important new book, *Attracting Perfect Customers...The Power of Strategic Synchronicity*. The book is scheduled for release in September 2001.

To oversimplify drastically, the book shows you how to consistently, deliberately attract good luck in business.

You'll find their website at [Perfect Customers dot com](http://PerfectCustomers.com).

Stacey, Jan, thanks for joining us.

Stacey Hall: Thank you, Charles.

Jan Brogniez: Thank you.

CML: I wanted to introduce you to my listeners because every time I read your book, I get this... it's not a mood...it's more of a mindset, And I can't quite describe it except to say it's just exquisite. It makes me feel...quietly intense about myself, my future, and my customers. How do you do it?

Stacey: How do we impart that sense to people through the book?

CML: Yeah, that's the question.

Stacey: I think what it is, Charles, is the fact that you are actually doing the exercises that are in the book. Rather than tell people how to attract perfect customers, we've actually been very blessed in being able to arrive at exercises that are simple and quick, and that allow people to very quickly feel that that they can transform themselves into a magnet for attracting to them whatever they desire. In business, that's usually more perfect clients or customers.

CML: We'll get back to this matter of the exercises in a little bit, but first, for listeners who

may not be familiar with your names, could you give a bit of background about yourselves, your business and your careers?

Stacey: My background really is, from the time I was twelve I knew I wanted to be in public relations and marketing, so I was blessed to have a mentor who showed me that those particular disciplines allow an organization to be able to create themselves such that they serve the greater needs of the community.

From the beginning of my career, I was with an ad agency as an account executive for five years; manager of marketing for Budget Rent a Car Corporation for the US and Canada; became a senior marketing specialist for Federal Express; did some stints with a film production company; and came to Houston where I met Jan. But I came here first to work with the University of Houston.

And in all of those experiences, it was always to help the organization that I was working with identify how to attract and then best serve those customers or members or constituents who were most perfectly aligned with the organization's mission of service.

That tells you a little bit about me. And Jan?

Jan: Well, Charles, where Stacey's background was predominately in marketing, my background has been in the area of sales. I started out selling back in the early 1980s and probably even before that. I had a number of sales jobs that we kind of joke about.

One of them was selling honey out of a wagon for my brothers when I was seven years old. So that was probably my first real sales job. I worked on straight commission, and I thought I did pretty good.

But I went to work for a company called Executone, back in 1980, selling telephone systems, and kind of cut my teeth in the sales world doing things, what I call "the hard way." Everything from cold-calling door-to-door, going into every building in downtown Houston, often being asked to leave, and started learning how to sell and close business the hard way back in 1980.

Then I moved up the ladder. I started selling major telephone systems. I went into the larger systems working for a company called Communications Corporation of America, and also for Contel Business Systems.

Then I moved from there into a time where I was a commercial real estate broker. I spent about six years as a tenant lease broker in a commercial brokerage firm.

Then ultimately back in telecommunications and software, where I was VP of sales.

So as you can see, I have a vast sales background, which really combined well with Stacey's vast marketing background.

CML: This is quite a resume. The title of your book – Attracting Perfect Customers – what is a perfect customer?

Stacey: What we like to say is, a perfect customer is any customer that's a perfect fit for an organization's mission. Every organization that comes together to be of service to the world wants to do that in a particular way. They have a particular niche, a particular strength, a particular take on an idea that someone else didn't have.

That particular niche is designed to be a perfect fit for a certain type of customer, and where we could be putting our energies in greater depth or greater focus as companies is in making sure that our missions are clear, so that we make it easy for those customers who are perfectly designed to be our customers to find us – to be attracted right to us.

Oftentimes, where energies are focused in business are on what the competition is doing, rather than what we can be doing to refine and define ourselves much more clearly.

CML: A perfect customer is one who wants what you offer? In the way you want to offer it?

Stacey: In simple terms, yes, that would be exactly what we would say. Someone who wants what you want to offer, exactly the way you want to offer it.

CML: So an imperfect customer is the guy who walks in making weird demands?

Jan: I think a good way to give you an example of the perfect customer is to share about one that we've had in our business. A perfect customer that I was thinking of was a man named Paul. He was somebody who believed in us when we first met with him. He liked what he heard, we had similar values, he was also willing to pay our fees and pay timely.

CML: I like that part.

Jan: Yes. He also benefited. We could see that we were making a big difference for him, and that's one of the things that we really like when we're working with somebody, to know that our work is making a difference.

So that kind of gives you an idea versus, say, someone who is not a perfect customer. Of course we don't have any.

CML: Hard to remember now, isn't it?

Jan: Back in the old days, a non-perfect customer (and I won't mention her name), but I can remember where I'd hang up the phone after talking to somebody, and when I hung up the phone, I would just sit there for a few minutes wishing I hadn't answered the telephone.

They may have made demands that I wasn't able to keep, or they were mad at me or our company for not performing the services the way they thought they should be done. Or some various upsets that we were handling.

That usually indicates it's not a perfect customer because we were trying to make something fit that wasn't really a fit in the first place.

CML: In other words, it's easy to tell if you don't really fit with your customers?

Jan: Well, if you'll be truthful with yourself, it's usually very easy to tell what a perfect customer and what a non-perfect customer would be.

CML: Why do you suggest that businesses drop eighty percent of their customers?

Stacey: There's a standard figure – I think it's been in place at least since the early eighties, if not before that. Many, many market research firms and sales consulting firms quote a study that was done, I believe, by Bain and Company out of Boston, where they identified that out of one hundred percent of a company's customers, only twenty percent of them are actually contributing to the bottom line. The other eighty percent are actually taking away, because to serve them requires additional manpower, additional resources, additional time, additional money, additional energy.

So it really doesn't make sense to us; if that's the case, then what do you need the other 80 percent for? Normally, it's to be able to say you've got the largest market share. But is that the most important aspect of running a company? To have the largest market share? Or to be profitable, so that you can continue to serve the customers you want to serve in the way that you want to be able to serve them?

So that's really all we're saying: market share isn't the 'be-all and the end-all.' Being profitable, being happy, being vital, having employees that are alive, full of zest and vitality because they're being able to use their talents fully – that's what makes a successful company.

CML: What's the lighthouse test, and how do you take it?

Stacey: The lighthouse test is actually a metaphor for how most of us spend our days in terms of our approach to customers. We could actually give you the test right now, Charles. Would you like to take the test?

CML: Sure, let's do.

Stacey: Okay, what we're going to ask you to do, Charles, is to take yourself, in your mind, to a seashore that is not just plain white sand but is actually one of those shores where there are a lot of hills and a lot of cliffs; the kind that's a little bit dangerous, especially in a storm.

Positioned on the top of those cliffs is a very majestic lighthouse. If you can see that lighthouse, would you please say 'ready' so we know you're ready to go on.

CML: Yeah, ready.

Stacey: And now what I'm going to ask you to do is to look out over the ocean, out onto the horizon, to the point where the sky and the sea meet at that horizon line. And as you're looking across to that horizon line, you'll see that it's a gorgeous day. The water is still, there are a variety of boats and ships and sailboats and wind surfers out on that water. However, at the point where the sea and the sky meet, there's also a storm cloud beginning to form. Can you see that storm cloud?

CML: Yeah, here it comes.

Stacey: It's a little bit gray, starting to grow. And now it's actually taking over the sky rather quickly, turning gray. The sky is getting dark, and you can probably start to feel the wind starting to whip up on your face, and a couple of rain pellets starting to come down.

As you continue to look out over the water, you'll notice that the waves are starting to churn up, and those wind surfers and some of the smaller boats are thinking they should probably start heading back to shore and get out of the water, so they're making their way back.

Now this cloud is much, much bigger. It has completely taken over the sky. The sky is dark, the waves are much higher, the rain is coming down much stronger, and the wind is blowing much harder.

Into the darkness now penetrates the light from the lighthouse. If you can see that beam of light going out across the water, could you just say 'ready' and then we'll know you're ready to go on.

CML: Ready.

Stacey: What you can probably see now, with that light piercing the darkness, is that some of the boats are starting to make their way towards the light, so that they can be guided by it, so that they don't run the risk of running up against each other or running up against the shore. They're making their way in.

Now, not all of the boats are coming in, because some of the bigger ships have equipment that allows them to navigate quite clearly.

So what I'd like you to do is, while that light is going out across the ocean, would you please make your way over to the lighthouse itself, climb up the stairs to the top cabin from where the light is emanating out across the sea. And when you're up in the cabin at

the top, would you tell me you're there, so I'll know you're ready?

CML: Yeah, I'm up here.

Stacey: Okay, good. So you're looking out, now, across the light. You're actually watching as that light penetrates out, and you're seeing the boats that need that guidance make their way according to the light, and other ships being out at sea, holding their own. They're being tossed, they're being churned up by those waves, but they're able to hold their own. The others are coming in.

Now, the lighthouse sees that it is being of service to some of those boats in the middle of that rain and wind and storm. It also sees that there are other ships out there that are not being guided by its light.

Now unfortunately, that lighthouse thinks that it has to serve all of them. And I'm going to ask you to hold on because you're going to start to feel that lighthouse beginning to sway and move. You may think it's the wind blowing, but it's not. That lighthouse is actually sprouting arms and legs and getting ready to starting running up and down the beach. Actually, as I'm speaking, there it goes.

It is now running up and down the beach, moving its light like a searchlight, up and down the beach to get the attention of all the ships at sea. If you can see that, would you please say 'ready.'

CML: Yeah. This is a heck of a ride.

Stacey: It's going. It's going back and forth, and what's happening, as that light is going back and forth, those boats that were depending on the light, they're distracted. They have lost all bearing, they're hitting up against each other. Some of them are up against the rocks. I'm sure that you can see that there's a bit of confusion and destruction going on.

CML: Yeah, it's a mess.

Stacey: What I'd like you to do is take control of that lighthouse, if you would. Drag it back to the spot where it was originally anchored, and ensure that that light is again refocused, steady and strong, out across the sea. When you've been able to do that, please let me know.

CML: Okay. We're back.

Stacey: Ready to go? Now the boats that were starting to come in, those that were not destroyed, again are being guided. And the others are still out at sea, holding their own.

What I'd like to ask you (this is where the test comes in, Charles), the question that I'm going to ask you is this. When you're marketing to customers, how often would you say

you are the lighthouse that's standing still and strong and steady, throwing its beam of light out and trusting that those that need you will find it? And how often are you the lighthouse that's running up and down the beach, trying to catch the attention of every boat at sea?

CML: This is an interesting question.

Stacey: You don't actually have to answer it. But you know in your heart when you're being the lighthouse running up and down the beach, and when you're being still and steady.

So for us, what the attraction process is all about, what we call "The Strategic Attraction Planning Process" is similar to what a lighthouse keeper does to a lighthouse. It makes sure that the lens is clean; it makes sure that there's plenty of juice in the generator; it makes sure that that lighthouse is firmly entrenched in its spot so that when that light is needed, it goes out strong and steady.

CML: Interesting metaphor! Do you have any kind of working definition for luck or synchronicity or success that you use in your daily life?

Jan: You know, we talk about strategic synchronicity, so I could talk about that. We always consider that when we have an occurrence of synchronicity, that it's good luck. But we don't really, in our workshops or in our business, focus on the area of good luck. We just like it when it happens. But we do talk about the power of strategic synchronicity.

What we've noticed is that when we started to work with our Strategic Attraction Plan, certain things would start to happen that seemed very synchronistic, meaning it was like things would happen "out of the blue." It wouldn't look like there was anything causing the event to happen, other than we knew we doing certain things in our business to focus on being clear, being focused and intentional through the work that we do in our Strategic Attraction Plan.

CML: Sort of like life bringing you pleasant little surprise gifts to help you along.

Jan: Right. So I guess our definition would be, when something out of the blue happens that you really weren't projecting or predicting, or it's even better than you could have imagined, for us, that's our definition of synchronicity.

And our definition of strategic synchronicity – we know that those words kind of play around with each other – they seem to be diametrically opposed in their meanings. And the whole purpose that we put those two words together is that when you are with an intention of being clear and focused and also in touch with what's of value to you internally, then what would happen is, synchronistic events would occur more frequently.

CML: A friend was asking me about your book the other day, and I was trying to explain what

“strategic synchronicity” means. And the best I could come up with was “planned luckiness.” How far off was I?

Jan: Yeah. Well actually, it’s not even planned, because, for example, when we have a Strategic Attraction Plan, we have a number of different plans to attract to us the kind of customers that we want. You know, we have a plan, for example, for workshop participants. We have a Strategic Attraction Plan for the perfect corporate client. We have a plan for the perfect strategic synchronistic leader in our leadership program.

What we do is, after we create a plan, we focus on those for a few minutes every morning. And then, it’s uncanny. I mean, like even this morning, we were just reading through our Strategic Attraction Plan for a corporate client, and we got an e-mail response from a corporation that we had been wanting to talk to and hadn’t heard back from. They responded all of a sudden. So it’s like we hadn’t even planned for that to happen today, but it seems to occur synchronistically when we work our plans.

CML: You make it a point to think about the things you want, and somehow or other they just appear – or something like them.

Stacey: Yeah. It isn’t just the idea of thinking about it. I think everybody “thinks about” what they want to have happen all day long.

CML: Good point.

Stacey: But there is a piece. And we’re not the first ones to have identified this; even Harvard Business School did a study once of what makes some people successful and others not successful. What they found was that the key ingredient is not just thinking about your goals but actually writing them down, and then being able to look at them every day.

So that’s one key piece. First you think about them, then you write them down.

And then, what I would say is unique about this book and this process is that we’ve figured out a very simple way to organize those thoughts and to write them down that actually do have them start showing up. Maybe it’s the fact that we’re more clear, so that when these things come by us... they could be coming by us all the time, but if we’re not clear about what we want, it’s easy to let them pass us without recognizing ‘oh yeah, I wanted that.’ That could be the reason why it happens.

We don’t know the reason it happens. We just know it happens. And it happens consistently within two days of creating the plan.

CML: Within two days? Oh, I like that.

Stacey: Uh huh. We’ve been steering this workshop now for about four years. We do our workshop called “Attracting Perfect Customers” almost every month here in Houston,

and we're in the process of starting to make it available via webinars so that people around the world can experience this.

But what I can tell you is, over the last four years we have yet to hear of anyone who attended the workshop and did not have a shift in their business within two days.

That's the glory for us, is that we can count on, after doing a workshop, we will receive e-mails and phone calls of people saying, "I don't know how it worked, but it did – I got a phone call out of the blue from somebody," or "A company that I've been waiting to give me a response finally responded and we're ready to go."

CML: That's an interesting track record.

Stacey: We're pleased to hold it up there, because we've got the proof and the testimonials for it.

CML: In your book you talk a lot about 'personal mission.' I think most people have heard of corporate missions, but what is a personal mission? And how does a listener go about getting one?

Stacey: Let me start, and we'll see if Jan has anything that she wants to add on that.

In terms of getting a mission, I don't know that it's a matter of 'getting.' I think, personally, all of us know on some level that we want to make a difference. Now oftentimes (and I was guilty of this myself when I first started in my career), we think that we have to put our personal desire to make a difference to the side in order to make a living. Do you know what I mean by that, Charles?

CML: Exactly. Yes: 'This is not what I want to do, but I need a paycheck.'

Stacey: Uh huh, so I don't think that I'm going to be able to find a way to make a difference through my job. Or I'll do my best to make a difference through my job, but the first thing is getting the paycheck and having the job.

And I did that. I had a job, my very first one out of school, that was one of those 'prized jobs' and within seven months I felt like I was dying on the vine because all my energy was going into my work. I had nothing left over for anything else. And it was not a place where I could make a difference.

So, what I know is, by not putting my energy into a place where I felt that I was contributing something back to society, I was not happy in my job. And what I set out to do after that – actually, I heard a saying that somebody had given to me that said: "Do what you love to do and the universe rushes in to support you."

Well, I knew the universe was not supporting me. It felt like I was walking against the wind all the time, instead of being carried along by it. That's when I woke up and said

‘there’s got to be a way for me to be able to do something that makes me feel good about myself and allows me to do something good for the world, and still make a paycheck.’

I think, if anybody’s not feeling like they’re able to do that right now, then they’re probably not in the right job for them. Jan, do you agree or disagree?

Jan: Yeah, I think that’s a key component of a personal mission, and that’s really the whole essence of all of our programs in our book, is to have people get in touch with the internal – I know, for myself, I was pretty removed from what I’m really, personally motivated to do, that comes from my heart and soul. I had to do quite a bit of work to get in touch with what Stacey called a personal mission, and what we’re talking about here. I had to do a lot of work to get in touch with that.

So now, we just incorporate that into our work.

Really, the secret of attracting perfect customers is, it’s not about having people outside of you become more perfect. It’s really you getting in touch and clear about who you want to work with, where you want to work when you’re working, and the kind of things that are of value to you. That’s really the essence of everything that we talk about and write about in our book.

CML: Can we get personal here? What is your personal mission?

Jan: I have several, and they keep showing up. One of them is to bring spiritual leaders out of hiding.

CML: Wonderful!

Jan: That’s not my only mission, but that’s certainly a mission.

Another mission that I have is to help people get connected to what they’re passionate about so that they can live fulfilled lives from a place of passion.

CML: Listeners who may know a little bit about NLP may recognize the term ‘circle of confidence.’ My mission is, ‘a circle of confidence in every mind on earth.’ But when I first realized that, it felt like I just being too incredibly grandiose. How do you recommend handling a mission statement that may at first seem ‘oversized.’

Jan: I think it’s a process that one goes through in expanding their capacity for understanding their own personal greatness.

CML: Wait, back up. Say that again... understanding...

Jan: I think that it’s a capacity we actually develop for understanding our own personal greatness.

CML: Our own personal greatness.

Jan: Uh huh, we're always great beyond what we give ourselves recognition for.

It's like, I may be able to see your greatness in you, but it's easier for me to see it over in you than it is for me to acknowledge and be able to experience and see it in myself.

A lot of times, when we're creating a personal mission, we start with where we are at the moment, and sometimes we create a statement that's a little grander than we are accustomed to declaring. It stretches our capacity. It's like creating 'a gap to live into.' It pushes something out in front of us for us to strive for and to stretch for.

CML: So it should feel a little grand, a little oversized.

Jan: Yes.

Stacey: I'm going to share a story here, since you mentioned Paul earlier, Jan.

When Jan and I first came together to create what we were going to create together, which ultimately became Perfect Customers Unlimited, each of us had our own personal mission statement, and now it was time for us to create what we were doing together. Why would people want to use us both.

We were creating this together one day and came up with the phrase that what we are up to is, 'generating communities in which millionaires are produced.' Speak about grandiose, right? And neither one of us millionaires at the time, so even more grandiose. But that was really what we were up to. If we looked at what we were going to produce together for people and companies, that would be the normal outcome.

Shortly after creating that statement, we both went to a business networking group that we belong to. And as they do at networking groups, you go around and you introduce yourself at the beginning; usually people stand up and say, "Hi, I'm a realtor," "Hi, I'm a landscaper." It came my turn first. Jan was sitting next to me, but the circle came to me first, and I stood up, and I have to admit that I chickened out.

It just seemed too big, too ludicrous, and these were people who knew me, right? They knew that I hadn't generated being a millionaire for myself, how could I do it for anyone else.

So I stood up and introduced myself with my standard line at the time, which was 'transforming businesses into magnets for attracting perfect customers.' Still pretty good, but not that big whopper. And I sat down and I looked at Jan with kind of a look that says, "Okay, I dare you to do it."

And she stands up and she does. She catches her breath and she says, “Hi, I’m Jan, and I generate communities in which millionaires are produced.”

There was a silence that came across that room, and the only sound was one woman who gasped – completely astounded by the statement.

However, there was a gentleman sitting next to Jan, and I saw his head whip around so fast to look at her. I thought he was going to have whiplash. When the meeting was over, he made a beeline straight for Jan and wanted to know how she could do that, and if she could help him. That turned out to be Paul, who was our first most perfect customer.

So what Jan was speaking about, this grandiose statement generally does cause us to feel weak in the knees, sick to our stomachs, and a little bit ludicrous. However, it gives us a place to aim for, because when we’re leading ourselves forward, that’s one of the most attractive places to be, and it’s what makes other people want to come and play with us.

CML: That last phrase you used, ‘makes people want to come and play with us.’ Can you expand on that?

Stacey: What makes us all attractive – that’s the playful part of us, it’s the playful, the brilliant, the light.

CML: Everybody talks about ‘work with us...’

Stacey: You know, being heavy and dark is not usually something that people are attracted to, would you agree?

CML: Yeah.

Stacey: So what is it that has us being lighter, taking ourselves a little less seriously, allowing ourselves to play with concepts, to be able to say, “I don’t know, but let’s play with that; let’s experiment; let’s explore.” In that kind of mindset, that kind of environment, we become open to other people, and it’s our openness that’s attractive.

CML: How old were you, the last time you went to somebody’s house, knocked on the door, their mother came to the door, and you said, “Hi, can Susie come out and play?” It’s been a long time.

Stacey: Well, Jan doesn’t live with her mom, but I have to admit, I do it with her almost every morning.

How long has it been since you asked someone to come out and play?

CML: It’s been a loooooong time. That’s a marvelous way to look at your day’s work – can you come out and play.

Stacey: It truly is the way we start every day. Jan mentioned to you what we do. We start with a prayer usually, or some sort of inspirational writing, and then we look at our plan so that we're connected with what we want to attract to us together. And then the rest of it really is: 'what are we going to play with today?'

And I want to be clear. We're not being frivolous; it's not a frivolous play. It's a sense of 'all right, our goal for this week is to generate \$10,000 in workshop sales; do we know how we're going to do it?' Well, we have a pretty good idea. We've got a conversation scheduled with this person, a conversation scheduled with that person; however, we don't know for sure that they're going to say yes. And we don't know who else is going to be coming into our circle over the week. So there has to be an element of play and surprise and joy, and sometimes the ability to be disappointed when it doesn't work out the way you expect.

But if you take it like it's life or death, there's no possibility of anything that you couldn't expect to come through. And I would say we're smart enough to know that all we have to do is show up and take the steps, but there are other forces at work that are going to be supporting us.

CML: The universe rushes in.

Stacey: The universe rushes in. I don't want to be so intent on how it has to look or how it has to be, that there isn't the opportunity for something better.

CML: Has either of you ever gone through a bad luck period, when it seemed like life was trying to thwart you at everything you tried to do?

Stacey: I think I referred earlier: it was like I was walking in a wind tunnel and the wind was blowing against me, not with me. But I have to say that was the only time. And what I've come to find out, looking back on it is, it was because I was not in the right place, I was not listening to my instincts, I was following my head and what other people said was 'better' for me.

That's the closest that I can say to that, even though I've had experiences in my life. My father had a stroke. I've lost people close to me. But I could never say that I felt that those were bad luck periods. They were learning periods and growth periods.

Jan: I've been reading a book on abundance. One of the things it talks about in the book, it uses the analogy of the grapevine and the way they get grapes to grow in abundance is that they prune back the grape leaves, only having the right amount of leaves according to the number of branches. I don't know how they determine it, but they prune way back on the foliage of the grapevine, and that's what they've found to be the most successful in producing the most fruit.

I've been applying that analogy to my life because it seems like in the last few months that there's been a lot of pruning going on in my life.

CML: We can either prune ourselves, or we can let life do it for us.

Jan: Right. And I can look at it either that it's been 'bad luck,' that things aren't going as fast as I want them to be, or as abundantly, that I'm not bearing as much fruit as I think I should be, and that maybe God is punishing me for something I did.

Or, I like the comparison of the pruning, that actually what's happening is that I'm pruning back to only have the branches that will bear the most fruit. And I'm learning to live moderately and not frivolously, not living in a way that isn't intentional and clear and focused, and that is going to produce the most fruit or abundance.

CML: Your book, *Attracting Perfect Customers*, is not a book of theories, is it? It's a handbook, a practice book.

Jan: Yes, it's a process.

CML: There's a quote I love on [proofreader's manuscript] page 20:
"It's no longer necessary, logical or productive to work 80-hour weeks, struggling to stay ahead of the competition because there is no race. Not even in the fast-paced world of dot-coms. It is also no longer necessary to get into the marketplace first. Your most perfect customers are patiently waiting for you. In fact, they're looking for you, and will find you at the perfect time and place."

That really removes the desperation.

Jan: Charles, I needed to hear that today. I'm so glad you read it. With the book being released in October, we have a lot of things coming our way. We have public relations firms wanting to promote our book. We have videotaping firms wanting to videotape our work. We have a lot of people seemingly putting a lot of pressure on us to make decisions that require financial expenditures right now.

Just before this interview, we actually stopped and took a step back enough to see that, truthfully, just exactly what was written on page 20 was that our most perfect customers will be there, waiting patiently for us when we come out to present our book, and that there isn't a rush to do things right now. It'll all develop in natural time.

CML: This has meant something to me because in the process of trying to get this second, companion, book finished, there have been just a million details – exactly the same experience I think that you're going through. My natural inclination has never been to be a patient guy, so this really means something to me when I read it.

Stacey: Yeah, thanks for reading that.

CML: The examples cited in your book, the case histories, they're all actual people, and they have agreed to be listed as contacts in the back of your book.

Very often, when I read a book, I'll read case histories that may or may not be real. John in Toledo did such-and-such. But there's no way to call John in Toledo and find out, hey, what really happened?

Stacey: I want to say thank you for noticing that. Actually, it is quite unusual, and it was something that we had to have a conversation about with our publisher. And I want to say that our publishers, Berrett-Koehler, have been just absolutely incredible in supporting the views that we've had. And we say we are the catalyst for a new sales and marketing reality, so in a lot of ways we have been forging new paths that have never been done before.

CML: That sounds like another mission statement.

Stacey: Yes, that's actually our overarching mission statement.

They questioned why we would want to do that, and that by putting testimonials in, it looked very self-serving. However, Jan and I both are avid readers, and just like you, when we hear that somebody's had an experience, you get a spark of interest, or what we like to say is a spark of synchronicity. Wouldn't it be great to have it be easy to be able to contact these people.

So how we set it up, and to avoid the primary concern of 'what if three years from now those people don't have the same phone number,' we're going to keep in touch with these folks. They are our perfect clients already. We do have a close relationship with them. If anything changes, people can always go to our website for an updated listing. Or write us and ask us how to get in touch with them.

But every single one of these people has committed to being available to answer questions and to share their own experiences so that others can relate.

CML: That's a brilliant touch. I'd love to see that happen in all business books.

Where do you get most of your ideas for new products or services? Do you have a special brainstorming process you rely on? Or do your ideas come from things you hear customers asking for?

Jan: That's a good question, but we don't have a good answer. I guess if we stop to look at where our products have come from, we started with what we know. And when Stacey and I came together in our business, she had started her work with attracting perfect

customers. That was her baby that she grew and enhanced.

And in my business, before she and I were business partners, I did a strategic planning process, and I had a particular process that I had been developing. And that was my baby.

So when we joined together in one company, we actually started with those two products. Then out of continuing to do workshops around those, I would say various situations would come up, whether it was a keynote speaking opportunity, or something that we saw inside of one of the workshops, or actually a need in our business, we would develop from there.

We developed a leadership program, which I would say was driven by the book sales. We needed to have other people that wanted to, one, learn the attraction process and methodology that we use, and two, we needed to be able to have more people besides just the two of us to refer other people from across the nation to, so that we could have a network of people that were all immersed and trained in our methods so that they could have access to the work in their area.

So we developed our leadership program out of that necessity. And that gives you an idea how we develop our products.

CML: I believe I heard you saying there that most of your products developed out of what your customers need.

Jan: Pretty much, yeah. We listen to the marketplace telling us what they want, and then develop from there.

CML: How do you recognize when a new idea is a really good one?

Stacey: Well, for example, the book came out of our clients, who were coming to our workshop, saying, "You really need to put this in writing so that people who can't come to the workshop can access it." And at first, it seemed like it was going to be very time and labor intensive, so we started doing audio tapes. We just taped the workshops and said, "Well, if somebody wants it, we can always mail them a tape."

However, there are so many different ways that people like to learn, and there is something about a book that gives people a sense of connectedness. And it just became an obvious thing when we started to do follow-up. One of the key components of the Attracting Perfect Customers workshop is that you'll look at the plan you create every day for five minutes. It's not human nature to look at something every day for five minutes, so our clients asked us if we would provide a reminder.

And an e-mail is a perfect way to do that. So we started to create little reminders, little tips for them every day. That's really what grew into the book.

So I can't say that we set out with the vision for the book. We set out to support our clients in helping them be successful. And together, we created how that would happen. And so, the tips grew into a book, and the book is growing into other products. And it's really a very organic way that our products get designed and developed.

CML: You have some interesting exercises in your book, and some of them are a little scary. But there are twenty-one of these exercises. Where did they come from? And why twenty-one?

Stacey: Let me answer the second question first. There are twenty-one tips primarily because behavior therapists by and large agree to the concept that it takes twenty-one days to create a new habit as a regular behavior. So we said if behavior therapists have proved this over and over again, then who are we to argue. We'll provide twenty-one of the tips.

Where they came from was, originally I was the first one to actually start doing the exercises. They're tips that I undertook, that I noticed brought me deeper and deeper to greater awarenesses, greater levels of awareness in how to develop strategic synchronicity for myself. They're very personal tips that, since they were originally written, have now been used by hundreds of people, and we've watched how people go through them and know that they really do have a rhythm to them. So we encourage people to take one a day and follow through with each one.

And I heard you say some of them are scary. I can hear that you must have done a couple. Which ones did you find to be scary?

CML: Well, let me give you one example: call your customer and tell them they're your perfect customer, and what you like about them. This is 'unnatural' – no, it's not unnatural, but it feels unnatural because everybody plays everything so close to the vest.

Stacey: To put you on the spot, Charles, did you get a chance to conduct that exercise for yourself?

CML: Yes, they were very, very pleased.

Stacey: Your perfect customer was pleased?

CML: Yes.

Stacey: If you don't mind, I'm going to ask you what did you tell them? Why were they your perfect customer?

CML: I told them they were my perfect customers because number one, they're always really pleasant on the phone. Number two, they pay promptly; they don't have a long payment cycle. And number three, very few of their jobs are rush jobs.

I'm an editor. You know, when Japanese translators translate into English, sometimes the English can sound a little odd. I'm the guy that takes that odd English and turns it into native English, makes it sound normal.

And my customers, they're all scrambling and competing for the low-priced work, and with everybody competing on price, then they have to compete for something else. So they compete on delivery time, faster-faster-faster. Correcting English sometimes just simply takes time to think (How would you say this? What's a better way to say this? Or in some cases, what the heck are they trying to say?), and it takes a little time.

This was so successful, telling them I really like working with them, that it led me to another big shift, which was, I raised my prices – for the first time in ten years. And I lost five of seven customers.

My income went down. But I feel soooooo much better, and I have time now to work on my book, work on these interviews. So it worked out beautifully.

Stacey: Thank you. Now I understand why it felt risky and scary. It was out of the experience of thanking your customer, you came to find out how valuable you are. And in being able to raise your prices, and trusting that there are other people – you know, when you raise your prices, you don't need as many customers.

And in the honoring of the customers that you have, who value you, what you've begun I would assume, Charles (and I'd like to hear you expand on it just a little bit), is that you actually did create a closer relationship, a more loyal, stronger relationship with this customer.

CML: Yeah... they were already loyal and strong. I can't honestly say if it's more strong or more loyal now. As you may remember, back in February and March, I was in the hospital. Had a balloon angioplasty. Totally unexpected. These customers were the only ones who actually sent flowers. These customers, when I came back, they were so thoughtful, they were afraid of sending too much work to me at first. I had to tell them, "Okay, I'm ready for more work now."

Stacey: Already a perfect customer, so it was really just a natural expression to be able to take the time and let them know that you've noticed how wonderful they are.

CML: And it was a little scary because it was just so 'outside my experience.' You don't call people up and tell them, "I like you."

Stacey: All I can tell you is, most people don't. And those that do...

CML: Yeah, it works neatly.

Stacey: It is amazing. Because very few of us ever have the opportunity to be acknowledged in that way.

CML: By the way, when I called you and we started this interview, I really didn't expect you to interview me, too.

Stacey: [laughter] That's how you build a relationship.

CML: Do you sometimes still find yourself getting into a slump period, like a spell of 'oh, man, I just don't want to motivate myself today,' or a less-than-good-synchronicity period? And if so, what do you do to put yourself back on track?

Stacey: That never happens to us, Jan, right?

Jan: Right.

CML: Do I hear a little bit of irony in that?

Jan: It does happen to us. We're just as susceptible to that as anybody, even though when we're on a roll, it seems like we can do no wrong. But when those moments aren't happening, we do go back to what works. We do have some practices that we know, when we're practicing those particular business steps, that's when our business is working the best.

CML: A piano player has finger exercises, and a football team has play exercises.

Jan: So what we do is, we go back to the basics and we go back to what was working that we're not doing now. Then we start putting back in what was working and we may have let it drop through the cracks and fall away. So we put those things back in, and usually that turns the corner.

We also have a really great business coach that I think is particularly useful to have the eyes and ears that we don't have because they're not involved with us every day. That usually will open the door so that we can see something and get us back on track quickly.

CML: I'd like to ask you just briefly to expand on that. Could you tell us a little more about your business coach?

Jan: Sure. Stacey and I started this business in the fall of last year. We both had our own businesses separately, but we had never worked together under one umbrella name. I knew that we had some lofty goals and some lofty visions, and I thought it would be important to hire a business coach to coach us, since I was the one taking the role as CEO, to put together the structure and foundation of the company and keep the vision intact. Then I decided that I would be the one that would go for the business coach, and

then I would just share all the coaching with Stacey. So far, that seems to be working well.

I have a business coach who, first of all, she's very powerfully steeped in coaching CEOs of very large organizations, so she has that in her experience to help us as a startup company. She basically coaches us from that background.

A couple of things I guess I'll just note out of working with a coach. One, it helps to have somebody that, even though she's not part of our company, she holds us accountable. Also, I make promises to her every time we have a coaching call, which stretches me and has me playing bigger than I would have if I hadn't made that promise.

CML: How often do you speak?

Jan: We speak every other week. Sometimes that varies slightly because of traveling, but for the average it's twice a month.

CML: Do you have any books or teachers that have helped you grow?

Jan: I think most of my relationships, where I have done the most growing, came mostly from coaches. I worked with a number of different coaches, and I've also worked with a number of different people who are trainers. So I work well in those types of environments. I learn quickly through those methods.

There's one book that made the most impact. The name of that book is "He's Scared, She's Scared," and it's all about people that have a fear of commitment. At the time I was single and really questioning why I wasn't having the kind of relationships that I wanted in my life. What I found when I started reading the book, my fear of commitment was pervasive through my whole life. It wasn't just around romantic relationships, but it really was in every aspect. Everything from business to what I would order when I'd order food off a menu, I couldn't really commit to what I wanted. Everything else looked good after I placed my order.

I found out that I really had a weak relationship to commitment. But what I thought was always a weak relationship to commitment really was just a fear. So I started to take some very grand steps in my life so that I could face my fear of commitment and start really having what I wanted in my life.

CML: I can very much identify with what you're saying.

Jan: At the time when I read the book, I was a VP of sales for a corporation that I was very proud of working for, because we had tripled in growth since I started working there. And I was part of the director team, and I was part of the actual teams that had a say in how the company went. That was always a dream of mine. But I was also not enjoying life very much, and I was in a very bad personal relationship that seemed to not ever

produce the kind of future that I wanted to create.

What I found out is, what was right in front of me was that I really needed to get out of the environment I was in to start healing my issues that I had around commitment.

CML: Do you believe that every person can improve their life and their luck?

Stacey: I don't know that I believe in luck. I think that we make our own luck in life.

CML: I keep hearing this in every one of these interviews.

Stacey: And if that's the case, then the answer for me would be that, yes, everyone has the opportunity to respond to what life brings us with a choice. It all depends upon how we choose to look at it: the old phrase of 'is the glass half empty or is the glass half full.'

For example, we use the concept of 'a sign of land.' You asked earlier about books that had an influence on our lives. The one that I would say made one of the greatest influences is a book called "The Game of Life" by Florence Scovel Shinn.

She talks about the concept of 'the sign of land.' Many times we set goals for ourselves, and on the way to our goal, what comes onto our path, what greets us, is something that is similar to the goal we set, but not exactly the goal completely fulfilled.

So it could be – let's say Jan and I set a goal that for our next workshop we want to have one hundred people registered for that workshop. And what we receive is actually twenty-five registrations.

Now, we have the choice to either say we failed in our goal, or what we received was 'a sign of land,' that another hundred are coming, that we're on the right path towards that goal.

Where this concept of a sign of land came from is, it's as if you're setting off across the ocean on a journey without directions, without a map. You're just heading off on the high seas. How you would know that you were getting close to land is, you would start to see signs. Birds overhead, driftwood starting to float up, seaweed, things like that.

Now, if we have the attitude, if we choose to say, "There's no land out there, there's only birds and driftwood and seaweed," we might be likely to turn around and go back. But if we understand that those are the signs that say 'keep on going; your calculations were off a little bit, but you're on the right path,' that gives you the courage, the determination, the joy, the hope, whatever you want to call it, to continue moving forward.

And when I read that line about the sign of land, I have to say it was as if I was really reborn. All the times I had given up or felt like a failure went right out the window.

CML: This is wonderful.

Do you have any parting words of special advice to listeners who still can't seem to figure out how to get started?

Stacey: You mean, aside from "Buy our book and do the exercises?"

For me, I would say the parting words are that the most important place to put our goals is on paper; to get them out of our head and to allow ourselves to get them on paper where we can see them and they can do us some good.

And I'm going to finish my thoughts with a little story. I don't know if it's true, but it sounds like it would be a true story, so I'm going to share it.

Albert Einstein was at a party and he was engaged in a conversation with an associate. They wanted to continue the conversation the next day, so Einstein said to his associate, "Why don't you give me your card, and I'll give you a call tomorrow and we can arrange another time to talk.

The associate said, "Oh, I'm out of cards, why don't you let me have your card?"

Einstein said, "I don't have my cards, either."

The associate said, "That's all right, let me just have your phone number."

Einstein in turn said, "No, why don't you just give me your phone number and I'll call you."

And there was something about the way he said it, that the associate looked at him and said, "You don't know your own phone number, do you?"

Einstein looked straight at him and said, "No, I don't."

The associate said, "I don't believe this – the world's smartest man doesn't even know his own telephone number?"

Einstein came straight back and said, "Why on earth would I want to use my mind, the most sophisticated piece of machinery ever created for creating new ideas, new thoughts and new universes, why on earth would I want to use that mind like a filing cabinet, when I can look up that information in better places?"

My parting thoughts are: if our goals are scattered around our minds instead of out where we can capture them, then allow our minds to go to work creating new worlds, new ideas, new thoughts, new universes around those goals. That's the way I want to play. And I invite our listeners to do the same.

CML: I'm afraid we're out of time, but this has been exciting.

For our listeners, you can visit Jan and Stacey's website at [Perfect Customers dot com](http://PerfectCustomers.com).

There, you can sign up to receive their free daily tips by e-mail. And you can also find a list of the workshops and seminars they provide.

Jan, Stacey, thanks for being with us today. You've given us a great deal of useful advice.

Stacey: Thank you, Charles, it has been a true joy for us.

Jan: Thank you, Charles.

Stacey Hall and **Jan Brogniez** of PerfectCustomers Unlimited speak internationally and facilitate "strategic attraction workshops on the subjects of:

- *Strategic Synchronicity: Mastering the Power of Attracting Perfect Customers and Employees;*
- *Attracting Your Perfect Self-Expression;*
- *Attracting Acknowledgement & Accomplishment;*
- *Attracting Perfect Partnerships; and*
- *Attracting Your World Vision.*

Their book, "Attracting Perfect Customers...The Power of Strategic Synchronicity," is being published by award-winning Berrett-Koehler Publishers and will be available in bookstores beginning September 2001.

For a complimentary subscription to their Daily Strategic Attraction Tip e-zine, please visit "Subscribe to Daily Tip Now" at <http://www.perfectcustomer.com>.

Chapter 14

Interview with John Harricharan

Author of *The Power Pause*, and *Morning Has Been All Night Coming*

July 30, 2001

A Joyous and Winding Road

To hear free audio samples from this interview, click on:

<http://www.inside-the-minds-of-winners.com/samples/>

Command More Luck (CML): Visiting with us today is John Harricharan, award-winning author and Internet businessman. John recently released a small book titled *The Power Pause*. But it's the titles of two earlier books that really tug at the imagination: *Morning Has Been All Night Coming* and *When You Can Walk on Water, Take the Boat*.

John is on the Internet at [Power Pause dot com](#), [Mind Marketing dot com](#) and [Insight 2000 dot com](#).

Thanks, John, for talking with us today.

John Harricharan: It's my pleasure, Charles.

CML: For readers who are not familiar with your name, could you give a bit of background about yourself, your business and your career?

John: You know, when I think of that question, I always think that there's nothing really very interesting about who I am. What is more interesting is what I do.

To make it a little fun here, I could ask a number of questions. For example, this guy, John Harricharan is East Indian, but he was not born in India. He's British but he never lived in Great Britain. He's American but he wasn't born in America. Who is this masked man?

That fellow is John Harricharan.

My background is very simple. I was born in a little village in Guyana, South America, right next to the Atlantic Ocean. My father was a farmer. He never finished fourth grade and my Mom didn't finish first grade, and I thought I'd make up for them by getting every degree, every piece of education I could.

So I went to school, finished high school, went on to college, where I got a degree summa cum laude in chemistry. Went on from that, did graduate work at the University

of Michigan, picked up an MBA at Rutgers, and did corporate MBA things like working for major corporations at some wonderful levels in New York.

But then things changed. I got bored—was thoroughly familiar with the corporate boardrooms of America and got bored with some of that and decided to go out into the world and start my own business. It was the most wonderful and most horrible thing I ever did.

What happened was, I immediately became extremely successful—I mean, in a very short while—with international trade, the recycling of precious metals and so forth. And because of that, expanded my lifestyle quite a lot, so that the hardest problem for me to decide on in the morning was which car I was going to take to work.

What occurred was interesting. Because I became very successful in the outer world, I forgot or did not listen to the inner world, and one day, through a combination of circumstances, I lost everything. Everything.

That means my houses (I had a number of them), my cars, my land. In fact, what I do at times, I tell people this little message. I say, I know what it feels like to have my car repossessed, to watch my wife die of cancer when she was only in her thirties, to lose all earthly possessions and start again from ground zero.

I also know what it feels like to write an award-winning book, to be written about in other's books, and to be featured in the same book with His Royal Highness, Prince Phillip of Great Britain, the Dalai Lama, Paul McCartney and so forth. The contrast brings compassion and sensitivity to one's life. It makes for balance.

So after losing everything, we trekked down to the southern city of Atlanta and started again. Lost my wife. Didn't go back into corporate work. Was left with two kids to raise (or for them to raise me), and I started discovering what was important in life.

Out of all of that came the book *When You Can Walk on Water, Take the Boat*. It's a book I was looking for and nobody had it, so I thought I'd write one myself. What would I tell me? What would I tell anyone who was going through what I was going through?

And thus, I got into a writing career. Since then I've consulted with some household names. I write more books. I do my Internet business. And our most important project, which was completed a year ago, is *The Power Pause*. Three steps, three minutes to personal success and real happiness.

So that's what I do, Charles.

CML: That's an interesting resume. After reading your personal story, you told it in your first two books, some people might get the idea that you've had an uncommon lot of bad luck. How do you stay so upbeat?

John: When you look at the proceedings, from one point of view you may say yes, this man suffered so much. But if you look at it from another standpoint, you'd say there are so many others who suffered more than he did. And as a result of looking at it two different ways, there is a middle ground, a balance, and the reason I stay so upbeat, no matter what happens, is I know that the problem out there, strange and horrible as it seems, is not really out there.

The problem isn't with the problem. The problem is what do I think about the problem. If I let fear or depression or anger or any of these negative emotions get me down, then I'd surely suffer even more. But when I remember that all these things are temporary, they come to pass, and all we have to do is keep on keeping on, and the valley of the shadow of suffering will lead us to the mountaintops of light.

CML: I heard somebody say one time: if your life has been flowering beautifully and suddenly the flowers start to die, just check. Have you forgotten to water the roots?

John: Ah! That is a very, very deep, wonderful statement. Many times we just worry about the flower and forget where the flower came from. So we must always look at ourselves.

CML: You have another new website about to open, don't you?

John: Yes, in fact, it will be one of those special things I have always wanted to do. It is called [Enterprising Spirit dot com](#), a place where business and spirit meet. That's because of my strong belief that business does not do business with business. People do business with people. And if you want to do business with people, if you love people, if your spirit meets their spirit, you will buy and sell and prosper. You will be happy; you'll be joyous. This is what we will do on that website. It will be a subscription membership site, and it's destined to open in about three or four weeks.

CML: I'd like to get back to this a little later, but let's take a side trip here.

Do you have any kind of working definition for luck or fortune or success that you use in your daily life?

John: I think the simplest one for me, Charles, is that luck or fortune, either one, whatever we call them, they are a result of attitudes and beliefs. If things seem to be going really bad, if you seem to have a spell of bad luck, your attitude and your beliefs need examining.

If things are going beautifully, it means that your attitudes and your beliefs are fine.

Now, with that said, I believe that we came here to this earth, and we don't know exactly why, but I believe that ninety percent of the things that we came here for could be changed. We could change careers, husbands or wives, or places we live and so forth. But there are about ten percent of things, maybe three or four of the most important

things that we have made agreements on, way before we got here, that we hardly ever change.

This would have to be when you come to a point where things never seem to go right, where everything seems horrible and you wonder is someone slapping me in the face? Every time I try to do something that I believe would take me to where I want to go, it seems like a door closes before me.

There are some of those things that happen, as to why exactly, I don't think we will ever know, while they're happening. Later on, we will find that they were probably the most "lucky" things that ever happened to us. You probably are familiar, Charles – I'm sure you are – with the great writer Richard Bach, author of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. I think most people on earth know who he is because the book *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* put Richard on the cover of Time Magazine.

Now, he and I have had quite some talks. I've known Richard, I guess, over two decades, and one of the things that intrigued me about this was, once he and I were talking about something that had happened to me, the loss of my business and so forth. Richard said to me, "You know, John, one day you will look back on this period and you will think of it as the most positive thing that ever happened to you.

And I thought, "You know, I'd like to choke that man."

But in retrospect, it was one of the happiest, one of the most positive, one of the most glorious things that happened to me. But while I was going through that, it didn't seem that way. It's like we said. It's like going through a super laundry. It's not fun while it's happening, but when you come out, you're clean. And so I think there are those around us, those who are in the invisible world, a whole big, giant situation that we can't even dream of, just like an ant could never conceive of what an elephant is.

And I think there are guardians and guardian angels and helpers who sometimes, in spite of what we think we want, would push us another way for our greater good.

Take for example a seven-year-old kid. If my son Jonathan decided it would be fun to run across the highway when cars are coming, I certainly wouldn't worry about his free will at that time. I'd grab him forcibly and hold him until the cars had passed, and I would give him a good scolding for that.

So I feel at times the universe comes to our aid. I believe the universe is biased on our side. And sometimes we are like willful children wanting to do this or that, and we are prevented, for our own good, for our own growth, from doing that which we think we really want to do.

Somewhere in there is an answer to what you asked.

CML: Okay, let me ask it up front, then. Do you actually believe in luck?

John: Not as the word is used these days. I do believe luck is the situation where being prepared and taking action meet. Churchill once said a very interesting thing. I mean, Churchill said almost everything. He said, "People occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing happened."

Well, luck is when you pick yourself up and you say, "Hah, what happened there?" And you look at it and all of a sudden you start changing your world.

CML: You have some experience with going through bad luck periods. Times when it feels like life is just trying to block everything you try to do. Is there anything a person can do to hurry up and get on through a period like that?

John: I remember the story about when Columbus sailed for the New World. It seemed like a very intimidating venture, and he came upon a place where he thought that nothing would happen, that they had run aground, a place in the Atlantic called the Sargasso Sea, the seaweed, and it was scary. But once he got through that, he realized that that was only an illusion; it was just something that was there. The sea was as deep there as anyplace.

So when we go through times of that nature, it calls for a bunch of things. First of all, to realize that no matter what it is, it's temporary. Even life as we know it here on this planet is temporary. And if we keep that in mind, we will understand that it will pass.

Here's another thing, and this is very important. During those times, we tend to get very depressed. We have friends and family, those who love us, who try to tell us what to do and what not to do, and if they don't do that, they're like Job's comforters. They come on and try to say, "Look, I know, isn't it terrible that you're suffering so much. Wish we could help you with that suffering." All those things put together, Charles, tend to make you even more depressed.

What you need to do is to go into the silence and hear the sound of your heart. Hear the voice of your soul telling you, "It's okay, son; it's okay, daughter; it's okay, my child. This is temporary. You're going to get through this, just hold on. Hold on a little bit more."

And here is the crux of the matter, Charles. You need to have hope. If you ever lose hope, you lose everything.

Now, you don't need faith to have hope. But you certainly do need hope to come up with faith.

So go into the silence, listen to you talk to you, and be quiet because silence might just be another name for God.

That's where it starts.

CML: Can you give some examples of when good luck has helped move you toward your goals?

John: I think a very important word is "enthusiasm" because it creates good luck. There are things that have happened in my life that others could look at and say, "Well, you know, he's been very lucky."

Take for example, the book, *When You Can Walk on Water, Take the Boat*. I never was trained as a writer. I was a scientist, a mathematician dealing in physics, chemistry and such fields.

Then one day, I decided to write a book. I had no idea what it was going to be called, but I want to tell you, before I wrote that book, I never took writing courses.

Actually, there's a funny story about that. The only course I ever took in writing was called "Creative Writing" and I got a "D" – I almost failed.

Years later, I was to sit down and write a book which became *When You Can Walk on Water, Take the Boat*.

Now, I know a number of things – the statistics are there – but I didn't really know them at that time. Statistics say that 90 to 95 percent of all authors never make any money on their books. They probably never sell more than 5,000 to 10,000 copies. It's the five percent that we hear of all the time that do so well.

Well, I didn't know that. And I didn't think that anybody was going to publish this book, so what I did was, I self-published it. I got a few thousand copies, and I thought to myself, "Well, it's a nice little book; I'll probably sell 300 or 400 copies, and the rest will stay in the boxes in my basement, and decades from now my grandchildren or great-grandchildren will find them and say, 'Hah, that's what he used to do. No wonder we starved'."

A strange thing happened. The book started selling, and suddenly the first printing was gone. I said to myself, "Darn, what happened there?" So we had a second printing. And the second printing sold out. By the third printing, I said, "This is amazing, I'd better read this book." So I read it again, and I thought, well, I just can't believe I wrote that because now other people are giving it validity. I thought I had just put together a little book.

Then, by the third printing, the major companies in New York started getting interested, so Berkeley published it (that's part of Putnam), and then later on, Harper Collins, and then it appeared in the Spanish translation in Spain, then throughout Latin America. It

was printed in French and Italian and Portuguese. And I had very, very little to do with it physically.

You asked about luck. Was there anything that seemed lucky about it? Well, yeah. I didn't do much about the book, but it appeared that the book had its own energy and did its own thing. That's why, today, years later, it's still all over the world, and every day people download it and drop me notes about it. And I still am a little puzzled, but I think it's a part of that ten percent deal where, in a way, this was meant to be, to take me to other places.

That could be considered luck.

Graduating summa cum laude could be considered luck, but let me tell you, I did study. A component of luck is work, action, and if you will, self-talk. Enthusiasm.

CML: Let's get back to this new website of yours, Enterprising Spirit dot com. Could you tell us a little about that?

John: Okay. Enterprising Spirit dot com will have articles, books, information as to how to use the spiritual side of us to make business successful. It will have guest writers, people who do that, people who realize, as Kennedy and others said, that a rising tide raises all ships, that it is not a competitive world. It's a cooperative world. And your competition is actually yourself of yesterday.

What it will do, Charles, is to put a different spin on the way we do business.

Just yesterday, Jonathan Mizel and I talked for a while, and we talked about what is happening in the Internet today, or in businesses. There seems to be a push to get as much as you can. You, too, have probably seen them, Charles, in the ezines that you might receive, and the spam that we all get. In fact, there was a beautiful one the other day. It said, "Earn \$60,000 a year by doing nothing, absolutely nothing."

CML: ... "and we'll do all the work."

John: Right. And I thought, "Yes, and the moon is made of green cheese, and the tooth fairy visits a lot, and Santa Clause really comes down the chimney."

CML: ... "and there's a bridge I want to sell you."

John: Yeah, yeah. And I thought of that, and Jonathan and I said, "You know, here is the thing about people on the Internet – and many of them are very successful – they go about and they're trying to sell you what they think works, which is not a bad thing; that's good. But they're selling you the same thing, and they're telling you why you've got to buy it by 12 midnight tomorrow night or else the price doubles. But you check again in three days and you'll find that it's 12 midnight three days from now. And if you check two

weeks from now, the same thing happens. It's a little Java script, or some Perl programming or something (I don't know the technicalities of it all), and then you find everyone sending you information as to why you must do this and why you must do that.

And hardly – every once in a while I come upon someone – hardly does anyone say, “Look, what is it that you really want to do? This is what I have. This will help you.”

There's an old show, one of my favorites with Kwai Chang Kane. It's called “The Legend Returns” or something of that nature, and it has this man who lives in Chinatown. Whenever you have problems and you meet him, he says, “Come to Chinatown. I will help you.” And what comes out of him is such honesty, such integrity, and that's what we are not finding any more, anyplace, even with the large companies.

So [Enterprising Spirit dot com](http://EnterprisingSpirit.com) is designed to have people come back to the basics of what makes things work, what makes success. Again, *When You Can Walk on Water, Take the Boat* became a best seller, not because I ran out there and tried to get every review there was. It was like I sat there, I was quiet, and the reviews came to me.

It was like they were attracted to me because I wasn't pushing them away with willfulness instead of willingness. The moment we get from willfulness to willingness, when we start allowing things that are good to come to us, rather than to chase after them, we will find ourselves becoming a lot more successful, and we will find that Lady Luck seems to smile on us more often.

CML: In the midst of all this hurry-hurry and excessive commercialism, do we seem to be seeing the stirrings of a new spiritual awakening?

John: About eight or ten years ago I made a prediction that the twenty-first century would create the beginnings of a whole new paradigm, a place where people start becoming more interested in people and less interested in things. Instead of loving things and using people, they would start loving people and using things.

You probably know, Charles, that I'm in touch with lots of different people at all levels of society in this world. One of the things I find that's very interesting and really wonderful is, in the most successful people, there is the most loving heart you could think of.

Now, we may not always read that in papers or magazines, because you wouldn't believe some of the things I read about me in interviews, but these people exude, I would say, a degree of spirituality which is far beyond what we call common religion.

The word religion itself came from the root word meaning to bind or to tie together, and as you probably noticed, it has done a lot of that binding into different little groups who seem to fight each other all the time. This is not to say that religions haven't done a lot of good, but at the same time, it's been like science, where science has brought us the

refrigerator and the washing machine and the computer and the hydrogen bomb and the poison gas, and all kinds of other things that come with it.

So I really believe that humanity is on the way up, that the pace is getting quicker and quicker. We're all going to the same place. We're going to the mountaintop. Some are halfway up the mountain, some are just at the base, and some have about reached the peak. And I think what's going to happen later, as we go on with this decade, is that people are going to begin to see that this is a very, very positive, successful way to live, because then we get rid of a lot of stress, the stress of hurry-hurry.

And we'll do things like Jonathan Mizel is doing. He left yesterday for Hawaii. He'll stay there for a while, and then he goes anyplace he wants to go, because he is not centered on the thing itself. He's centered on the feeling within him, how he wants to feel, which is freedom. That's the beginning of freedom.

So yes, to paraphrase all that, this is a very important decade. More people, at all levels, again, in business are going to come to see that maybe there's a new way to do this.

CML: You mentioned just briefly in passing the relationship to religious things. This doesn't really seem to be connected very directly with religion, this time around, does it?

John: No. No. Religion, I think, was a tool that was started by people to grasp some truths, that some teacher may have taught at one time. But what occurred, as religion become more formalized, we saw economic reasoning getting in there, and we saw another very interesting thing.

Religion made people worship the message bearer, instead of listening to the message. Because the message of all the teachers (and I will not get into naming religions here), but the messages were very similar. Like love your neighbor. Love your God. Love yourself. Help others. If somebody is hungry, feed him. If he thirsts, give him to drink. If he is naked, clothe him. It didn't say you've got to fall down three times a day on your knees and turn to the heavens and pray, or you have to polish a crystal, or you have to say fifteen mantras, or chant all day. Those are little tools we use to get ourselves to a point where we could feel the connectedness with the universe.

I don't think for one instant we would have been put here without the tools necessary to make it a wonderful, glorious life.

So religion helped people to get to a certain point. Then, what happens is, it takes off. They don't need formal religion any longer. They just need a close personal relationship with their creator, that's all.

Einstein once said something to the effect that 'things should be made as simple as possible and not one whit simpler'.

CML: The trick is knowing where the ‘not one whit’ falls.

Getting back to your website, Where do you get most of your ideas for new products or services? Do you have a special brainstorming process, or do your ideas come from things you hear customers asking for?

John: Well, I get them from the idea fairy, from the shower fairy, from the walk fairy. And not to be facetious, really, but that’s how it happens. If we open our minds, we will find ideas come to us and tap us on the shoulder and say, “Hey John, here I am. What do you think of me? What do you want to do with me? I’ll work with you.”

Now, people use different methods. For example, this brainstorming thing is very good. But that, too, is a universal law, a kind of a sample of the mastermind technology or teaching, where you put a number of minds together, and the sum of the total of those minds is far greater than if you were to add them one-to-one.

So, many of my ideas come from quiet reflection, because then I feel them, and they tap me and say, “I’m here.”

For example, this [Enterprising Spirit dot com](#) came out of the seminar in Atlanta, the [SuperSeminar 2001](#). I had never seen such a group, and even yesterday, Mizel told me that it was “the most important, best seminar” he had ever attended.

And guys like Declan Dunn told me that.

CML: I’d have to add my voice to that. This was a watershed experience for me, and I had no idea of it at the time. I thought I was just meeting some really interesting people.

John: But you see, what occurred there, Charles, was a combination of everybody’s spirit meeting together and forming a unit that was far greater than any one person there. Because to this day, many of them communicate with me, and I’m sure with you and others. I hear from them constantly, and what was created was an energy form which could solve any business problem.

A lot of people made contacts there. A lot of people get help. I ask them to help me in many cases, and they say sure. Well, this is what Enterprising Spirit dot com will do. It will take that type of energy and put it in a website, and we’re going to make it very, very inexpensive. Instead of \$49 a month, I think we’ll have it at \$9.95 a month. There’s a reason for that. Some people would say to me, “Why don’t you do it free?”

Well, you know, sometimes you do things free. I give away *When You Can Walk on Water, Take the Boat* on the Internet. Lots of people get it, they read it, they love it, and they forget about it. But it is important in a give-and-take world, a sowing-and-reaping world, that we give service and we receive service. We receive an exchange of energy. And if we don’t do it that way, it won’t work for people.

So it will be a place to help many, many, many entrepreneurs who will go there, read something, and maybe one sentence that sticks with them will create a fortune.

CML: When an idea comes and taps you on the shoulder, I don't know if you're like me, but I get a lot of ideas, but not all of them are really top notch. How do you recognize when a new idea is a really good one?

John: You will feel it. You won't be able to right away tell by logic that it is. You will feel it somewhere deep within you. It won't let you go. It won't let you go until you do something with it, or you absolutely kill it.

So you will have about twenty different ideas at different times. For example, I get those, too, and some of them are not that bad, and some of them are fantastic, and a whole bunch of them are lousy. We have to be careful about our ideas because we might be wishing for something that we don't really want.

For example, take my business. Whenever I get into doing it like a "real business" which is like, "okay, let's see if I can get into the top ten spots in the search engines." Or here is a chance of getting my book into some list someplace. And when I start going after the mechanics of the thing, I start losing the power of my being, and I become someone who tries to learn all there is about a car by examining the engine or the tires, forgetting that here is the set of keys. All you've got to do is put it in the little thing, turn it, and it will start.

It's like what I heard, a story of these men who went into a mango orchard in India to study mangos. They brought their notepads, their yellow pads and their pencils, and their rulers and whatnot to measure and study and categorize mangos.

While a bunch of them were doing this, there was one sitting under a tree eating a mango. You see, that man who was eating the mango, knew mangos. The others knew about mangos. So there's a great difference when ideas come to us, the ones that really resonate with us, because I think they're electromagnetic in nature, that certain good ideas, like good beliefs, bunch together and help one another. If we have a diverse bunch of them, where they're fighting against each other, there's not going to be the peace there.

To get the right idea you've got to get into the mode of listening, and listening doesn't only have to happen when you're awake. Some of the greatest ideas came in dreams to people.

Way before anybody could figure out anything called organic chemistry, in which most of our life styles of this world are actually based right now, there was a guy called Kekulé who was sleeping, couldn't find the formula for the benzene ring. He had this dream of six people dancing in a circle or something of that nature, and got up and said,

“You know, this formula is a ring, not a straight long chain of stuff.” And that was the beginning of organic chemistry.

Some of the greatest breakthroughs—I think his name was Elias Howe, of the sewing machine—he couldn’t figure how to get the thing to work properly. Then one time he had this dream that he was being chased by a whole bunch of natives with spears, and the spears had holes at the tips. Then he got up the next day and he said, “You know, that’s interesting. Let’s put the eye of the needle at the tip of the needle in the sewing machine. Isn’t that what they do these days?”

So we get these ideas in dreams, in feelings, in daydreaming.

Conrad Hilton played with little hotels, knew he was going to buy them when he got older, and it just happened that this became a reality. So your ideas are transformed by your beliefs, your enthusiasms, your attitudes, into that which you really want.

Similarly, not to be always positive here, your ideas – if they are fearful ideas – will translate themselves, using your emotions, into fearful happenings in your life. So if you don’t want to have terrible things happen to you all the time, you have to just make sure that you are not giving those terrible thoughts energy by dwelling on them all the time, by being afraid of them, because it’s stated in the Good Book “that which I feared most has come upon me.” That was Job lamenting his “bad luck,” if you will.

CML: Do you sometimes find yourself getting into a slump period, like a spell of “aw, I just don’t want to motivate myself today” or a less-than-good-luck? And if so, what do you do to put yourself back on track?

John: Okay. First question: yes, I get into a little slump often enough because I think I should start a club called The Procrastinators Club (but I bet they have one), with the theme of “why do today what you can do tomorrow.”

By nature, at times, I think I’m lazy. So there are things I should do that I don’t do at the appropriate moment, and I worry about them a little bit. But here’s the secret: it’s okay to do that – it’s okay to feel a little bad every once in a while. The problem is, if you do that and stay there, then you’re starting to affect your entire life.

So yes, I have my little pity parties. I do feel depressed. And I get out of these things by using what I call “sources of inspiration.”

What sources of inspiration? Well, they are all around us. Sometimes it’s too long to wait to get to that motivational seminar or to do this or do that. But one of my sources is actually nature. Just a little walk in nature. Sitting under a tree by a river. You can’t help but be inspired.

Another one is music. How many times in the middle of some of the greatest problems

we have, there's a haunting melody or something that will take us away from what appears to be happening to us right then.

Another source of inspiration – you should see my library – I know Joe Vitale, my dear friend, has a great library, and I'm not going to compare mine with his, but I have sitting on my bookshelves some of the greatest teachers on earth, the authors of these books.

So another source of inspiration would be books, seminars, tapes. I use those things to get out of the temporary slump.

CML: What would you say to people who have these books and tapes on their shelf, but they just leave them there, they don't actually use them?

John: I think people like to collect things. They collect books, they collect other people, they collect cars, they collect hats, they collect a lot of things. And if these books are on the shelves, and you don't read them, it's like what difference does it make if you didn't even know how to read? Because you have there the secrets of the universe, and all the thoughts of all the great minds – you have access to them – and you refuse to even hear what they say.

It's like a sage would be speaking to me and I don't even listen. That's what happens if you collect books for the sake of collecting.

Collecting anything for the sake of collecting has no value, really, if you don't love the thing you're collecting. So I suggest that people open their books and read them. Pick any book. Go to the library. Go to your bookshelf. Pick any one of those books. Open that book to any page, and you will probably find a message that was written there particularly for you.

CML: What books or teachers have helped you grow?

John: Many of them probably are invisible. Many of them are in books, But I have bumped into some people on earth, and I think what happens here is, we meet people for one of two reasons, or a combination. One is to learn something from them. Two is to teach them something. And if you can have fun doing either one of those, or both, you could become very successful.

Along the way were some professors in college. The dean of my university, who was very, very understanding and taught me a lot about life. I have had friends of all kinds.

Deepak Chopra and I have had numerous conversations in the past, where it wasn't that either of us was trying to teach the other one, but we were just exchanging views, and out of those views came bigger and better situations.

Right now, I would say a lot of friends that I have or some of them are new friends, like

yourself, Charles, or like my dear friend, Rick Beneteau, who I call “the maverick marketer,” because Rick talks from his soul and his heart, and I think he will always be successful in marketing. He is a people person, and he doesn’t worry too much about the mechanics; he worries about the integrity and he deals with that.

Another new friend, Yanik and I, we talk a lot and I think we both grow from it.

Anytime two beings meet, there is a learning and a teaching. So I couldn’t put my finger on any one person, but on all of them. Some of the masters of the Far East. Some Yogis, some Swamis.

People like the late Og Mandino. He and I were the keynote speakers at a major event in Atlanta. That little meeting inspired me so much. And he himself, as he went around, he kept asking, “Where is John, where is John?” And I kept going around saying, “Where is Og, where is Og?” When we met, he said, “Oh my gosh!”

I said to him, “Og, I’ve read your books.”

And he said, “John, I’ve read yours, too.”

And I thought, isn’t this wonderful, a man I’d dreamed of when I was a little boy, read his books, finally meeting. So that’s how we meet them, but we don’t go out of our way; we don’t have to go out of our way to meet them.

We’re always fortunate when these things occur. I have met people through some of the strangest ways. I told you about the magic of the book *When You Can Walk on Water, Take the Boat*. Would you believe, one of the mystical things about it, that I can’t understand to this day is, anybody – no matter what his or her problem is – when they read that book, they get back to me and say, “You know, I was going through this, it was bad; guess what, it changed; I don’t know how.” This is interesting.

Well, I always had heard of Muhammed Ali, the champ, right? And because of the book, or because of some magic of something, I got to meet him, and we became friends. In fact, I introduced him to Elizabeth Kuebler-Ross.

So we meet people like that because we don’t have to be in awe of anybody. What we have to do is think of them as awesome, which is different.

Somehow or other, their spirit speaks to us and we speak to theirs, and we get together at a level where all men and women are equal – that’s in the sight of God, I think. And then we can relate, we can tell our stories. By the sea we can exchange tales, like Deepak and I have done a number of times, and many of the others. They will come to you if you don’t chase after them, whoever ‘they’ happen to be. Because this is an attractive universe.

We attract to us things that are like us. And we repel from us things that are not like us. So if we want...

CML: This is important. Could you say that again?

John: We attract to us things and people who are like us, and we repel or push away from us things and people who are totally unlike us.

If we look around and say, "You know, I certainly wouldn't attract that person," then you'd better get into your belief system. Check out what you believe about yourself, how worthy you are of things. Because one of the terrible things, one thing that contributes to tremendous "bad luck" or misfortune is a simple little word called guilt.

You asked about mentors and friends and what not. Once upon a time there was a man called Foster Hibbard. Foster was one of the few remaining people who had taught with and lectured with Napoleon Hill of *Think and Grow Rich*, and as you probably know and as your audience will know, Napoleon Hill spent many, many years of his life studying the habits of successful people, how they became successful, how they became wealthy. And Foster was privileged to be a part of studying this and teaching it with Napoleon Hill.

A few years ago, through a very strange situation, Foster and I were introduced to each other. Now, it's been a few years since he died, but Foster taught me so many things about money, about wealth, about success, and he would call me at least twice a week. Out of that came this feeling that, you know, everything is possible. This man would call, and no matter what his problem was, he'd say, "John, how are you?" And he would want to find out how I was doing.

How many times we call people and we say, "Gee, Jim, I gotta tell you what it was like today," and we go on telling people what it was like.

By the way, I just found a new thing to do with telemarketers who call me at dinner. They always say, "Gee, Mr. H. My name is so-and-so. How are you today?"

And I can't resist it; it's the ham in me. I say, "Well, you really want to know? Let me tell you what it was like when I got up this morning." And the poor person... I'm not being nasty, but I'm just kidding around, bringing a little lightness into them and to myself. I'll go through with it, and they'll say, "Oh, I'm so sorry about that, but let me tell you about..."

I say, "You really wanted to know? Aren't you listening?"

There's the thing. When we ask somebody how he or she is doing, we ought to be able to listen to what he or she says, because I'm convinced that many of us could solve somebody else's problems by either a phone call or a signature, and we absolutely refuse

to do that.

I wrote an article, Charles, and this is going to be in the Enterprising Spirit dot com site: "A Little Known Business Secret," and I'll tell your audience what it is. The little known business secret has to do with good will, of doing things for others without expecting anything. That's one of the things that creates "good luck." Helping others without a thought of return.

Yes, as simple as that. Because just as you couldn't receive without giving, you couldn't give without receiving.

CML: Say that again, please.

John: Just as you couldn't receive without giving, you cannot give without receiving.

CML: You cannot give without receiving. This is a universal law.

John: Yeah, if you give, you certainly will get back, because here's this strange little thing. You can't out-give the universe.

You plunk a ten dollar bill down for the universe and say, "Hey, you beat that," and before you blink, there's a hundred dollar bill someplace. And this happens. People think that this is really impractical stuff. When they think so, I want to remind them that, you know, I'm a scientist, I'm an MBA guy, I've been through business, I talk to people at all levels of corporations, and the last time I checked, I wasn't totally nuts.

This is really, really practical stuff. There are examples all over the place.

One day in those what you call "bad luck" days, Charles, I think I had five bucks in my pocket and I was driving to go to the grocery to buy milk and bread for my little kids. Their mom had died. Here we were, no insurance, no anything, and we're struggling just to be able to eat.

On my way, I saw a man standing with his wife and two kids, with a sign (they do that down south here, you know), and the sign says, Will Work for Food.

I thought, oh poor things. Two kids, wife. I don't know if he made it up, but I passed them. I felt so guilty as I passed them with my five dollars in my pocket, and I drove about a mile. I couldn't get over this feeling of "I've got to help them." So I made a U-turn, came back, stopped next to where they were, and I handed the guy the five dollars. And I thought, "This is crazy. Now I'll have to go home and check to see if I have any change."

I checked the little thing in the car and there was some change, so I thought at least I'd be able to get a loaf of bread and I'll figure out about the milk later on.

So I pulled into the parking lot at the supermarket, and as I got out of the car and stepped out, I stepped on a twenty dollar bill. Right under my shoe. I picked it up and I said, “Wow, you really can’t out-give the universe.” I gave away five bucks, I got twenty bucks back. I was able to get the milk, the bread and everything else.

This is such a practical thing. It happens. This is the secret of red lights becoming green, finding a parking space in the most crowded mall in the middle of Christmas. Yet, we think it’s only the things we can measure, the things we can touch, and the things we can hold that will make us successful. And we forget that we can’t even see air, and without it we’d surely die.

CML: How important a part of success is the feeling that you deserve good things?

John: Great! I was talking about Foster Hibbard, and one thing he talked about: he said, “Guilt is the [cause] of most poverty, most failures.” If you do not feel you deserve good things, subconsciously you will do all within your power to punish yourself by not getting those good things. So the feeling of deserving is a very important thing.

There are, again, very great scientific reasons for this. You see, the subconscious (which like a faithful servant), the subconscious reacts to two things very quickly. One is repetition, and the other is strong feelings. That’s why those people who have bought my book called *The Power Pause*, where we talked about feelings and gave examples about it, have written me with some of the most wonderful stories you could think of. Because by generating the feelings (and I’m going to tell you what that is). Here it is. It’s a little secret, a well known secret.

You want anything? Feel how you would feel if the thing you wanted to have happen happened. Simple as that. And keep feeling that way.

People say to me, “But John, you can’t make yourself feel that way.”

My question is, why not? Whose feelings are they? Right now as we’re talking, Charles, I have a pen in my left hand. And I think, what can I do with that pen? I could throw it in the waste paper basket. I could step on it. I could give it away. I could keep it. Why? Because it’s my pen.

The same with thoughts: “Oh I can’t change my thoughts.” Well, here’s a simple thing: whose thoughts are they? Are they not your thoughts? Don’t you think them, or do your thoughts think you?

If you think your thoughts, then you can think other thoughts. If you have certain feelings, then you can change them to other feelings, because they are your feelings. That’s where we use sources of inspiration – to get us out of the horrible, gloomy, rainy-day feeling into the sunshiny type feelings. So we can change our feelings.

Feelings are very, very important. Emotions actually color our world, and we need emotions. We need feelings to be able to create a kind of goal-seeking mechanism, which our subconscious actually is. We need to speed it up. We need the catalyst. That is so important in creation.

CML: For years, I did affirmations and visualizations, and self hypnosis, and for years, nothing much happened. It wasn't until I discovered – people had been telling me, I suppose, all that time, but I never noticed somehow – you gotta have some feelings for what you want, or you'll never live there.

John: That's right. It's like being passionate about what you do. By feeling that within you, you may not have to go out and get the thing; the thing will come towards you.

CML: People may have to work at it a little bit when they first start developing a new skill, this skill of directing your emotions.

John: Right, and it's like anything else. We have got to work at it before it really becomes workable in a subconscious way, where it becomes a habit. It's like anything else.

The first time I drove a car, it certainly wasn't an experience like now. Right now I'll jump in my car and I'll get to someplace without even knowing what streets I've passed. Without even noticing the red lights or green lights, because somehow the red lights will trigger me to stop, and I didn't even know I stopped.

This is because we are guided by what I call intention. Very important.

The intent. What do I intend to do? Well, I intend to have this new site I'm putting up, and write a few more books, and have them all be successful.

Well, there are certain steps I have to take. I've got to do something, I imagine. I've got to write the sales letter. I've got to send out some email. I've got to pass it around. But that, to me, isn't the most important thing.

What is the most important thing for me is to think of all the thousands of people who will come to the site and who will derive such great benefit from this place. And then I start seeing them being fulfilled. And guess what? If I do that often enough, I will get an urge to: "change that sentence in the sales letter, John," or "check the spelling of this word, John." I'll have an urge to "pick up the phone and call Declan Dunn, John." Do this and do that.

You see, I don't have to force myself to think of what to do if I'm passionate about what I love.

You know, talking about Richard Bach, I once asked Richard, "You've been rich and

you've been poor, and you've been broke, and you've been a multi-millionaire, so you know a lot about that, tell me; what is it that makes us successful? And I'll never forget the words he used.

He said, "John, give yourself, give your gift as brilliantly and as beautifully as you can to the world, and the world will say 'thank you'."

And I went, "Duh!"

I mean, the world would say 'Thank you'? Man, I'd be a multi-millionaire if I banked all the 'thank you's I got.

He said, "You didn't let me finish."

I said, "Okay, okay... give your gift as brilliantly as you want and the world would say 'thank you'... right?"

He said, "Yep. And they generally say 'thank you' by sending you money. Checks. Buying your books."

He said, "We were broke, and we put together this little book called *Bridge Across Forever*, and we gave it to the world through our publisher and we let it go.

People started to read that book. It was our gift, and they started buying it, and little bits of their checks went through our publisher and came to us as royalties and pulled us out of all the problems where money was concerned."

And then another time he said, "You know what? Hurl..." (and I love this word) "hurl yourselves at the thing you love, and the entire universe will come to your aid."

It's an interesting universe, Charles. I would have made it a little differently, but ... I don't know that much, you see.

CML: What about the person who doesn't know what they love?

John: I really think that most everybody knows, somewhere deep within himself or herself, what it is that they love.

What happens is, they permit themselves to be surrounded by such an atmosphere of hurry and worry and everything else that they cannot even hear the birds sing; they cannot hear their children crying or calling and saying, "We love you daddy," or "We love you, mommy. We wish we could see you a little bit more often." They have surrounded themselves in a cocoon, and so they have imprisoned the splendor that's within them.

What they have to do is stop for a little while and let that imprisoned splendor come out, and they will feel the glory of their lives.

They will then feel themselves attracted into painting the greatest painting on earth, writing the great American novel. How many people have done that? They must slow down; they must stop beating themselves up; they must get rid of this guilt for things they may have done or may not have done, because what guilt does is this: it keeps making you pay for something you've paid for already.

Now, when you realize that, there's no need to be guilty. I talk in my consultation practice, where I have people calling me from all over the planet to talk to me for a half an hour. I meet many, many people, and you wouldn't suspect who some of these people are. If I were to mention a name, you'd recognize it immediately, many of them.

And one of the things they do, they go over beating themselves up. Remember, we talked about not deserving? They beat themselves up because they feel guilty.

You know, I have a good cure for guilt, and I think I wrote about it in one of my books. I tell the story of this western cowboy who jumped off his horse at noontime and jumped right into a cactus patch. As soon as he jumped out of it, which was very quickly, his friends turned to him and said, "Whatever did you do such a stupid thing for?"

And his answer, I think, was absolutely brilliant. He said, "You know, it seemed like a good thing at the time."

Now, whatever it is that we are guilty about, the reason we did it was, it seemed like a good thing at the time. Or else we wouldn't have done it. At that time we thought it was fine. We certainly wouldn't do it again – or we hope not – so we can deal with the guilt that way.

People think they don't deserve. They think they're weak and little beings in this great world. They think the Internet is full of millions of people who are getting rich or stealing from each other, or doing this or doing that, without saying, "No, the Internet is a part of who I am. This world is a part of me. This is my dream, and in my world are all these things. And since it's my dream, I can do whatever it is I want to do with it – if I'm not doubtful, if I'm not fearful.

It doesn't mean not to be prudent, you know. If I carry a spare tire in my car as I go on a long trip, it's not because I'm negative; it's because I'm a little bit sensible. I'm prudent. So it doesn't mean to just go sell all you've got, go into the world and say, "Hey, world, here I come."

It reminds me of the kid who got out of college, and he ran out and said, "Here world, here I come. I got my AB degree."

And the world said, “Sit down, son. I’ll teach you the rest of the alphabet.”

We must respect ourselves, and we will discover that we are not some tiny little being on a little planet in an obscure solar system in the universe, but perhaps that this entire universe springs from us. Our great religions tell us things of this nature, but we think, of course, you know, “Oh gee, that’s church stuff, that’s not very practical.”

Some of the most practical things are the simplest things, Charles.

CML: You just mentioned your consulting. You’ve been described as an intuitive. What is an intuitive?

John: Well, I think it’s an ordinary person who really uses a few other tools than most people use. I think we were all born with a sense of knowing things. That’s why, when people talk about learning – there’s so much learning to be done – and I say, “Why struggle with learning, when all we have to do is remember?”

And if we remember who we are, we can feel things because we then get deep within us, and we tap into the various “radio stations,” which are like: everyone – to me – is a broadcasting station and a receiving station. And we could be in communications no matter where we are; there’s certainly enough proof of that.

What I do, I go into a kind of a quiet time, and I feel something about somebody and I pick up things that are important to them. I get the feeling of where they’ve been, where they are, and what are the probabilities of going where they’re going.

I don’t tell the future because the future isn’t made yet. I don’t know what the future holds, but I have indications of what will happen, and I give the probabilities of that. And I touch into some of their biggest problems and explain to them from my point of view what it is. I’ve done that for years.

It is an intuitive thing. It’s using your intuition.

Knowledge is acquired in one of two ways. Through tuition; you pay your tuition, you go to school and you learn. Or through intuition, where you feel and you know what is. So when they call me that, I guess that’s what they mean.

CML: When people call, do they mostly call and want you to ratify what they’ve perhaps unconsciously already decided to do, or are they in general really wide open and willing to accept whatever you advise?

John: It’s both, Charles. I do have some people who call and want me to tell them that what they are doing is the most wonderful thing possible.

This could happen. You know, there are three problems: money, health, relationships. I

tell this on my website, [Insight 2000 dot com](http://Insight2000.com).

Many people call about relationships, and they've already met this guy or woman, or whoever it is, and they want to know that this is the right person for them. They will call and say, "You know, this is what has happened. Do you think this is the right person for me?"

Now, I don't know. People get a little bemused when I tell them I don't know, but I go through some things asking them to determine, and I lead them through a process which gets them to feel whether this is so or not.

Like we said before, most people don't trust their feelings. Trust is a very important word. You trust your feelings and they are going to work better for you than if they were not trusted.

So I think people come to me for just a little clarification, or a little guidance.

CML: How should one work with an intuitive to get the best results? Is it like working with a personal coach?

John: I think with an intuitive, it's like if you are going to approach it this way, if you need help from people who do intuitive consulting, you need to come to them with an open mind; it's the best way to do it.

I have, over a decade and a half, done this, and I used to, in the old days, make a money-back guarantee. These days, there's no guarantee. They could hardly get me if they want. I mean we've got people who want to consult with me so often, so we don't even bother.

But you know, I think in all this time, only three or four times did I give back the money to the people. And it wasn't that they asked for it.

I didn't feel that I did anything for them, and I knew it when I started, and I thought, "Well, we won't bother with it." But most people will listen to what I say with an open mind. Many of them tell me later, "You know, John, when you were saying that, I thought, 'Well, you know I already am paying this guy so much for half an hour and he sounds like a nice guy, and I'm not going to say anything, but it doesn't make any sense, what he says'."

But a year later, or two years later – and I have examples of a best-selling author in Philadelphia who lectures throughout the country, has been on TBS and television and Good Morning America and whatnot – way before that, I said to her, "You know, see you on television, see you talking to a lot of people, see books."

And only years later she told me she'd thought I was nuts. Now she can afford to say that because she's doing all those things. It's not that I foretell the future. I can't do that, or

else I wouldn't be doing the things I'm doing. I'd just sit down and say well, I know all that's going to happen. It's fun, but it's like playing a card game, Charles. If you know every hand of every person, the first two or three games are great.

By the fourth and fifth, you're bored to death, and boredom isn't a fun thing, although there are times people say to me, "John, you know, if you didn't have any problems, you'd be bored to death." And I say, "Bore me, man, I want to be bored for a short while."

But boredom is not fun, and that's why we have challenges, and that's why we have these things we've got to do, and that's why we have to remember the observer effect in physics, which says that whatever the observer observes changes. Or the observer changes that which he or she observes.

This means, if that's true, and we have our high energy physicists saying that, then it means that if I see my world a little differently, it will change to be the way I want it to be. If I'm scared of my world, it means that it will be a scary world.

You know the little saying, "Two men looked through bars, one saw mud, the other saw stars."

Or, "That thou seest, man become, too, thou must; God, if thou seest god; dust if thou seest dust."

It's whatever it is we see with the inner eye and either love or are afraid of. That's what we'll bring into our lives. That's where the whole luck thing is.

CML: By the way, John, one thing we haven't talked about much is *Power Pause*. And this is one of the main reasons I was impressed with you in the first place. Could you tell us about your website, Power Pause dot com?

John: Okay. One of the things I'm going to do, because a funny thing happened not long ago, Charles, somebody said, "Power paws, is that something for cats? They've got paws that are powerful?" So I spell it for them P-O-W-E-R-P-A-U-S-E a power pause, pausing with power. [Power Pause dot com](http://PowerPause.com).

The reason I put that together is, I have known many teachers of all religions, all philosophies, experts and whatnot, and there are so many people who teach you this and that, and they all work – all these things work – but in our society today, we don't have two hours for meditation.

We don't have two hours for the silence. And if you want to try various forms of this sort of thing, that's great – if you have the time and the money.

So what I did, I took all the complicated things I have ever learned from all the friends

and teachers that I've had, and from what I knew within my heart, put them together in three little steps.

Three principles. That's all. Not complicated at all.

Three principles that anyone could do in three minutes, a number of times a day. And if they do that, as you probably can attest, Charles, if they do that, their entire world changes. Becomes a beautiful, brilliant, great world out there instead of a scary world.

This thing was written at the simplest level so that anybody could use it. And it's not written in a how-to fashion. It's not: you do this and you do that and you do the other, and this is going to happen – no. It's written as a story, a teaching story, and as you read that, you remember the story. The truth is buried within the story. A simple formula, three minutes, three steps to personal success and real happiness.

CML: We're almost out of time, but do you have any parting words of special advice to readers who're still trying to get in touch with their own spirituality?

John: Yes. First, start trusting yourself. Don't force yourself to find your spirituality. Don't force yourself to grow into spirituality. You don't have to. It's like a fish looking for water.

You are already as spiritual as you could ever be. All you have to do is remember that. Don't feel guilty, have an open mind, learn to trust yourself, learn to care, learn to switch focus, and learn to be you as brilliantly as possible. Don't worry about competition.

Don't worry about the problems. The problems came from something that's in your mind anyway. Examine what you believe and ask yourself why do I believe what I believe, because all that we're living, all that we're doing, we're doing it through the invisible system of our beliefs.

Change your beliefs, change the way you look at the world, change the way you look at people, and your entire world changes with you. It just can't help but be that and do that.

CML: John, this has been exciting. You've given us some wonderful things to think about. On behalf of our listeners, I'd like to thank you for being with us today.

John: Thank you, Charles. It was my pleasure to be able to spend a little time with you, and I really enjoyed it and I hope your listeners get a little bit out of it.

CML: You can find John on the Internet at [Insight 2000 dot com](#), [Power Pause dot com](#) and [Mind Marketing dot com](#). And the newest website, soon to be opened, [Enterprising Spirit dot com](#).

John, thanks again.

John: Thank you, Charles.

John Harricharan is the award-winning author of *When You Can Walk on Water, Take the Boat*. FREE download at <http://www.waterbook.com> .

He is also the creator of the ground-breaking **PowerPause** system for success at <http://www.powerpause.com/cgi-bin/at.cgi?a=169539>.

Visit his website at [Insight200 dot com](http://www.insight200.com) and sign up for his free, inspirational newsletter.

Check out his membership site at <http://www.enterprisingspirit.com>.

Photos are at <http://www.mindmarketing.com/picturepages.html>

Chapter 15

Interview with Linda Clemons

Author of *Temple Cleansing*

July 31, 2001

Do a Check-Up From The Neck Up

To hear free audio samples from this interview, click on:

<http://www.inside-the-minds-of-winners.com/samples/>

Command More Luck (CML): With us today is Linda Clemons. Linda has written two books, two plays, and she's in demand as a motivational speaker and as an up-and-coming radio talk show host.

I asked Linda to talk with us about turning chance events into opportunities. She has some fascinating stories to tell, and you're going to love the one about Oprah.

Linda, thanks for being with us today..

Linda Clemons: Thank you so much. It's wonderful.

CML: For listeners who are not familiar with your name, could you give a bit of background about yourself, your work and your career?

Linda: Basically, I do a lot of sales training. My background is in sales. My educational background, of course, was in marketing. But the thing is, I love connecting with people, so I do a little bit of everything. You know, if I feel that I can do it – I'm just like a bumblebee – I don't know that I can't fly, so I fly in different directions.

But my foundation, of course, is in sales, which led me into sales training, and then from there, motivational speaking at churches and different organizations, and also in the corporate sector.

I've always been interested in the arts and interested in the mind and interested in constantly reading. And after attending many plays here in the city of Indianapolis, I decided I could write a play; I can do that. So I decided to write a play. It wasn't given to me as inspirational intervention *per se*, but I wrote a play titled "When God Calls a Woman," and was able to travel all over the country with that play.

It started off in Indianapolis, went all over the country, then I decided to write another play for the American Cancer Society, which was wonderful, which was titled "Lord I Want to Dance," and it just gave me the opportunity to express what I have inside of me

and put it on the stage.

CML: So both of your plays have been produced.

Linda: I was the producer, the director, the financier, all of it. I did it all. I auditioned people, I went out and got sponsors, I took it on the road, and then next thing you know, a promoter saw the play in Kansas City and said, “Oh, we’ve got to have you in Denver,” and flew the entire cast to Denver.

So what started out originally as a fund raiser for my church ended up with a cast of people going on the road. And they were all amateurs. These were people who just had the passion; we got out on stage, and the spirit was evident in our performance. And it was just wonderful. We touched lives all over the country.

CML: So once you got a dream or a concept, you didn’t just sit around and wait for it to happen.

Linda: Oh no! Because, see, here’s the thing: see Charles, if the dream was given to you, it was given to you – was placed in you – to carry out. See, so many people, they’ll sit there and let their dreams and their innovations and ideas just sit there, and years [later], you’ll see something on television or in movies and say, “Oh my gosh! I had that. I thought about that several years ago.” But you didn’t move on it.

CML: That could have been your baby.

Linda: It could have been your baby. You didn’t move on it, and the creator says, “Wait a minute, Charles, back up. I gave that to you twenty years ago.”

CML: One of the reasons I wanted to speak with you is, so many people feel like, well, I’m not big and famous like these people you’re talking with. You know, I’m just still an undiscovered, or an unknown, or whatever. And I am really impressed with how much energy you have, and you’re up-and-coming. You’re maybe not nationally known yet, but you know you’re going to be.

I really want to put this across, how you don’t have to be already famous to be successful, and show people how to construct success and build good luck out of the stuff they have around them.

Linda: It was a million to one, maybe a billion to one, that each one of us would survive, meaning that when our mothers and our fathers came together, boom, you were chosen to pop out in the universe. So first of all, that’s a good sign right there, that you were chosen for a purpose. If you believe that and you can see that necessity that’s in your mind, you can always remember: “I am here for a purpose.”

Now, it’s just like I tell all my friends, I am a millionaire. My money is in circulation

right now. I'm just waiting for it to come to me. It's coming to me, it's just right now in circulation. It's doing its trip and traveling all over the world, but it's coming to me. And when you believe that, you start to subconsciously walk in whatever belief you have.

If you believe "I'm going to be a successful sales person" or "a successful singer," provided you have the innate talent to be able to sing, just as in sales, or whatever profession or career you choose, and you start to believe in that, you'll start walking in that belief.

CML: When did you start selling?

Linda: Oh gosh! I think out of the womb. I think I've been selling since I was a child, when I decided – a neighbor down the street had a pear tree in their yard, and the pears would fall on the ground. I said, "If I pick up the pears, can I pick any of the pears from the tree?" And they said, "well yeah," so I decided to do that.

I would go home and my mom would give me a little butter knife, and I would peel the pears and roll them in cinnamon sugar and stick a Popsicle stick in the middle of the pear, put it in the freezer, and I would sell it to the kids in the neighborhood for a quarter. So I was doing good. I was making big-time money as an eight-nine year old, you know, and it began then.

I just love persuading people and getting them to do wonderful things – put it that way – wonderful things, the things that can change their lives, and it was a natural gift for me to do that.

CML: So it's just in your blood and in your bones.

Linda: It's innate. It's in my blood. See, I'm speaking a sales presentation right now. It's in my blood.

CML: What about a person – you know, most people will walk over glass barefoot rather than sell anything. Is there any way to get a little bit of this, if you weren't born with it?

Linda: The thing is, so many people are afraid of rejection, so rather than being rejected, they're afraid to be challenged on that, but the way you get that is, you keep on, knowing that there are yes's out there. You make up your mind, "I'm going to clean out all the no's. I'm cleaning out all the no's that are out there, and there's a yes around the corner." And once you receive that yes for whatever it is that you're selling, that's the little sign of victory.

That's what gives you the hope. That's what gives you the motivation.

CML: Do you have a working definition for luck or fortune or success that you use in your daily life?

Linda: I believe, when I think about luck, I just think that it's a source of connection to the universe. That's what it is.

When you are in tune to what the laws of the universe give you, then things start working in place, meaning this: if you throw out a boomerang, it's going to come back.

When you put out positive things in the universe, and you plant positive seeds, like if you had a wonderful business, and see that that business can help other people and touch lives, by me helping with my talent or finances or whatever, that's planting good seeds. Well, the law of the universe has it that it's going to come back around to you.

So be it that you call it luck or be it just a simple law of the universe, that's the way it works. It's the same thing if you put out negative energy and do negative things, it has to come back. That's the law.

What happens when people say, "Oh my gosh, he or she is so lucky," is that that person has mastered the law of the universe and knows how to walk in that law, and knows how to put themselves into position to be able to attract all the goodness and all the luck and all the prosperity and all the positive things that are out there.

CML: So luck doesn't just happen by luck.

Linda: It happens by – you've got to give in order to receive. You've got to put it out there.

Here's the thing, if you don't ask for what you want, you probably won't get it. And you ask for what you want when you say to the universe, to your creator, to God, "I expect you to give me this, my father, because you are a righteous father." And when you've got a creator that's rich in houses and land, he already has it.

But you've got to be able to receive it, and the way you do that is by giving. You constantly give because you can't beat the creator at giving. The more you give, it comes back to you.

Think about it. If I received a blessing and someone dropped a million dollars on my doorstep, and I figure, "Wow, how many people can I touch with this?" Then I give you a little bit, and give this person a little bit, and I say, "Look, I'm giving you this on the stipulation that you must also touch someone else with it," it eventually comes back. It's a circle.

CML: You started out in sales, but now you're on radio. How did that happen? Isn't that kind of a jump?

Linda: Well, here's what happened. Several years ago I was head of an organization, a minority Black Chamber of Commerce, and then later on the National Association of African-

American Entrepreneurs, so my whole thing is trying to help people have something that's their own.

Well, there was a friend of mine who had her own business, and I said, "Oh, everyone needs to know that you've got your own business." She dealt with mail distribution, an independent individual. She'd worked for the Postal Service and later retired and started her own business.

I said, "Oh, there's a man on the radio show; he does a talk show and he talks to women who do different things." So I decided to call this radio talk show host and said, "Look, I've got a friend, she's got her own business, and I think she should be on your show."

It was at that moment that he had a guest that cancelled.

CML: Now there was a piece of luck.

Linda: And I knew the radio talk show because I listened to the radio show constantly, that I ended up being on. He said, "Well, Linda, you bring her down here and we'll interview her, because I had a guest that cancelled."

I called her and said, "Look, come on and get ready, let's go. Meet me at the radio station."

Well, while he was interviewing her, I was interrupting and saying, "Well, let's ask her this. Let's dig a little deeper. As a woman, how did you get started? What were the challenges?" And he was looking at me like gee, she must be crazy!

During a commercial break, he said, "You know, Linda, if I didn't know any better, I'd think you're trying to be my co-host, or better yet, the host. Well, he was in the process of moving to another direction, and when he took his week's vacation, he asked me if I would host his show for a couple of days. And at that time, the general manager of the radio station heard me and just kept me in the back of his mind.

So when they were going through a transition and revamping their whole morning team, my name came up. My name came up to bring in just to talk to, because the particular guy they were bringing in, he wanted someone that had never done radio, and that was known in the community, and my name popped up.

And that's how I got on radio. I did morning radio for four years. And from there, I went on and had my own radio talk show.

CML: When you just started out, you were trying to help somebody else.

Linda: I was helping somebody else. Sincerely helping somebody else to get her fixed. That's what I'm talking about. So that's how you can really create your luck.

CML: I've got to ask now. Your two books, how did that happen?

Linda: Well, I'm a holistic health consultant. You know, I try to be very healthy, and I've done a lot of research on the proper things to eat for your body to help you look great, live longer, and slow down the aging process. So I thought: now, should I write a book on healthy eating to live longer? That's not going to move.

And the marketing background in me came out and said, "No, here's how I can get people to read the book." I wrote a book, and it was just a novelty type of thing, it wasn't to be a big, major best-seller. It was just something that I wanted to do. The title of the book was *Scrumptious Recipes for Sizzling Sex*.

CML: Okay! A little bit daring...

Linda: I ended up doing over four hundred radio talk shows. I did a couple of television shows; one national TV show, BET, and just traveling with this, it was unbelievable. I did radio interviews from Japan, from Australia, Hawaii, all over the world, all over the country.

In the book, there is a love shake, which was the buzzword for all the morning DJs, and it was called Kava Kava Boom Boom. And that's what got the DJs going, because you think Kava Kava Boom Boom, and it was a love shake, and there, from that, I was able to talk about the other things in the book.

But that's what attracted the attention, and the next thing you know I looked up and I'd sold well over, well an unbelievable amount of copies. But I could have fun playing around traveling for a while.

CML: Beautiful story. And your other book is...

Linda: The other book is called *The Temple Cleansing Program*. It's just a little workbook based on my holistic cleansing program to cleanse the body of toxins and bad food that's left in the body and to help people get off to a healthy start and help them lose weight. So that was a little book that was used for people who attended my workshops and wanted to get on the program. And from there, that's how I got into the secular world with the other book.

CML: For listeners who want to either cleanse their temples or improve their sex life, where can they find your books?

Linda: Right now, I'm thinking about bringing the book back again. I just did a limited run of a little over twenty thousand, and that was it. Charles, it was a novelty thing, you know, and I'm thinking about doing it again, but my direction is in another area right now, because I'm dealing with empowerment conferences across the country for women, having women just step forward, aspiring to be the best that they can be, going for their

dreams and having their visions come true. That's what my concentration is on right now. And I'm in the process of writing a book in the area of confirmations and affirmations for women, what we can do to create miracles in our lives.

CML: What a terrific idea.

Linda: Yeah, that's what I'm doing right now.

CML: Our listeners in the Indianapolis area might want to tune in to your talk show. Where? What times?

Linda: Every Saturday, and right now at nine o'clock a.m. and the radio station is WTLC, and it's on AM 1310.

CML: W-Tender-Loving-Care.

Linda: Uh huh, that's the way to remember it.

CML: Okay, let me ask you this now. We've talked a lot about good luck here. Have you ever gone through a bad luck period?

Linda: If I did, I didn't recognize it, because see, the thing is, I look at – if I don't get what I'm looking for immediately, I've got to go through something to achieve it.

My pastor always says, "You've got to go through it to get to it." I know that if I've got to get to the top of a mountain, I'm going to have some challenges in the valleys, but I understand that I'm going to get to the top.

So I wouldn't call it bad luck. I call them challenges. Because everything is a lesson, be it good or bad, there's a lesson in everything. Even a tragedy, there's always a miracle in a mess, and you've just got to find it. I wouldn't say I've had bad luck *per se*.

Everything happens for a reason.

CML: So you actually don't see events as good or bad luck.

Linda: Right.

CML: You don't seem to actually believe in luck.

Linda: Well, see, because there's a message in everything. There is a message in everything.

What is it that's telling you, when you're about to take a plane trip, and with that little intuition we feel and hear inside us, the universe or our creator is trying to talk to us, and you decide, "I'm not going to get on that plane. I don't know what it is, I don't know

why.” The next thing you know, the plane crashes. You hear about these things all the time. There’s a reason in everything. Then you find out, of course, mechanical problems. Well, the mechanical problems that they find out are going to help them make the planes better.

I always say I try to look for the good in anything and any person. There’s always a miracle in a mess. You can always find a miracle in a mess.

CML: I like that phrase. Where do you get your ideas for new books or new services? Do you brainstorm? Do surveys? Ideas come from things you hear customers say?

Linda: Yes, and just listening and staying in tune to everything. I like to take out the time, Charles, to be still, to meditate.

See, the thing is, when we pray, this is when we are talking to God. When we meditate, this is when God is talking to us, speaking to us.

And you’ve got to take out the time. We’re in a fast food society. I mean there are some parts of the country you can go through a drive-through funeral. You don’t even have to go in to mourn for the loved one, you can go by, drive through, look, cry and go on. So we don’t ever take out the time to be still.

Taking out the time to be still, that’s when you get all your inspiration – voila! – it comes to you. How many times have you been working on a project and you say, “I just can’t get the answer, I’m just stuck, I’ve got writer’s block.” And next thing you know, when you put it to the side, and you forget about it, boom, it hits you.

CML: Absolutely! You get up, you walk away.

Linda: When you walk away. And then learning and training yourself to take out the time to be still, then your receptors are on. So many times we’re broadcasting instead of tuning in.

CML: How do you recognize when a new idea is a really good one?

Linda: When I’m thinking about something and then I don’t say anything to anybody about it, and next thing you know, throughout my day there are little things that give you confirmations. Maybe through conversations, or something you’ve heard on the radio, or you’ve seen on television, or read in the newspaper or the magazines. Like oh my gosh, everything’s headed in the right direction.

You could have a conversation with someone and there’s a project you’ve been thinking about working on and thinking about whether it’s a go, and next thing you know, someone will say, “Oh man, I just wish someone would do this, or somebody would come up with this.” Those are confirmations, meaning we’ve got to learn how to listen.

CML: You have some really clear ideas about how life works, and you don't seem to flounder around. What books or teachers have helped you grow?

Linda: Oh man! I love the things that I – first of all, the Bible. That's one of my main things, the Bible. I love inspirational books. I love books by Wayne Dyer. Og Mandino. Just books that make you think outside of yourself. Books that make you believe that, yes, I can fly. I love success stories. I love books by Maya Angelou. As I said, Og Mandino. There's one little bitty book that I'm reading right now, and it doesn't take but five minutes. It's *The Prayer of Jabez*. Just books that give you inspiration where people have overcome and succeeded when the odds were against them.

CML: Have there ever been certain people who either knowingly or unknowingly acted as a mentor to you along the way?

Linda: Yeah, my mother. My grandmother. My grandmother was my best friend growing up. That's where my wisdom came from, my grandma. I love Oprah Winfrey because of her story, because she's real. She's like me. I can look at her, even though she's talking to millions of people, it's like I'm her sistah friend, and I am her sistah friend. And many of my educators who just stayed on me. Definitely my mother because she sat back and she didn't tell us that we couldn't fly. She didn't tell us we couldn't do this. Growing up, if I said, "Mom, I want to do this, I want to get in pageants, I want to do this," she was right there and supportive. If it took working two jobs to make sure it was possible, she did that.

CML: This is a treasure.

Linda: And see, Harriet Tubman, *A Woman Called Moses*, this woman, the underground railroad, her parents could not see the vision of freedom. She had to put her parents on her back to get them to freedom, and so many slaves back then, she would say, "You either go or you die." Because dead slaves tell no lie, you either go or you die.

Her vision was so clear, and when you read about people like that, you know, it just moves me, oh my! And we think we've got it hard. Look at this. People have given their lives, their blood.

CML: Just out of curiosity, about how many hours a day do you spend watching TV?

Linda: Only maybe a couple of hours a day. Especially, I love the news shows, like Twenty-Twenty, Prime Time, Dateline, those type of things, just to find out what's going on around the world. I love when they have feature stories on people who have overcome obstacles to succeed. I love those type of things because most of my time is spent reading and creating, because I've got to put good things in my head because you are led by your most dominant thoughts.

CML: So you don't spend a lot of time watching, say, soap operas, or dramas?

Linda: No. Because if you want to watch a soap opera, look around you. Look at your family. Look at your friends. That's a live soap opera.

CML: You just mentioned Oprah a few minutes ago. I understand you had an interesting experience related to Oprah not too long ago.

Linda: Well, she had her "Live Your Best Life" tour. He hit about four cities, San Francisco, Charlotte, Minneapolis, I think, and Baltimore. Baltimore was the last city; that was the city I was at.

Well, what happened, I always said that I was going to be in a workshop or some kind of seminar with Oprah Winfrey, and I've been saying this for years, because I've been following her since she started. I've been supporting her since she started, and been praying for this woman since she started.

That's one thing, having a fan when you are up. Another thing is having someone stand there, and you may not even know it, when the rest of the world steps out, a true friend is the one who steps in. And I shared with her, I was one of those little people out there that were praying and fasting when she was going through her many challenges.

But the thing is, I was watching Oprah (now that's one thing I do watch on television), I was watching Oprah, and she was talking about she was going on tour. They didn't indicate as to when, and I said, "I've got to be there, I've got to be there, I don't care where." So I did some research and found out the different cities that she was going to be traveling to. I decided to pick Baltimore because that was closer to me here in Indianapolis.

Well, by coincidence, before I found out what hotel she was going to be at, or where was the venue, I chose a hotel in Baltimore that happened to be the hotel. I didn't find that out till later.

CML: Just happened to.

Linda: Yeah, a month earlier, prior to the tickets going on sale. The tickets didn't go on sale until May, I booked it in April. What was so funny is that by chance, when I called Ticketmaster, all tickets went on sale May fourteenth, like at ten o'clock, and I called three minutes prior to ten o'clock, and they're an hour ahead of us.

What happened was, some young lady answered the phone three minutes prior to when she was supposed to. I said, "You don't know this, but you're going to be a part of my miracle." And she probably thought I was crazy. I said, "I love Oprah Winfrey, I've followed her for years, she is wonderful, she's an inspiration to me, and you were chosen this morning. You didn't realize when you got up this morning, had your bacon, eggs and your coffee, that you were going to be part of a miracle." The girl started laughing,

and I said, “I’m calling all the way from Indianapolis. She’s coming to your city, and I’ve got to be there, and you’ve got to help me.”

She opened up the system three minutes prior to when the computers are supposed to be, and next thing you know, I had a great seat right up front.

And it was wonderful. It was a wonderful, wonderful experience.

CML: This is a perfect example, to me, of how luck works. Opportunity opens the door a crack. It’s up to us to do something with that tiny little opening. And you talked your way in, I presume.

Linda: Well, yes. Here’s why, because the thing is, when you see that little crack, it’s just like – imagine someone left in a dungeon and it’s dark. Imagine when someone sees a little beam of light coming through a crack in the cave. That’s hope. When you see that light, that’s the opportunity. It’s time to move.

CML: Regarding your life today, are you living totally freeform, or is your life fairly carefully planned out now?

Linda: Well, I’m going to have to say it’s a combination of both, because once I make up my mind to do what I need to do, I move in that direction. And when the creator gives me confirmation, it’s time to move. I can be in the middle of anything and it’s time to do this, it’s time to do this project. But you’ve got to have a structured plan as to where you’re going. You have to have a goal plan.

I tell my employees – I train sales people – you’ve got to write it down, make it clear. Write it down, make it clear, whatever steps it takes, and then carry it out.

You know, you’ve got to decide what it is that you want to have, then decide what you have to do and the person you have to be to accomplish that. So that’s the structure. You’ve got to know what your game plan is and how to go about it.

CML: Otherwise, you won’t recognize it when opportunity comes.

Linda: You won’t recognize it when it’s happening. Right.

CML: We spoke just a moment ago about some of the people who have served as inspirations and as mentors to you. Looking at it from the other side of the relationship, why do you think somebody would decide to mentor another person? What’s in it for them?

Linda: It gives them hope. It gives them inspiration. Especially if someone’s life story mirrors your own. Man, if he or she was able to pull themselves out of the gutter, or out of the dumps, when all hope was gone, maybe I can do that too. That makes a difference.

Think about it. If you're sitting there, you've lost your job, your husband or wife walked out on you, and all the bill collectors are banging at the door and you feel that your life is over, and the next thing you know, you may be just that person.

My brother used to work as a 411 operator in his earlier years. What happened, to show you how listening is an opportunity – someone had called Information wanting the number for the Suicide Hotline. Now, yes, he could have just punched the button and given them the number, but what he decided to do, there was something that was whispering to him. He decided to ask them why they wanted this number.

He was talking to this individual. What was supposed to be a one minute or thirty second call ended up being, I think, well over twenty or thirty minutes.

It was by chance that his supervisor was monitoring the call. Needless to say, he saved a life, and he received an award from that. But that was an opportunity.

See, the other person at the other end was lucky to get my brother.

CML: And your brother was lucky to get that call.

Linda: Exactly.

CML: They were calling each other.

Linda: Isn't that unbelievable? He could have been having a bad day. He could have just given the number. I mean, when we dial for information just to get a phone number, their job is not to chit-chat and have a good time with us. But for some reason, that call, this person was asking for the number for the Suicide Hotline. Can you believe that?

CML: This is what I call a sense of responsibility. You look beyond the surface of the question to why. What do they really need?

Do you believe that every person can improve their life and their luck?

Linda: Uh huh. Yes they can. And my prescription for that, for each and every one, is a check-up from the neck up.

CML: Say that again?

Linda: A check-up from the neck up. Meaning it begins in your head. That's where it starts.

CML: That's catchy.

Linda: Oh I've got a lot of them. You know what? I could write a book just on all my little clichés there.

CML: Oh, I don't think that's a cliché. I think that's good. When you write it, I want a copy.

How important a part of success is the feeling that you deserve good things?

Linda: I was put here for a purpose, and people have to understand: prosperity is not a sin. You know, being poor could be a sin; prosperity is not. And when you believe that you are worthy of good things that the universe has to offer and that the creator has to offer, it will come to us. If you believe you're not, it's not going to come.

I'll give you a good example. When you are a positive, cheerful, enthusiastic person, people want to be around that person because in their mind they believe that person's on the go, that person's going someplace, that person's headed in the right direction. Notice this: you walk in the room and you're in a positive mood and the next thing you know you see your friend George or Harry and they're in a bad mood, you don't want to be around that. And nothing positive does. It won't stick.

So when you are in that frame of mind, and you're drawing that energy, you're drawing people, just like the Pied Piper. You're drawing people to you.

Look at your more charismatic leaders. Look at your charismatic ministers, how they draw people to them.

CML: Maybe I'm asking the wrong person here, but have you ever felt yourself getting in a slump, like a day when you just don't feel like motivating yourself?

Linda: You know, I do. I do.

CML: What do you do?

Linda: Those times are rare, because what I do is, I take a nice little drive... to the cemetery, and that snaps you back.

The reason why, because guess what, I was a winner because I woke up this morning.

Somebody else had plans for the day, but they didn't wake up. And when you drive by a cemetery, I don't care whether you've got a loved one, a friend, or someone – oh gosh! – you know, there are some people right now, like Jackie Onassis, all the money in the world, but she could not buy her life or her health back.

So when I get into that little slump and I have my little pity party, that's where I go. And when you sit there, there's a different kind of feeling that comes over you. It refocuses you very quickly: "I guess my life is not that bad after all."

It could be better, it could worse, you could be riding in the back of a hearse.

CML: Another one of your catchy phrases.

For a person who's neck-deep in problems, they're just buried, they just cannot see daylight for all the stuff, what do you suggest they do first, and why?

Linda: The first thing I suggest that they do is to sit down and write a letter, or make a two-column list, and on one side all the things that are just wrong in their life, all the things. Just make that list, just keep writing, because that's part of therapy. Write down all the things that are wrong, things that happen. My tire went flat. I have an old, beat out car. I'm having problems in my relationships. And so on. Just make whatever the list is.

Then on the other side, write down the things that you do have to be happy about. If you have a tire that's flat, thank God that I have a car. Somebody out there is walking. If I only have two pairs of shoes and my friend has twenty of them, what about the person who has no feet.

Oh yeah, tell people to write down the negative part – everything that they feel is negative in their life – and then you must, in order to do this list, write down the flip side of it. Then make up your mind at that point in your life which one of those you want to keep.

CML: When you start writing the plus side, suddenly you realize you're not totally surrounded by enemies. You do have some friends.

Linda: Exactly.

CML: There are some situations, some things in your life that are not "out to defeat you." This is good medicine.

Linda: Let me share this with you. It was so funny because growing up, it was kind of just like my good friend, another wonderful, wonderful woman, Lillian Cosby. We both know her. She's like my second mother. I've got to tell you, Charles, and it seems like we're backing up. I've got to tell you the story of our meeting, if you don't mind. Because we're talking about luck here.

CML: Oh I'd love to hear that, yes.

Linda: Lillian Cosby. We have here in Indiana what we call the Indiana Black Expo. It is the largest Expo of its kind in the nation and one of the oldest. What happened, every year our radio station is a part of this.

Well, there was someone there that had a booth and they were selling health care products. I wasn't going to go to the Expo on that Sunday because I was really busy that Saturday, and I did all my activities that day. But I decided to go that Sunday anyway.

I was on my way out, leaving, and as I was going down a particular aisle of the Convention Center, there were some fliers on the floor. So whoever had the particular booth that was selling the products, they had packed up their stuff and they were gone. But there were some fliers on the floor. Well, as I was rushing to get out of there, I almost slipped and fell on this particular paper, this flier.

Instead of just catching myself and leaving the building, I picked up the flier and there was a picture of Lillian Cosby. It was talking about her psychic gifts and so on.

I thought, “Ah, yeah, right.”

I could have thrown the flier back on the floor or placed it on the table. Instead, I put it in my bag. So when I got home, I was going through all the little goodies in my bag, and I picked up this flier and I said, “You know what? This would be interesting for a radio show,” and I called her and I said, “Hi, my name is Linda Clemons, and I have a show called Sistah Talk, and I would love to have you on my show.”

You’ve got to understand: there were over a quarter of a million people at this Expo, and of all the people throughout that entire week, I was the only one that called her from that flier. The only person that called her.

And she was at that time praying that someone would send her someone in the media because she had severed her relationship with a radio station where she was doing a radio talk show there, and she said, “I wish God would send me someone in the media, so I can get back on the radio again.” And that’s how we met.

CML: So out of a quarter of a million people, you slipped on her paper.

Linda: And that’s how we met. And that’s why to this day, she and I always have a spiritual connection. We can actually talk to each other without picking up the phone. So even at the conference where you and I met, people thought that I was her daughter, because our connection was so tight.

But can you believe that? I said to her, “You almost broke my leg.” And we’ve been friends ever since. She’s been here to speak, to do workshops, and I took her on a cruise along with my mother – she’s like one of my other mothers – and we’ve been close ever since.

As a child, my grandmother and my mother always shared with me that I had that gift because I would see things and have dreams, and didn’t even know what was going on. You know, I thought I was a kid with a wild imagination.

I recall my brother and my sister, I’d say, “I have a weird feeling about this thing. I think this is going to happen.” And I didn’t understand this.

CML: What was the hardest thing in your life to change?

Linda: The hardest thing in my life to change was trying not to be my mother's mother. I'm the oldest of four kids, and I'm very, very protective and very, very close, and I'm just trying to begin to let go in that aspect. Just trying to let go, trying not to be my mother's mother. That was one of the most difficult things because knowing now that my mother's not going to always be here with me, just beginning to kind of let that go and understanding that we are only here for borrowed time and we're here for a purpose. That was one of the most difficult things.

And the most difficult thing right now, for me, is to be able to move out of state, because of my mother. Still wanting to be close to my mother.

CML: Behind all these terrific, wonderful stories you relate, you know, I think I'm hearing a real, live sense of destiny. Can you say a word or two about that?

Linda: Destiny is the pre-planned contract that the creator has for you. Destiny is when you know that there's a higher purpose and your goal is going to be realized. This means I can say to you, Charles, I know how your movie is ending.

I know how your movie is going to end. I know how my movie is going to end. But I've got to get through all of it. I know how my book is going to end, my book of life, but I've got to get through all of it, so that when I look back, when I look back on all the things I've done, and when I look down from heaven, I can feel so good because I've accomplished the things I needed to do and touched so many lives.

My whole purpose in life (and I want to share this with you), my whole destiny is to be able to touch lives so, to move people to action so, to empower people so, that upon my death, when I die, even the undertaker cries.

CML: How does somebody awaken their own sense of destiny and make it grow? Most of us are pretty impoverished in that area.

Linda: It's important to step out on faith. Be like a child. Even the Bible says it's okay to be child-like. Be free to step out on faith.

When Peter stepped on the water, when he looked away is when he began to sink. When you keep your eyes on the prize, your eyes on your goal, your eyes on whatever it is you need to accomplish, that's when you have that relentless power. That's when that adrenaline starts to go. But you've got to stay focused; that's the thing. So take one thing and master that. Then take something else on.

But look at all your successful people. They take one thing and they master that. Bill Gates. Ford. You know, they take that one thing and they master that. They didn't have

to be great in everything, just great in what they do.

CML: Take one thing, master it, keep your eyes on it, stay focused.

Linda: Yeah. And mold it, and keep working with it, till it becomes you and you become it.

CML: Do you feel like you've finally arrived at a coasting phase, or are you still on an uphill track, still learning lots of new stuff?

Linda: Oh, I'm on an uphill track, oh yes. I think that I've got so many things to do, Charles, I've been sitting in neutral for a while. I'm ready to put it in full drive. Got to get the car ready, you've got to get the mind ready, got to get the engine ready, you've got to get everything ready. You can't go to war with a water pistol, you've got to be ready.

CML: Does learning things get any easier, the farther you go?

Linda: Oh yes, because in the beginning, then things seem challenging to you, and as you experience life, experience more things, "Voila! Now that makes sense to me! I didn't understand it back then."

See, I love to learn. I love to learn! I love to stay green. Stay green, Charles, stay green, because when you're green you grow, and when you're ripe you rot. Stay green, constantly wanting to know more things. Because when you come to a point where you know everything, guess what? That's when you start to rot.

CML: There are a lot of people who really hate to learn new stuff. They resist it. Got any advice for these people?

Linda: Well, you have make up your mind that if this is part of what you need to do to take it to the next level, you're going to have to do it. Grit and bear it. If you don't like it, fake it till you make it, as Mary Kay would say. Just do it.

What happens, otherwise, you're just going to be standing there marking time. You'll never march forward.

CML: Speaking of new stuff, I understand that you're going to open a couple of new websites soon?

Linda: Yeah. I've got one, of course, [Bargain Diva dot com](#), and the other is my [Sistah Posse dot com](#) website. And both of those are under construction right now.

CML: Any idea when they'll be available?

Linda: Late fall. With the Bargain Diva one, we're just trying to find all the bargains for you all over the country.

CML: This is related to your current talk show?

Linda: Yeah, a weekly segment I do on the Fox Network affiliate here in Indianapolis.

Oh, and that was another thing you may call luck, how that came about.

CML: Yeah, I'd like to hear that.

Linda: That came about because I was on the Fox 59 morning show as a guest talking about what women can do to empower themselves for the new millennium. Well, I hit it off with the co-host, so they invited me to come back again, and I said, "Well who do you want me to talk about the second time?"

They said, "Well we like you, so just talk about your radio show."

I said, "Okay, I'll do that."

What happened, on a Sunday, our Indianapolis Colts were in the playoffs, and there was a woman who was supposed to go down to the television station and talk about what women can do in regard to enjoying football... She didn't show up.

They called me at the last minute and said, "Would you fill in? Can you come and talk about football?"

Now, in my mind, I don't know a doggone thing about football, and I said, "Oh yeah!" Because it's better to be prepared for an opportunity and have one than to have an opportunity and not be prepared. I said, "Oh yeah, oh yeah, I can do it."

I went down there, and they started asking me questions, and I said, "Well, one of the things you want to do is make sure your environment is wonderful, ladies. Have all the wonderful treats and all the things you can make; hors d'oeuvres and shape them into little footballs, and this is how you can enjoy the game. And then, all the women, you can get together, and sit there and enjoy the TV show and watch all those little tight ends on the field."

When I said that, the next thing you know, they said, "Would you mind doing a weekly segment? We had a guy, he's the Bargain Hunter."

I said, I'll only do it if I can change the name. I'm the Bargain Diva. And that's how that came about.

CML: How do you spell that?

Linda: B-A-R-G-A-I-N, a bargain, and D-I-V-A.

CML: So this will be [Bargain Diva dot com](#), and it'll be in the fall.

Linda: Uh huh.

CML: Now how about – we need to be careful about the spelling of Sistah Posse, too, don't we?

Linda: Yeah, sistah, because it's an endearment for African-American women. It's sistah, S-I-S-T-A-H, and the posse, of course, is P-O-S-S-E. [Sistah Posse dot com](#).

CML: Dot com.

Linda: Dot com, yeah.

CML: This sounds really exciting. The sistah posse, what do we need to know about that?

Linda: Basically what that is, it's just a group of women that used to listen to my radio show when I did morning radio, and when I would bring authors into town, speakers into town, they would come out and support it, and it grew and it grew. And one listener called in and said, "I love listening to you and all the things you're doing in the community," and she said, "I just want to be a part of your group."

I said, "Well yeah, you can be a part of my posse. You're a sistah, you can be a part of my posse." And that's where the name came up, sistah posse.

We've taken cruises, we've done workshops, seminars, had sistah brunches, sistah empowerment sessions, sistah weekends. And you know, we have women in from different parts of the country that come in and they support it, so it's wonderful.

CML: Many teachers say the earth experience is about to change significantly. How do you envision our daily life changing in, say, the next fifty or a hundred years? Or in the next five hundred or so years? This is far out stuff.

Linda: Well, basically, if you remember the cartoon show The Jetsons, whoever created that show was way ahead of time. Because you're able to just press a button and your food was prepared, and you can ride in this little space ship instead of a car, and they had big screen televisions where they were talking to each other, and this was a cartoon when I was a kid. I just see the technology age moving in a whole new direction.

What I hate about it is that we're doing so many things by computers now, we're doing so many things by just pressing a button, that many times we lose the personal connection with people. That's the only thing that I hope will not go away, because even if someone is in the hospital sick, in their deathbed, a computer that touches their hand could never compare to a human's touch. And a newborn baby will never be able to

survive without a human's touch.

So the whole thing is, even as we're moving fast in this new age of technology, Charles, as long as we keep that person-to-person touch, that real human touch, that loving touch that you cannot get from a computer, you cannot get it from the Internet, you cannot get it from anything but from that human touch. And as long as we're able to keep that somehow, that will always be a good thing, and the person who remembers that will make a big difference.

There was a gentleman who – and I'm trying to think of a comic magazine – there was a customer who had been a customer for years, and that individual stopped his subscription. The president of this magazine decided to hop on a plane and knock on the door and wanted to know why they did not renew.

That empowered that person so much it was unbelievable. You know, they kept sending letters saying your subscription has lapsed, why didn't you renew? That didn't do it, but when he got on that plane for that one little customer who had been there for all those years, and knocked on the door, can you imagine how that person reacted?

So as long as we're able to keep that human and that personal touch, we'll always make a big difference.

CML: Yeah! The human touch. Our time is just about up. Do you have any parting words of special advice for listeners who still just can't seem to get themselves started?

Linda: You know what? There is something waiting for you behind the door.

No one can get in that door but you. The thing is, you have the key, but you have to be the one that opens the door. And if you knock on the door of opportunity, all you've got to do is ask, seek and knock, and the door will be opened. But it's not going to be there for you until you ask for it.

CML: I've enjoyed this, Linda. I'm sure our listeners have, too.

Listeners can find your book – or, no they can't find your book, can they?

Linda: Just watch the website. You may be able to get it.

CML: Okay! And the websites are [Bargain Diva dot com](http://BargainDiva.com) and [Sistah Posse dot com](http://SistahPosse.com) coming in the autumn of 2001.

And listeners in the Indianapolis area, they should tune in to W-Tender-Loving-Care...

Linda: WTLC.

CML: Linda, thanks so much for visiting with us today.

Linda: Yeah, this has been fun.

Author and playwright **Linda Clemons** is a popular motivational and keynote speaker, while her **Sistah Posse** workshops are a big hit among African-American women around the US. In addition, she hosts **Bargain Diva** a popular Indianapolis radio talk show.

Her two websites will be online by Fall 2001. Click on <http://www.sistahposse.com> and <http://www.bargaindiva.com> to find out more about this very inspiring lady.

More Material

Extending this book's usefulness

As of this writing (September 15, 2001) I am still finding more information (and receiving offers to do interviews) that could all be included. But a book just can't keep growing forever. This one's already much bigger than most eBooks ever get. So as I gather additional material, I will post notices at the special page offering access to the new material.

That way, you'll be able to keep abreast of new additions, as they become available.

To make sure you have all the latest additions:

Check in regularly at the **NEW MATERIALS PAGE** located at:

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and you'll receive a working password by return email.

To receive a brief notice each time something new is added, email me at:

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I'll be adding new material as well as posting notices about new products as they become available.

In addition, I'll be bringing to you occasional introductions to other writers and lecturers whose work I think would be a good fit with your interests. If I find a product or service that I feel might benefit you, I'll bring it to your attention.

Wishing you all the brightest light,
Charles Burke, Japan

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TODAY'S QUOTE

There is nothing in which people more betray their character than in what they laugh at.

- Goethe

CEIL SAYS

'Tis But A Reflection Of Your Soul

Words alone can say and proclaim many things,
But what gives credence and will ever really bring
Life and reality to these words is the force and intent
And the universal power expressing through the words You've sent.

Kind and gentle words can heal and restore a devastated life,
Can lift you up far above the vengeful strife,
Or like knives and fire, your angry and hateful words can cut and burn
Telling all that you haven't yet become aware of or ever even learned.

Ceil Burke

November 24, 1995

* Ceil, now 78, has written literally thousands of poems in her lifetime. Thanks to her unique style and irreverent viewpoint, a reader once referred to her as "Grandma Unexpected," and the nickname stuck. For more about Ceil, [click here](#).

AND A PARTING SMILE

William Henderson was named the new postmaster general. Postal workers gave him a 21 gun salute.

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1. PRIMING THE PUMP

There was a time, many many years ago, when pumps had to be primed. To get water out of one, you first had to pour water in, then work the handle like crazy till you got results. In other words, you had to give before you could get.

Life is still that way. If there's anything you want from life, you need to be ready to put something in at the beginning. Nothing is free – especially not good luck.

That's why, when I talk about improving the satisfaction, joy and success you can get from life, I sometimes refer to the first principle as The Prime Principle; it's the most important, most fundamental element. In addition, there's the need to pour in or “prime” the pump with your belief and concentration, while you also put in some work and effort.

In this book I tell you about some of the things I've discovered, things that can multiply your success, your luck and your emotional well-being – in short, things that can improve your luck.

Before we get into the details of improving your luck, however, it's important to be sure that we're using the same definitions. So let's step back a moment and make sure we're talking about the same things. The next few pages cover what luck is and – equally important – what it is not.

What Luck Is Not

Have you ever known somebody who was “naturally lucky”? Silly question – of course you have. We all have, and often we just watch them with envy, and we wonder what special thing makes them so much luckier than us normal people. They don't seem to work any harder – sometimes they actually work less than ordinary folks.

Maybe they were born under a different star? That's exactly how I felt about lucky people until I eventually found the secret of becoming “naturally” lucky myself. And believe me, becoming naturally lucky did not come

naturally to me. But the most amazing thing to me was that the “secret” is simple, and not really a secret at all. It’s right out where everybody can see it, but it doesn’t register because we’re all so busy looking at the wrong things and in the wrong places.

Now, let’s get it clear what I’m talking about when I refer to luck. First, by my definition, luck is *not* any of the following.

A Whim of the Gods

You’ll hear some people say, when a good (or bad) thing happens, that it’s just fate. A person dies unexpectedly and “their number just came up then.” Or you’ll hear people say it was god’s (or God’s) will. This viewpoint assumes that people are helpless puppets of completely uncontrollable outside forces. There are many who believe it to be utter hubris, total vanity (even blasphemy), to second-guess the higher forces controlling our lives.

I do not subscribe to that belief.

I accept that there may be some things we cannot control, but there are also many, many events we have influence over, and it’s our right – our duty – to find them and learn to use the powers we were created with. To put it in scriptural terms, if God gives you a talent and you refuse to invest it or make it grow (hide it under a bushel), you have committed the blasphemy. That’s my belief.

A “Lady” Smiling on You

Then there are others who visualize luck as a fickle lady who visits, smiling, then just when you get comfortable with her favors, she cruelly yanks them away, taunting you. I also don’t accept this idea. I’ll explain why in a later section.

Ever heard of Murphy’s Law? “Anything that *can* go wrong *will* go wrong, and at the worst possible time.” This “Law” is only halfway intended as a joke. There are millions who really believe that the universe is a capricious,

malicious place where everything works backwards for us poor, powerless humans, and that some taunting force is just waiting to deliberately thwart your every attempt to accomplish anything positive.

This, of course, is absolute and total crap.

Incomprehensible and Uncontrollable

Luck in life is often characterized as impossible to understand or control. Luck, according to this theory, is beyond our simple human abilities. There's no way we can ever dictate what's going to happen to us, no way to decide our own future. This is another idea I reject. We may not be omnipotent, but we aren't anywhere near *that* dumb.

The dictionary definition doesn't help much, either, since it only gives the usual description of luck:

the events or circumstances that operate for or against an individual.

It offers no suggestion that you or I might be able to exert conscious control over our luck. I suggest that we insert a few words into the above definition. This will bring it up to the power I have come to expect from my version of luck.

For our work here, let's redefine luck as:

the events or circumstances naturally resulting from an individual's decisions, expectations, emotions and thought processes that operate for or against that individual.

Huh? Nice long, rolling phrase, but what does it mean?

It means the things you habitually do and think today, the little decisions you make, day-in and day-out, are what your tomorrows are built of. It's not too different from the old biblical "as you sow, so shall you also reap." But there's a twist here: it's not God doing the judging and rewarding, it's *you* shaping the stuff you have to live in next week and next year.

If you spend most of your time shoveling a bunch of mental and emotional sludge, guess what you're going to be up to your neck in before long? And it's not as simplistic as "people are going to treat you the same way you treat them." Everybody over the age of two knows life doesn't work that way. Good people sometimes get treated crappy, while we've all seen bad people manage to sail through life with hardly a wave to bob their boat. There's a simple principle that explains this seeming inequity.

There's more to it than a straight one-to-one equation, and because of this, most people never quite identify the variables that go into controlling their luck and having a happy, successful, satisfying life.

Before we go any further, I should point out that I haven't tried to define what happy is for you. I don't know that. I don't know what makes you feel successful or what would make a satisfying life for you. That's for you to decide.

If your mind sees happiness as endless days strolling along the beach beside a rolling surf, or spending hours and hours studying the intricacies of Victorian poetry, or romping with dozens of different romantic partners, or authoring a shelf-full of best selling novels, or building a towering business empire – whatever your happiness is – you can have it.

No reservations.

But you should be aware of this: first, if you really do follow along with me, you're probably going to grow in ways you don't presently foresee. Just as your seven-year-old self could not comprehend a future without a passion for toys, the inner values you now hold could also grow beyond their present levels. If they do, it's simple to change the things you're aiming for. But if your values don't change, that's okay, too.

And second, often the things you ask for don't come pre-assembled. Ask for a cake and life may hand you flour, water, sugar and eggs; request greater strength and you might get some weights to lift. So you may want to carefully consider the things you seek in life. As Harry James the band

leader once said, “Be careful what you ask for, you might get it.” I don’t know if there was any connection, but he was married to Betty Grable.

When you start asking life for things, it’s good to start small, be logical and stop griping about what you get. Instead, look more closely at the things you receive. A lot of what passes for bad luck is really the richest of opportunities in disguise. An excellent first choice is to seek deeper vision, so you can better see the true nature of the things you’re receiving.

But I’m getting ahead of myself. My real point here is that we can make luck, and therefore success, much more predictable and life much more enjoyable, safe and secure, in comparison with where we’re starting from right now. But at the same time, we can also teach ourselves to see more of the riches lying all around us, and thus recognize hidden diamonds that we formerly walked right past.

Will The Prime Principle solve every last problem and keep you from all of life’s hurts? Probably not totally, but it’s a good place to start. It’s certainly far better than doing nothing. And in the process, you’ll be gaining a whole new level of resourcefulness. Then, if you run into situations that you formerly classified as problems, you’re more likely to see some potential advantages or profits that would have escaped you earlier.

There are many different kinds of luck. In the next chapter we’ll look at some of the different ways that “lady luck” can smile on you.

2. THE 101 FLAVORS OF LUCK

Our traditional definitions of good luck and bad luck are not too different from our definitions of good and evil.

Anything that makes us feel good about ourselves and those we love, and makes life more convenient is usually considered good luck, while conversely, anything that brings bad feelings, inconvenience or pain is labeled bad luck.

Money at Your Feet

You're walking down the street, minding your own business, thinking totally forgettable thoughts, then suddenly you look down and there in front of you is a bit of money. If it's a small amount (coins or a small bill) you never question that the money is yours. You pick it up and feel better immediately. Soon it's spent, but for a little while you feel that you've had a really nice piece of good luck.

If the amount of money is larger – say, the equivalent of several thousand dollars – you're not so immediately convinced the money is yours. Feeling ownership of a 50-cent piece is easy, but 50,000 dollars (or pounds, yen, marks) is not. If you decide to keep the money with no effort to seek out the owner, you'll look over your shoulder more often than if it were a single coin. There's more at work here than a simple difference in the amount of money you found. There's also the matter of how much good luck you feel like you deserve.

This type of luck is considered a matter of blind chance, something you can't control. However, I once knew a man, a friend of my father's, who was constantly finding money on the street. Virtually every day of the week he would find money just lying there in front of him. I don't find money that often. Most people don't. But he did. That's highly improbable, you know. How can blind chance happen to one person that much more often than it does to others? I have a theory, and I'll tell you about it a little further on.

Just the Ticket

Some people love to play the lottery. Recently a lady in the US bought just one ticket and won tens of millions of dollars. One ticket. There are people who, year after year, buy fistfuls of tickets and have never won any significant amount. Why was she so lucky? Was it just her time to win? Blind luck? Again, I believe I know why, and if you love lotteries, this could be what you're looking for. Myself, I've never been able to get interested in lotteries, races, card games or the like. Others absolutely love them, which is fine with me, because there's certainly nothing wrong with them.

My stepson had a dream two or three years ago. He dreamed that a certain lottery ticket number won, and when he awoke, he still remembered what the number was, so he wrote it down. Later, he went down and bought that ticket.

He had to buy a whole packet of 10 or 20 tickets to get the one with that number, but when the results were announced, the number he had dreamed about was not a winner. One of the other tickets in the packet, however, did win about 50,000 yen (about \$500). True story. So does he believe he's a lucky person now? You bet he does. The results support that belief.

Anthony Robbins, the famous inspirational speaker, tells about the couple who took one of his courses on setting life goals. They set a goal of winning the lottery, got all hyped up about it and went around telling people that they were going to win. Robbins did his best to diplomatically suggest that this was a fairly long-shot goal, and that maybe they could start a little lower, but they would not be deterred. And they won – something like \$150,000 – then they set a goal to win again. And they did win again.

So it *can* happen. It can happen if you do exactly the right things inside your own mind. And of course you'll probably need to go buy a ticket . . . less likely to work without a ticket. Don't laugh – I've heard of people who

seriously expected to win but didn't see why they should bother with a tiny detail like a ticket.

Only the Best Genes

Then there are the people who are born beautiful, healthy and rich. Some would call this extraordinarily good luck, and for some it certainly is. On the other hand, what about the ones who become addicted to drugs, gamble away their inheritance, or spend years in deep depression? What are we to make of them? Did the fates really hand them such a wonderful gift? Why do some take what seem such enviable circumstances and just fritter them away? Do they have the right to waste their resources if they want to? We'll discuss some of these points before we're through and shed some light on why some go up, others go down, and some absolutely crash and burn.

Grinding It Out

Do you consider a person lucky if they work at their career for twenty, thirty or forty years, carefully save their money, invest it very wisely, then take a trip around the world or retire to a tropical paradise? It's surprising how often I've heard people say, "Oh, wow, they're so lucky," when referring to someone who has slaved and saved to have nice things.

Maybe you've said something like this yourself. If so, I invite you to think over the implications. When you put in your forty hours on the job each week and receive your paycheck on Friday, do you walk around saying, "Man, I am soooooo lucky!" The only difference between these two scenarios is the time scale. Why would having a well-earned reward after 40 years of work be any luckier than after 40 hours?

Of course, we can change the situation a bit further and make this 40-hour paycheck your first one after twelve months of unemployment. Now how lucky do you feel? As we change the surrounding circumstances of a situation, it gives everything a whole different perspective. But most of the time we never even think about the implications when we say such things.

X Marks the Spot

It's also possible to simply be in the right (or wrong) place at the right (wrong) time. Take an example from the old cartoons, a safe falls twenty stories and smashes one person out of a crowd of hundreds walking past a building. Ohhhh, bad luck.

A tornado sets down in a town and smashes some of the houses while leaving others untouched. It would be pure arrogance to assume that the people spared were the only ones praying. What else is at work here? Again, I have some ideas to suggest. I can't guarantee that you'll agree with me, but I think it will be worth your while to consider them and perhaps reach some conclusions of your own.

Miracle Cure

We also hear stories of miraculous healings. Every once in a while, one of the many thousands of people who stream through Lourdes every day experiences an instantaneous cure. It happens there and at other places around the world just often enough to make us realize that *something* is happening. Why that one person? Why not everybody? Why anybody at all?

And lest we assume that Christianity has a monopoly on spontaneous healings, it doesn't. Every religion in the world can claim occasional miraculous results. Enough to tantalize, enough to tease, enough to drive us nuts if we insist on repeatable, certifiable results every single time.

Even modern medicine, which makes no spiritual claims at all, has its share of spontaneous remissions – events that can't quite be explained by science.

Who's Helping Your Career

Years ago I read a book called *The Luck Factor* written by Max Gunther. In it he noted that most of the things we get in life we get from other people. He related the stories of two men from the poorer part of a large eastern U.S. city, both of Polish extraction. One of them grew up to be a drifter

whose career never seemed to rise higher than dishwasher in restaurants – when he felt like working.

The other man did considerably better. He mingled eagerly with others, studied drama and worked hard at getting parts in small-time plays. One day he caught someone’s eye and was recommended for a small part in a movie. This led to advance after advance in his acting career, almost always through referrals and introductions. Eventually he wrote his own book, called *Ragman’s Son* the story of Kirk Douglas.

If you’ll look at most successful careers, they consist of two components. One part is working hard to get prepared to do the best job we can do, and the other part is the help we receive from other people.

The people who don’t work very hard to prepare properly often drop the ball if it’s handed to them. They may rely on oily words, flattery and sucking up to attract the attention of people who can help them. This kind of person usually fails eventually, but if they do succeed, it may be that, after all, they’re more competent than we like to admit. In any case, as Kirk Douglas can tell us, there *is* a better way than flattery to relate to people, and we’ll discuss it before we’re through.

Investing Is Slow Art

Years ago I worked in a camera shop with a man called Sam who was constantly bemoaning his bad luck. He often pointed out Mr. Dawson, a man in his seventies who was *really* lucky. Dawson owned buildings all up and down the main street of our town. In fact, he owned properties all over the western suburbs of Chicago. I was barely twenty-three at the time, but I thought I saw a way for Sam to be as rich as Mr. Dawson.

The next time he raised the topic, I said, “Hey, Sam, you’re only thirty-five now. Why don’t you start buying buildings this year, and by the time you’re seventy-five you’ll be as rich as he is.”

Sam looked at me like I had insulted his mother's mating habits and told me, quite huffily, "I don't want to wait *that* long."

Let's get this straight between us right now. While there are real elements of chance involved in luck, and I can teach you how to take control of some of those elements, there are also other, more down-to-earth factors, too.

Like work.

Like patience.

Like having enough common sense to know that if it's worth having, it's worth exerting yourself a bit.

If this offends you, or if you are repelled by the idea that controlling luck is a skill that requires the same kind of effort needed to control other elements of your life, then you need an attitude adjustment. I can help you, but honestly, my help will go a lot farther if you're a person who's also willing to help yourself.

**Enjoy the two chapters you just read?
There's much more!**

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