



emPOWERMENT

Creating Lives, Families and Organizations that ROCK!

By Michael Shenker

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His unique training methods invoke "inspiration" rather than motivation and help management and employees alike gain a new perspective of how to be successful, make good business decisions, how to treat their clients, and how to create work environments that produce an unprecedented ROI.

He has written numerous articles, lectured throughout the U.S. on the Law of Attraction, The Secret, team working, the power of the mind, and recently wrote the book, "EMPOWERMENT: Creating Lives, Families and Organizations That ROCK!"

Contents

Please Read This First.....	2
<i>Terms of Use</i>	2
<i>Disclaimer</i>	2
<i>Credits:</i>	2
About the Author	4
Contents	5
Universal Truths.....	6
Creativity Vs. Competition	12
The Quest for a Worthy Ideal	17
Gratefulness	21
Expectation and Non-resistance	26
Personal Freedom.....	30
Sharing It	35
Empowering Others.....	41
The Mastermind	49
The Practice	53
Doctrine Of Gratitude	55
The Gratefulness Exercise	56
Author’s Note	59
The Next Steps	60



Universal Truths

Next to my family, business is my life. One of the things I learned a long time ago is that if you want to be successful in life you have to first be successful in business and to be successful in business you have to go after what you want and not quit until you get it. No one is going to do it for you and no one is going to help you along the way. Life is difficult, full of obstacles and only the strong survive. I am a survivor. I started my company ten years ago with no money and today I have over 200 employees and three regional offices around the country. The *American Dream* come true.

One of my secrets for success is I enjoy going to the book store near my office and browsing through their inventory of biographies and WWII books because the strategies of war apply very easily to the strategies of business. And let's face it, business *is* war. I also like to enjoy a cup of hot green tea while I sit and read.

My wife recently tried to get me to read one of those hot New Age best sellers that she gave me as a gift. After picking it up several times I finally had to admit that I wasn't enjoying it. Not so much because it wasn't well written but because the content was so contrary to my way of thinking. So I decided to exchange it for something more to my liking. When I went up to the book store clerk, a friendly young man in his late twenties with longish hair and wire rimmed glasses, looked at me like I was making the biggest mistake of my life. He asked me why I was so eager to exchange it and I explained that it just wasn't my cup of tea.

"Well, I guess you're just not ready," he said in a very matter of fact manner. "That's too bad too, it really is an excellent book and not because of all the hype." He started to reach for the book. "What do you mean, I'm not ready?" as I recoiled. Who does this young punk think he 's talking to? Does he

supply more than 200 people a place to go to work each day? I don't think so. "Ready for what?" I asked inquisitively, wanting to know what he meant. "Evolve. That's what it's about. As a species we've reached a place in our evolution where we have to either evolve or become extinct. It's pretty heavy." He began to write on a slip of paper.

"Really? I didn't get that from what I read." To be honest I didn't read that much, maybe half a chapter. "Maybe I didn't give it enough of a chance." He stopped writing and looked at me. "Look, there's a guy that we sometimes refer people to when it comes to books like this. He's somewhat of an authority and if he likes you he might offer to help translate the information so that it makes more sense."

Intrigued by this criterion, yet not really sure why I had agreed, I took him up on his offer and he gave me a name and number and I immediately give Myron Cain a call. When we spoke he sounded a little gruff, like I was interrupting something. I told him about the book my wife gave me and he agreed to meet me at his home the following Saturday morning. He made a big deal about my being there at precisely 8:00 a.m.. Not before, not after; or not to come at all. He said that punctuality was a sign of character and if I couldn't control my time, he wanted nothing to do with me.

Saturday morning I was standing on his front porch wondering if I was doing the right thing. I knocked on his door at precisely 8:00 a.m. and was greeted by what appeared to be a little old man who stood about five feet tall with a full head of shiny white hair. After I introduced myself, he politely ushered me into his living room. Although the room was not spacious it had a comfortable feel to it, and a big overstuffed couch which seemed to envelope me as I sat down. Myron moved with the ease and manner of a person half his age as he quickly straightened up the room picking up piles of magazines and books that lay scattered about. "I wasn't sure you were going to show," he said and then followed it with what could only be described as a pirate's laugh. He then disappeared into the adjoining kitchen.

Without asking, he brought out a pot of hot green tea which wound up

being the only libation we would have throughout the time I would spend with him. Once he poured us each a cup, he said, "I have zero tolerance for anyone who refuses to have an open mind to new ideas. Would that describe you?" he accusingly asked.

"No, it does not," I quipped, resenting the implication. "The fact that I am here with you today demonstrates my willingness to learn something new. However, I'll admit that this has not always been the case. For a long time I guess I let my success in business substantiate my perspective of the world, but for some reason that doesn't seem to work quite as well anymore.

"You know Robert, I have done some checking up on you and I know that you own a very successful software development company here in town. I also know that you are highly respected amongst your peers, which is why I'm taking the time to meet with you today. Now what seems to be the problem with understanding the book?"

"Yes, I'm very proud of what I've been able to accomplish with my company. But to answer your question, the words are plain enough, yet it seems like my perspective of reality is contrary to what the book is saying and I'm having trouble making sense of it all."

Myron gazed into my eyes as if to see if I was on the level and I got a weird sensation in the pit of my stomach. What in the hell was I doing here? For all I knew this guy was a serial killer who spiked the tea and was going to chop me up into little pieces! Yet, at the same time, I somehow sensed that this little man possessed a great deal of wisdom and that I would be passing up a valuable opportunity if I didn't give him a fair chance.

Myron drank his tea, sat back in his chair contentedly with his eyes closed as he seemed to relish the moment. No one spoke as the silence became heavy when he suddenly opened his eyes and quietly asked, "Robert, do you know anything about Universal Truths?"

Although I had a few good guesses based upon seeing all of the Star Wars movies at least twice, I decided to plead the fifth. "No, not really."

"The Universe in which we live, works on an entirely different set of

rules and principles than those practiced by most folks. That's why the world is so screwed up, or what I call *unempowered*. In fact, most people live their lives in total ignorance of these laws and by doing so, lead very unfulfilling, frustrating lives. If you want to understand the book and the way life actually works, you've got to understand and live by the Universal Laws which will transform you into an *empowered* being."

Even though I was considered highly successful in the eyes of society I had to admit that something was definitely missing in my life and Myron's words resonated deeply within me. I started to say, "Well if I may, let me play devil's advocate..."

Myron bolted from his chair like a gazelle with its tail on fire and brought his face about one inch from mine, "If you want to play devil's advocate, you can march your ass right out of here and not waste my time." He straightened himself up and looked down at me, "But if you want to understand the book, you've got to listen with the mind of a student, like your life depended on it, OK?"

As someone who's used to giving orders, I found Myron's tone quite objectionable to say the least, even inappropriate. Who does he think he's talking to? Yet at the same time I was able to sense something beyond the attitude and actions and I heard myself saying, "OK I didn't mean to upset you." I cautiously took another sip of tea, sat back and listened.

"What I'm going to share with you Robert, are truths that have been handed down through the ages and are sacred. In order to grasp their meaning, you must open your mind, have no expectations, listen to what I'm going to tell you and follow directions. Like you, I ran a successful company back on the East Coast until we were bought out by a large conglomerate. Since we are both businessmen, I'm going to put the information I'm going to share with you in a business context. That way you will be able to relate to it in a very real world sense, OK?"

"I'd like that very much," I said as I was beginning to think that maybe he wasn't so crazy after all. He sat back in his chair and proceeded, "The

business world you live in Robert is unfriendly and competitive, wouldn't you agree?"

"Yes! Every time I turn around I'm either fighting a new competitor, dealing with shrinking margins or having to pull a rabbit out of a hat in order to maintain my stock value. I'm constantly fighting to keep my head above water. So yes, it's pretty unfriendly out there."

"Well Robert, what if I were to tell you that your unfriendly, competitive universe is just an illusion? An illusion that results in the lowest form of existence because it feeds on itself and continues to produce more of what you don't want ...more competition, continued shrinking margins, lower stock valuation, etcetera." He takes another sip of tea and continues.

"The truth is that the world is a friendly place with an abundant supply of everything you want and need and it is not necessary to fight or compete in order to share in its abundance. As opposed to *competing* for a *limited supply*, you can choose to *create* from an *unlimited supply* and by doing so, cease to be a victim of your circumstances," he said while rising from the chair and walking across the room to the massive book shelf that lined his walls.

Myron removed a small, worn-looking, leather bound edition from the shelf, looked fondly at it and began flipping through the pages. "Many years ago, a man who had been an abject failure most of his life, developed an understanding of this perspective and wrote a wonderful little book. Up until it's writing, Wallace Wattles had spent most of his years searching for the answers that would turn his life around. Finally, in 1903, Wallace "got it" and wrote the 1903 classic, *The Science of Getting Rich*, a brilliant treatise on manifesting wealth which served as the prime motivating force behind the powerfully enlightening movie, *The Secret*. In one of the chapters, Wattles discusses the distinction between competition and creativity: "He read aloud from the book: "There is a thinking stuff (energy) from which all things are made, and which, in its original state, permeates, penetrates, and fills the inner spaces of the Universe.

A thought in this substance produces the thing that is imaged by the thought.

Man can form things in his thought, and by impressing his thought upon formless substance can cause the thing he thinks about to be created. In order to do this, man must pass from the competitive to the creative mind; otherwise he cannot be in harmony with the Formless Intelligence, which is always creative and never competitive in spirit.”

Closing the book he approached me and said, “Robert, I would like to loan you this book and between now and next Saturday I want you to read this passage over and over until you are crystal clear about its meaning.” “Next Saturday? You want me to come back?” “If you are really sincere about learning, then yes. What we’ve discussed today is just the tip of the iceberg; the beginning of what could become a whole new you. I’ll see you next Saturday at 8 o’clock.”

He then gave me the book, abruptly turned, walked towards the door, opened it and bid me goodbye. His brisk dismissal reminded me of my long-gone college days when one of my professors decided to end the class abruptly. I stood and replied to my surprise, “Thank you Myron, I’ll see you promptly at 8:00 a.m. next Saturday.”

As I walked away I couldn’t help but feel like a wuss. Here I am, a successful businessman, and I’m taking orders from this odd little old man as if he were my boss.

For some strange reason, I didn’t seem to mind.



Creativity Vs. Competition

Opening the door at precisely 8 a.m., Myron broke out into his pirate laugh and cheerfully welcomed me in, “Ah, good morning lad. Anticipating your promptness, I have already prepared some tea for us.” He looked up at me slyly as I entered, “How have you and Mr. Wattles been getting along?”

I sighed, “Myron, why in the hell do I need to know all this just to read this book?”

“Do you want a little cheese with that wine?” He closed the door and motioned for me to take a seat as we both took our respective places on the sofa and chair. “The truth of the matter Robert, is that what you understand to be reality is hogwash. You don’t know what you don’t know. In order to understand a book on reality in its true state, you have to know what the hell reality is. If I’d known you were looking for something easy, I would have sent you packing the first time I’d laid eyes on you. What we’re going to be doing over the next few weeks is simple but not necessarily easy. Remember, you called me. If you want to walk around with your head in the sand for the rest of your life fighting one problem after the other in your competitive world, it’s no skin off my nose. Just walk out that door and we’ll call it quits.”

Here was my opportunity to make life easy and leave. After all, I had a successful company, a good marriage and my kids liked me. But something *was* missing and a little voice inside was telling me that if I stuck it out with Myron I just might find out what it is.

With all the face saving energy I could muster, “You’re right Myron; I’m here to understand reality so let’s go to work. But tell me, why is “truth” or *objective* reality such a mystique? I mean, shouldn’t reality be obvious? Right off the bat you hit me with a concept that is so totally contrary to everything

I’ve learned in school and in life.”

“Robert, there’s an old adage that when the student is ready the teacher will appear. Up until now you weren’t ready to know reality. Besides, in order to know the truth, you first have to know the lie because everything is relative. Can you write with white chalk on a white board? No. Can you distinguish the summer without winter? How about day without night? The fact that you don’t like what I’m telling you is irrelevant to me and just demonstrates the necessity for you to listen with the mind of a student with no expectations.”

“But Myron, how can you prove what this Wattles character is saying? You know, I’ve read his words over and over and what I got out of it was simply that creation begins with a thought and if you continue that thought you can create what you’re thinking.”

“Bravo, you’ve got it!” “I’ve got it? I’ve got what? I’ve had high hopes and expectations as to what success was going to bring me for the last ten years; like more time with my family and the opportunity to pursue my hobbies and travel but when my dreams met reality, reality usually won out and I just kept on working harder each year.”

“Robert, let’s take it one step at a time. I think you’ll find that you yourself are the proof of what Wattles is saying. Let’s take a look at what primarily occupies your thoughts each day. Like most people, you think about what you need or what you don’t have; is that right?”

Although I didn’t care for the way he worded the question I had to agree, “I suppose.”

He leaned closer as if speaking about something that was only meant to be heard by me, “One of the tendencies of the unempowered is to link their dreams and desires with fears, doubts and insecurities about their abilities to achieve their dreams. Every time they think of something they want, they subconsciously begin having corresponding feelings of doubt and insecurity about their ability to get it. Since feelings trump thoughts, their mind cuts them off in their tracks and nothing manifests other than more insecurity.

Based upon what Wattles purports and science has proven, your thoughts and your focus always provide you with exactly what you focus on. As you told me the first time we met, you're constantly dealing with maintaining market share, your competitors, shrinking margins and increasing the value of your stock. Since your mind is designed to bring you whatever it thinks you want and is totally ignorant of your intentions due to its extremely literal and simplistic interpretation, it can only bring you more competition, shrinking market share, etcetera. Once you understand how the mind works and are respectful of its power, everything will begin to change.”

“OK, I think I'm starting to get this. I see what you're saying. So if I want to get 'X', then 'X' had better be what I focus on irrespective of my current reality,” I smiled, nodding my head in agreement and feeling a little more confident.

“Exactly,” he smiled back, like a teacher whose student was showing signs of progress.

“And what about the residual doubt and fear that I experience about my ability to get 'X'?”

“Here, my friend is where faith comes in. Now this may seem a little odd because this is a scientific process, so why do we need faith? The answer is that in the initial stages of working with this new technology, irrespective of Wattles or science, you don't know it works. The only way to compensate for this is through faith. Over time, you will see that this process works like gang busters and you won't have the necessity to have 'blind' faith. You will, however, develop 'true' faith as you begin to successfully manifest what you want,” he sat back with confidence and sipped his tea.

“I have to admit, this is pretty interesting stuff,” I was now getting energized as it began to make some sense for the first time when another thought occurred to me. “But what about the real world problems and challenges that need handling every day? Should I just ignore them and focus on getting 'X'?”

“Quite the contrary, as Ramdas says “Being-Here-Now” is the name of

the game. Do all that you can do each moment to deal with the challenges of the day to the best of your ability while at the same time maintaining a positive, confident vision of what you want in the future."

"Well, I can see that this isn't going to be a walk in the park, but whatever it takes to master this technique, I can make it happen."

"That's what I like to hear. You know, people who embark upon this type of work are called *warriors*, in that they are constantly dealing with the conflict of perceived reality - what they have, for actual reality - what they want." "So is that it? Is that all there is to it?"

"Close but not quite. Being-here-now in dealing with the challenges of the day and being vigilant of your thoughts of the future is a good start, but that's just the first of many aspects to this process. For example Robert, what do you want, what is your vision for the future?"

"You know, the usual; continued success, the ability to spend more time with my family... to be happy."

"That's what everybody wants, but what is your definition of success, and how much more time with your family do you want and what would you do if you had it and what exactly makes you happy? Remember the mind is simplistic and literal and you don't want it to have to guess for you. What you want needs to be spelled out in great detail using as many of your senses as possible." "Then I guess I don't have a specific, detailed vision for the future."

"And that's what next week assignment is all about. In preparation for that, I want you to write down what your life looks like in detail in a perfect world. This is a no holds barred description of your perfect life including where you live, who you are living with, what kind of house you live in, what kind of car you drive, what color it is, how much discretionary time do you have and how do you spend it, etcetera, etcetera. Keep it as short and concise as possible with as much detail as you can." "Anything I want no matter what?"

"Anything, providing

1) it's physically possible and 2) it's what you really want and not what

somebody else wants for you and *please* Robert, GO BIG, and have fun with it. Don't write down what you think you're capable of having, write down what you want as if anything were possible and you couldn't fail and I'll see you next week."

As I left Myron's house my head was swirling. I'm amazed I have been able to accomplish as much as I have. I can't imagine what I'm going to be able to accomplish using these tools, but I guess that's what this week's assignment is all about.



The Quest for a Worthy Ideal

The week seemed to fly by and before I knew it I was walking up to Myron's front door. I took a deep breath and knocked. The door opened a few moments later and there stood the strange little man who I have started to become so fond of.

“Good morning Robert. Have you come with a vision, or are you still flying blind?” He let out one of those great pirate laughs and then motioned for me to come in as we both made ourselves comfortable in our respective seats.

“I've been working very diligently on my vision and am looking forward to discussing it with you,” I said with some degree of pride.

“So, you've decided what you want and what your vision is, but are you passionate about it?” He reached over to the teapot sitting next to him and began to pour the tea into two cups, passing one to me.

“Yes and yes,” I chimed in like a kid winning a spelling bee. “What's weird is how much work it took to get clear on what I really wanted. Even though I have projections and goals for my company, I realized that on a personal level I was pretty much reacting to life as opposed to it responding to me.”

“Excellent observation,” Myron said as he took a sip of tea and pondered for a moment as if deciding whether or not the flavor suited him. “Over the years I have had the privilege of speaking to many business leaders and inevitably many of them acknowledged the same situation and consequently agreed that they were unsatisfied and unfulfilled even though they were financially successful,” he raised a knowing eyebrow at me. Wanting Myron to hurry up and review my vision for the future I eagerly responded, “Should I go ahead and show you what I've come up with?”

He let out another one of his pirate laughs and smiled, “Sure, on one

condition.” He then looked me in the eye, “That you are willing to give up your life for what you want.” “Give up my life? You never said anything about that!” “Well of course not. I wanted you to think through what you wanted first. Now that you’ve done that, it’s time to put it in perspective. Remember when I said, ‘go big?’” “But I never thought you were talking life and death big.”

“Well what did you think I was talking about? A big house, an expensive car, massive amounts of money? That’s not big in my book. Big is that which you are willing to give up your life for because that’s what you’re actually doing each day – giving up your life for what you want. Every day you spend working for something is a day of your life you’ve traded in the process.”

As Myron spoke, I sank lower and lower into his couch as if it were eating me for breakfast. Just when I think I understand what he’s talking about, he pulls the rug out from under my feet and I’m back to square one, but perhaps that’s just part of the learning process. As I was folding up my goals and putting them back in my pocket, Myron let out another hearty laugh.

“Robert my boy, don’t be discouraged. This ‘E’ ticket ride you’re on is guaranteed to take you places you didn’t even know existed and will change your life forever. You’ll not only know how to read the book, you’ll be able to write your own. The key to not being upset or discouraged is to not have any expectations as I’ve cautioned you about before. Eastern philosophy teaches that without expectations, you’re never upset, but we’ll discuss that more in depth next week.”

He walked over to one of the book shelves, combed the titles with his index finger and removed one. Holding it in his hand he turned to me and started walking back. “For now, I want you to upgrade your goals to what Earl Nightingale calls a *‘Worthy Ideal’* in his definition of success; **Success is the progressive realization of a Worthy Ideal.** Naturally, in order to do this, you have to have a Worthy Ideal which works as a compass in setting lesser goals. You do know who Earl Nightingale is, don’t you?”

“Of course, he’s the cofounder of the Nightingale-Conant Corporation. They publish all kinds of personal development materials.” Myron sat back down in his chair and cleared his throat, “Now, what does Nightingale’s statement mean to you?”

“OK, well, let’s see, *Progressive* means the feeling of moving forward and getting closer to what you want. *Realization* is the act of bringing into concrete existence. *Worthy* is having some moral worth and/or deserving respect and *Ideal* is an idea or image with heart, soul and passion – something of true worth or value.”

Myron slapped his hand on the side of his thigh and grinned widely, “Give that man a cupie doll! As you develop your Worthy Ideal, you’ll find that it will be driven by an unrelenting force and a passion that cannot be denied and will provide you with a level of inspiration like nothing you’ve ever experienced. By living according to your Worthy Ideal, your business will grow at a faster rate, your relationships will be strengthened and what you thought you wanted out of life will pale in comparison to your reality.” He picked up an ornate piece of stationery, “Here are some clues that will assist you in developing your Worthy Ideal,” as he handed it to me. I began to read it.

Your Worthy Ideal is soaked with emotion, powered by passion, driven by destiny and forged with the fire of the heart. You’ll know when you have discovered your Worthy Ideal (or heart ‘s desire) because you’ll feel it in your guts. Your Worthy Ideal will inspire you to accomplish tasks well beyond what you have achieved in the past.

Your Worthy Ideal will afford you the opportunity to become more aware of your true nature. No matter how difficult your challenges, your Worthy Ideal will provide you the encouragement to carry on. A Worthy Ideal will have great spiritual value to the extent that you’ll be willing to trade your life for it. I put the paper down and slowly looked up at Myron. He started to rise, “Now before my couch totally consumes you, let’s call it a day.”

As I left Myron’s house that morning, a feeling of excitement mixed with

wonder was surging throughout my entire being. I was beginning to feel something; a change. It wasn't like anything I had ever experienced, yet it somehow felt strangely familiar, like something that I had once known but forgotten a long time ago.



Gratefulness

The week was hectic with the usual challenges of running a thriving company and family obligations which always seem to play second fiddle to business. Yet, with all of my responsibilities and time challenges, I still managed to read the Wattles book and think about my Worthy Ideal.

On the drive to Myron’s house I realized how happy I was. In fact, I couldn’t remember the last time I felt this way. Was I feeling happy about going to see Myron or was it something more? As I walked up to his door I realized that yes, I was happy to be seeing my new-found mentor but more so, for the first time in quite a while I was just happy to be me. I was being exposed to a lot of new concepts and I had this feeling of *rightness* which seemed to substantiate Myron’s teachings.

At precisely eight o’clock I knocked and as usual I didn’t have to wait long before the door flew open and I was greeted by a smiling and eager-looking Myron indicating with a wave of his hand for me to enter. As I passed through the doorway he said, “All right Robert, now that you’ve had another week to have a go at developing your Worthy Ideal, what have you got for me?” “Well good morning to you, too,” I couldn’t help but get in a playful jab.

“Oh, good morning,” he replied with a big smile, indicating that he got the hint that perhaps he was rushing into “teacher mode” a little too quickly. As we took our customary places on the sofa and chair he handed me a cup of tea and I leaned back and got comfortable. “Robert, you seem to be in an inordinately good mood today. May I ask why?”

“Let’s just say that the world I’m living in is getting to be a friendlier place”, I replied with a smile. I knew Myron was just eating this up. “Today I’ve come to discuss my Worthy Ideal which is based upon my values, beliefs and

emotions and what I believe to be the primary motivating factor of my life.”
“You’ve got my attention”, he smiled warmly.

“First, I realized that my Worthy Ideal was a place to come *from*, not to go *to*. I thought about those times when I was at my best and then I asked myself, ‘what was present for me? Then I thought about when I was at my worst and asked myself, ‘what was missing?’ At the end of all this, I deduced that my Worthy Ideal was to be proud of myself and the work that I do. To make a difference in the lives of those that I love and care about and when I look back at my life at the end of the road, to feel as though the world was a better place for what I had contributed.”

“Excellent! Robert. I’m really proud of you. I can tell that a lot of heartfelt thought went into your Worthy Ideal. Now, let’s go back to the goals you developed and see how they stack up against your Worthy Ideal.” He leaned back closed his eyes, sipped from his cup and intently listened.

“OK, well, my primary goal is to sell my business for enough money so that I can semi-retire, work on only those projects that I deem worthwhile, spend quality time with my family and travel a little. “Robert,” he stopped sipping his tea and looked at me. “I think that all of your goals fit right in line with your Worthy Ideal, however, they all break the laws of goal setting.”

He put the cup down and leaned forward as if to make a point.
“Remember when I said that your mind is simplistic and very literal? That means that you have to paint an in-depth picture of what you want. If you want to sell your business, you need to specify when and for how much. You’ll need to delineate what projects you might work on after you sell your company, and decide how you will spend your leisure time with your family and to what destinations you will travel.”

“OK, so I have to define the specifics of the ‘what,’ establish the ‘when’ and forget about the ‘how’ because that’s the job of the Universe, right?” “Not only are you right, I couldn’t have said it better myself. Now Robert, your Worthy Ideal and your goals are living entities which you’ll continuously change as you change. By continuously being cognizant of what you want on

a daily basis you will become a veritable magnet for all that you desire, providing you maintain a positive perspective and have a little faith it will happen in its own good time, ergo, no expectations."

As Myron poured himself another cup of tea, he gazed deeply into his cup as if he was searching for something. "Robert, now that you have created your Worthy Ideal and your corresponding goals I want to talk to you about the concept of *gratitude*. How often do you take stock of all the things in your life that you're grateful for?" "Hmm, I don't know. Who keeps track of such things? When it happens it happens." "But how often does it happen, daily, weekly... a couple times a month?" He stopped in mid sip as if waiting for my answer.

My brow wrinkled as I thought about it, "I don't know, maybe a couple of times a month."

"Well Robert, as a *warrior*, it is imperative that you write down and consider all that you are grateful for on a *daily* basis. In order to appreciate the value of this, let me give you some background on its significance to your success." He took a slow sip and then continued.

"You see, I have known many great business leaders in my time who never reached their true potential. They worked hard, read veritable libraries of books on success and business, joined all the right organizations and kissed all the right fannies," he let go with a hearty laugh, "but never achieved what was possible". And why you ask? Because of a lack of adherence to the *Law of Gratitude*." He picked up the Wattles book, opened it to a passage and read, "According to Wattles: "

There is a Law of Gratitude, and it is absolutely necessary that you should observe the Law, if you are to get the results you seek. The Law of Gratitude is the natural principle that action and reaction are always equal, and in opposite directions. The grateful outreaching of your mind in thankful praise to the Universe is a liberation or expenditure of force; it cannot fail to reach that to which it is addressed, and the reaction is an instantaneous movement towards you. 'Draw nigh unto the Universe, and It will draw nigh

unto you.’ That is a statement of psychological truth.

If your gratitude is strong and constant, the reaction in Formless Substance will be strong and continuous; the movement of the things you want will be always toward you. You cannot exercise much power without gratitude; for it is gratitude that keeps you connected with power.”

He closed the book and slowly looked up at me, “So what do you get from this?” “Well, to tell you the truth, I don’t know what in the hell he’s talking about. I mean ‘*Draw nigh unto the Universe, and It will draw nigh unto you.*’ What’s that all about?”

I could see that Myron had some appreciation for my lack of understanding as he sat back and smiled. “You know Robert, I have read *The Science of Getting Rich* so many times, I have forgotten what a pain in the butt the early 1900’s jargon is to someone just starting to read it. Years ago I took the trouble to edit Wattles book, bringing it up to contemporary standards. I’ll give you a copy of my edited version before you leave today.”

“For right now, however, let me break it down for you. The Law of Gratitude states that ‘action and reaction are always equal and in opposite directions.’ Giving thanks or being grateful to the Universe for what you have today and what you want to manifest tomorrow creates an *action*. The Universe then responds in kind with a *reaction* which causes you to receive more of what you are grateful for.”

“I’m not sure I understand why I would be grateful for the things that I want in the future.” “You see part of the process for manifesting or creating what you want in the future is giving thanks for it today. This Law of Gratitude is so powerful, that you can do everything else right and by not adhering to the Law of Gratitude, never reach your full potential.”

As I thought about it the pieces started falling into place and a smile gradually began to replace my look of confusion. “Make sense?” “Actually, it does,” I proclaimed.

Myron then handed me his edited version of *The Science of Getting Rich* and said that next week we’ll keep pushing the envelope while lightening the

load a little as he abruptly bid me good bye.

“See you next week Robert, you’re doing a great job,” he said and patted me on the shoulder.

“Thank you, Myron,” I replied. I felt a new bounce in my step as I walked to my car. This was going to be a great weekend.



Expectation and Non-resistance

Before I left last week, Myron told me that today's lesson would both lighten my load as well as expand my horizons which would be welcome information to say the least. Although I have tremendous responsibilities and most of the time I'm under a lot of stress, all-in-all I have a great life. My company is successful, my wife and I have two beautiful, happy children, I have great friends and I have good health. So I have to ask myself, why is my relationship with Myron such a boon to my existence?

Over and above trying to understand these new concepts, I'm fifty years old and although I've been extremely fortunate in my life, I'm starting to realize that there is more to life than what I previously believed. I attended a seminar recently and the person leading it had us do an exercise whereby we closed our eyes and pretended we were lying on a hospital bed. The lights were turned down low; we were to pretend we were all alone and had only three minutes to live. We were asked to quickly review our life and the question was then posed, "how do you feel about it?" And you know what? I didn't feel so hot. In fact, tears welled up in my eyes when I thought about all the things I wanted to do but never got around to it. I thought about all the places I wanted to take my family but was too busy building my business and I thought about the dreams I once had when I was younger which seemed to fall by the wayside as I had gotten older.

My experience at that seminar has made me realize that my meeting Myron was very fortuitous. As I pulled in front of his house, I saw him trimming some bushes which was pretty impressive for a man of his years.

As I approached him he greeted me warmly "Good morning Robert, how are you doing this fine day?"

"I'm doing great, sir. I'm surprised you haven't hired somebody to do

your yard work.” “Oh hell, I’ve never found anybody that could do the job nearly as well as me. I do all the yard work myself; can’t you see how young it makes me look?” Myron gave me a big smile and let out one of his trademark laughs. I realized that this was the perfect opportunity to ask him something I’ve wanted to know since I met him but felt uncomfortable asking. “Exactly how old are you, Myron?”

He lowered the clippers and looked at me, “How *young* do you think I am?” OK, I asked for it. How do I tactfully get myself out of this one? “I’m going to say... seventy.” It came out sounding like a question. “Humph. Not even close,” he said and went back to trimming the hedge. “Eighty?” I asked, now certain if I done the right thing.

He lowered the clippers once again and turned to me. “You’re getting warmer. I’m going to be ninety-seven years young next month,” he bowed as he said it. My mouth dropped open in astonishment and all I could say was, “Wow.” “What are we jawing out here for? Let’s get some tea and go to work.” As I sank down into that couch which I’d grown to love, Myron poured me a nice hot cup of our traditional green tea.

“Robert, today we’re going to talk about a couple of things that will definitely lighten the load. As a warrior, you might think that life is all about fighting reality, but nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, a warrior’s life is easier than most because of their perspective.”

Myron then began searching through the hundreds of books that occupied his bookshelf, floor and desk. “Aha, there it is.” Finding what he was looking for he removed an old-looking leather bound book from one of the shelves.

“Robert this little book is called the *Tao Te Ching* which was written by Taoist sage by the name of Lao Tzu in the 6th century BC and translated by a brilliant author by the name of Stephen Mitchell. Lao Tzu had never intended to document his wisdom, however, when he was making his way to the mountains to die, he was held captive at the border by the ruler of China until he wrote all of what he knew of life.” He opened the book to a marked section.

“His writings contained 81 precepts. In his 2nd precept, Lao Tzu writes,” as he reads aloud:

“When people see some things as beautiful, other things become ugly.

When people see some things as good, other things become bad.

Being and non-being create each other. Difficult and easy support each other.

Long and short define each other. High and low depend on each other.

Before and after follow each other.

Therefore the Master acts without doing anything and teaches without saying anything. Things arise and he lets them come; things disappear and he lets them go. He has but doesn't possess, acts but doesn't expect. When his work is done, he forgets it. That is why it lasts forever.”

He closed the book and looked up at me, “I have read this to you Robert because of two words, *'expectation'* and *'non-resistance'*, which are the bane of our existence. Unlike many western motivational speakers who preach that one should *'expect what you want'*, I can tell you with 100% certainty that expectation will get you nothing but disappointment and heartache. The truth of the matter is that without expectations your life will be much happier and joyful. Now this is not to say that you don't have goals, because you do, but it's all about creating them, not expecting them because they will come at their perfect time and you don't know when that is.”

Myron began to move closer as he continued speaking, “The point here is that instead of arguing with reality or *what is*, you can utilize another Universal Law, the *Law of Polarity*. The Law of Polarity which is discussed by Lau Tzu states that everything in life is like a coin with two sides; a 'good' side and a 'bad' side and in many instances you don't know which is which. It's kind of like the story about the sparrow and the cat. Once upon a time, there was a nonconforming sparrow who decided not to fly south for the winter. However, soon the weather turned so cold that he reluctantly started to fly south. In a short time ice began to form on his wings and he fell to earth in a barnyard, almost frozen. A cow passed by and crapped on the little sparrow. The sparrow thought that it was the end. But, the manure warmed

him and defrosted his wings. Warm and happy, able to breath, he started to sing. Just then a large cat came by and heard the chirping, investigated the sounds. The cat cleared away the manure, found the chirping bird and promptly ate him. The moral of the story:

Everyone who shits on you is not necessarily your enemy.

Everyone who gets you out of the shit is not necessarily your friend.

If you're warm and happy in a pile of shit, keep your mouth shut."

With that, Myron let out a great pirate laugh, slapped his knee and said, "I love that story!"

He then winked at me, patted me on the shoulder and said, "See you next week, Robert."



Personal Freedom

On the drive over to Myron’s house I was tempted to pull out my cell phone and cancel our meeting due to the foul mood I was in, but that little voice inside kept nudging me to keep my appointment. I find it funny how difficult I can be at times. I swear, I fought myself all the way up the brick walkway to Myron’s front porch until I finally called it a truce and knocked, once again, at precisely 8 AM. The door opened and Myron greeted me with a big friendly smile.

“Good morning Robert, how are you doing today?” and gestured for me to come in.

As I walked past him and into the living room I replied, “Well not so hot.” We took our seats as I relayed to him the circumstances over the last couple of days. Myron poured the tea with a wry smile on his face and I wondered what the little elf was up to.

“Robert, one of the subjects I wanted to cover with you today is the works of Don Miguel Ruiz entitled the *Four Agreements*. Based upon what you just shared with me, it would appear that my timing is excellent.”

I took my cup and settled back, prepared to hear some new pearls of wisdom I had become so used to experiencing. Myron also settled back in his chair and continued, “Don Miguel Ruiz comes from a long line of Toltec healers and teachers. Although his family anticipated that he would continue on with the family’s centuries-old legacy, Don Miguel followed a different path and went to medical school and became a surgeon. After a near-death car accident, Don Miguel switched gears and now devotes his life to sharing the Toltec wisdom. In the interest of teaching mankind a path to personal freedom and not being controlled by your environment, he wrote his first book, *The Four Agreements*. ” Although I am only going to discuss the

highlights, I highly recommend that you get the book and study it in depth."

From the table next to him he picked up the book and held it up to show me, then opened it. "The first Agreement is BE IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD." He looked up from the book and said, "... Which means to speak with integrity. This sounds somewhat simple, but it is actually very, very powerful. Depending on how you use it, your words can change lives for the better which is demonstrated by people like Lao Tzu, Socrates and Jesus or they can destroy lives which is demonstrated by Hitler, Stalin and Saddam Hussein. If you do what you say, you can create a heaven on earth. If you spend your time gossiping or not being true to your word, you render your speech weak and powerless." He took a sip of tea and looked closely at me. "Is this making any sense?"

"Yes, I replied. "I get it. If we don't have our word we don't have much at all."

"Good!" Myron smiled and returned to the book. "The second agreement is DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY." He stops to think for a moment, looks at me and says, "The reality is that whatever someone says or does to you, it has nothing to do with you and everything to do with them. When you become immune to the opinion of others, you become very powerful and enjoy a level of independence enjoyed by few. Just look back on your life and see how often your words and actions were based upon how others would perceive them. Now think how your life would be if you had the freedom to act independently and didn't take anything personally, would that improve your life?"

That was a powerful question and I had to stop and think about my answer. "Every time I was ever involved in a confrontation whether it was verbal or otherwise, was a result of my reacting to what the other person said or did."

"Excellent, that's getting it!" He again read from the book, "The third agreement is DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS." He slowly put down the book and looked at me. "Most people spend their entire lives making assumptions of

what others say and do based upon their personal view of the world, not how the world really is. So the vast majority of what we believe to be true is false. By asking clarifying questions and not making assumptions, you can get to the actual truth as opposed to your *version* of it. With this one agreement, you can completely transform your life. Are you ready to give it a try?”

“I believe so.” I reconsidered my words, “Yes, I’m ready.”

Myron nodded affirmatively then went back to the book. “The fourth and last agreement is ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST.” He smiled, closed the book and looked at me once more. “By following this agreement you will experience life with a positive intensity which will produce a high self esteem level and a lot of self fulfillment. By doing your best, which will vary, depending upon how you feel, you will be highly productive while at the same time being good to yourself. The main idea behind doing your best is that your actions are motivated by self love and respect – not for some reward at the end. Actions based upon rewards are hollow and not truly enjoyed.” He placed the book back on the table and picked up his tea and sipped. “What do you think of the Four Agreements?”

“I love them. If I would have incorporated them into my life prior to yesterday, the outcome of my day would have been entirely different. Up until now, I never even considered the concept of personal freedom and the tremendous impact it would have for me and every person in my life.”

“Well Robert, today is your lucky day. In addition to the *Four Agreements*, I’m going to show you an exercise which will give you even more personal freedom.”

“What have I done to deserve all this?” I said jovially.

“Like I said, ‘when the student is ready the teacher or teaching will appear.’ Now I want you to un-button your top button, un-tuck your shirt, loosen your belt a notch or two and lie down on the floor.”

“Are you kidding me?”

“Do I look like I’m kidding, let’s go.”

I followed Myron’s instructions feeling a little bit out of my comfort zone but then, I had to admit, my entire relationship with him has been about getting me out of my comfort zone. I proceeded to lie down on the floor.

“OK, now put this glass of water beside you and I’ll give you little background on Transformational Breathing or TB, which was co-created by Dr. Judith Kravitz. TB is a unique form of breath work that facilitates the natural healing process for all types of trauma and is beneficial in gaining greater physical, mental and spiritual health.

It has a number of associated benefits including:

- ✓ Higher energy level
- ✓ Reduces worry and anxiety
- ✓ Enhances the awareness of self-sabotaging patterns
- ✓ Clears past traumas and dramas
- ✓ Relieves depressive and negative emotions
- ✓ Improves self-esteem

In addition to all of this, I do it every day and can personally vouch for the many benefits it has to offer.” “Wow, that’s pretty impressive. Is it painful?” “Well,” Myron said with a chuckle, “When I first started doing it I was a little concerned about maintaining my pace for forty five minutes.” “Forty five minutes, are you kidding me?”

“No, and the beauty is, Dr. Kravitz will guide you through the entire process. So let’s get started.” Myron handed me a pillow for my head and one for my knees and then a set of head phones and turned on his CD player. As the music played and I breathed, Myron coached me on breathing deeper and deeper. Forty five minutes later, I was about as calm as I have ever been while at the same time feeling rejuvenated. What was weird was it didn’t feel as if I was doing it for forty-five minutes. It felt more like fifteen or twenty. And, I felt myself actually looking forward to doing it again.

When I opened my eyes, Myron was peering down at me with that big smile, “How’d it go, are you gonna live?”

“Wow that was really something.” “Are you up for doing it again sometime?” “Absolutely!”

“OK,” He then slipped a piece of paper in my hand with the TB website scribbled on it. “You better gather up your things and I’ll see you next week.”

Still reeling from my Transformational Breathing experience and feeling more relaxed than I can imagine, I waived a faint good bye as I made my way out the door.



Sharing It

After six weeks of Myron, six weeks of *The Science of Getting Rich*, seven days of TB and a comprehensive study of the *Four Agreements*, I was really ready to rock. My wife, kids and co-workers have all commented on my calm demeanor and upbeat attitude. What's really cool is that I'm starting to work out again and instead of getting up a couple of times a night I'm sleeping straight through until the alarm goes off.

As I walked through Myron's door he could tell that things were working for me. While he poured us some tea and we got comfortable, I could see by his smile that he was pleased with me and it made me feel a sense of pride.

"So Robert, how's life treating you?" He sat back in his chair eager to hear my response. I felt myself sit up straighter as I raised my chin, "It's more like how am I treating *it*. Our work together is really starting to make a huge difference; in my business, with my family and especially in me.

"Excellent, so now what?" "I'm not sure I understand what you mean," I said as I leaned back into the sofa.

"Well, what are you going to do with all of this new found knowledge?" Myron took a slow sip of his tea and then looked at me probingly.

My confidence was suddenly evaporating as I tried to determine an appropriate response. "I plan to just keep improving and getting better."

"Isn't your Worthy Ideal to make a positive difference and be of service to as many people as possible before you die?"

"Yes." "Then share it." "What do you mean, share it?" "Well, in addition to your immediate family, don't you have over two hundred people in your company?" "Yes."

“What would be the impact to your company if your employees had the same knowledge and experiences you’ve had over the last seven weeks?”

“That would be a dream come true.” “Would you like for that to happen?”

“Absolutely, but do you actually have the bandwidth to implement such changes in my company?” After all, this little guy was in his late nineties and two hundred people would be extremely taxing on anyone let alone a person of Myron’s age.

“No, nor would I want to.” He took another sip of tea. “That’s *your* job.” I practically fell off the sofa and spilled my tea. “Me?” I said incredulously. “I wouldn’t know where to start.”

“Well then, let’s start with you,” as he handed me a napkin and refilled my cup. “Business is essentially about profitability and a strong bottom line – that is a given. However, building a sustainable, growing and profitable business requires much more than just financial acumen and having people turning out the work. Business leaders like yourself are faced with constant and unrelenting pressures. These pressures come from a wide array of sources including maintaining market share, interpersonal, cross cultural governance and maintaining profitability just to name a few. There’s no time for developing your people... right?...Wrong!” He set the teapot down and held his cup as if getting ready to sip.

“Great leaders are constantly looking for newer and better ways to empower and leverage the passion of their employees. They know that irrespective of the circumstances, increasing the return on investment of their human capital can make a *substantial* difference in their bottom line profits over and above the products and services they sell.”

“I never looked at it that way.” “Well, I would suggest that you start. But don’t feel bad because very few leaders have this *empowered* perspective and consequently struggle because of it. Studies have shown that highly motivated employees are up to 127% more productive than your average employees in highly complex jobs. I would also suggest that motivated employees turn up to work because they *want* to, not because they *have* to. I

would even go so far as to say that motivated employees are more cost conscious and have less sick days. That all adds up to a lot at the end of the year.” He takes a sip of tea and continues.

“Research has found on average that 70% of the employees are looking for more meaning in their work. That means that only 30% are relatively happy in their job. To me that says that there is a lot of underutilized human capital in the workplace. It makes sense to me Robert, that if you want to break away from the pack of the *unempowered* to the *empowered*, you had better implement modalities that create passion in your employees.”

I felt a rush of energy; a wonderful feeling of lightness slowly flowed through me as I began playing “what if” scenarios in my imagination. I knew that a change of this manner was possible if I wanted it to be so and I was excited about the possibilities as Myron continued to elaborate.

“And I’m not talking about a short lived blip of motivation typically provided by books, tapes or an off-site meeting at the beach. The passion I’m referring to is a conscious choice to live a life of meaning where at the end of the day you know you have made a contribution, not only to your own life but in the lives of your employees and customers. How does that hold up to your Worthy Ideal?”

“It’s dead on.” I looked at him and then down to my cup, “But I have no idea where to begin.” “Again, Robert, it all starts with you. First you must know how to feel.” “Feel what?” I asked, slightly frustrated.

“If you have to ask then you better really take a deep breath, step outside the vortex of normality, and step into the world of *leadership from the heart*. Feeling is another way of listening to that small voice within. That voice, or as I like to call it, the ‘Gollum,’ a character in the Lord of the Rings, is the balance between good and evil, right and wrong. It’s the voice that most people don’t listen to, the voice that gives you that ‘gut feeling.’ And when you follow this voice, you take ownership and responsibility for every thought, decision and action that arises both personally and professionally.”

“You mean I can’t blame other people, I can’t delegate the fallout?” I said jokingly.

“The answer is that great leaders, passionate leaders, take full responsibility for the outcome of their leadership. Great leaders constantly interact with their employees. They get out from behind their desks, and ivory towers and interact with those who are in the trenches.”

“But I’m constantly asking my people about what’s going on.”

“No one is ever going to tell you the truth if *you* ask them how things are going. But if you’re intermingling with your employees directly, you’ll be able to see the truth first hand.”

“I guess I see what you mean. To be honest, maybe I didn’t really want to know the truth. I just wanted to hear that everything was working well.”

“If you want to be a great leader, you must learn to build trust. Francois De La Rochefoucauld once wrote, ‘The trust that we put in ourselves makes us feel trust in others.’ To build true and meaningful trust you must first learn to trust *yourself*, then and only then will others learn to break down the barriers of skepticism and trust you.”

“Wow, I never looked at it that way. You know, this is all a little overwhelming but I know I can do it. Where do I start?”

“Robert, a change in your company starts with you. The desire to change is paramount due to the intestinal fortitude you’ll need in order to withstand the many blows from critics who’ll ridicule and try to put you down. Remember though, the majority are only willing to make a difference if it benefits them and their bank accounts. Working to the contrary is the stuff from which legends rise. Just ask yourself, how do I want to be remembered, what legacy do I wish to leave and how do I want to feel when I look back on my life at the end of it all?”

Myron picked up a hand written piece of paper next to the teapot. “The following is a general checklist I put together for beginning your journey of becoming a passionate, heart-based leader,” as he read aloud:

Take a good look at yourself – the good the bad and the ugly. Understand and learn from the many benefits and lessons that lay within any pain, hurt or suppressed experience. An executive coach or mentor can be of tremendous help in this self evaluation process. Promote personal responsibility and ownership within your company. Always starting with you first. Pursue an impactful purpose for your organization that results in a positive sustainable difference within the company while still creating a strong bottom line.

Promote personal growth, organizational leadership development and identify, nurture, recognize and reward your people and emerging leaders and those people with hidden talents.

Open up the positive feedback channels within your company, your family and your friends.

He then handed me the paper and said, “Now, do a quick mental audit of how many of the above steps you are actively planning, encouraging and pursuing within your company?”

I looked at the page and quickly accessed it. “I’m embarrassed to say that I’m not doing any of these things. Up until now, I thought I had a pretty good company.”

“And Robert, I’m sure you do, but how would you like to have a *world class* company that really makes a contribution?” “I’d love it.”

“Well it all starts with a single thought that develops into an idea that transforms into a plan that gives birth to a proposal that with care and commitment will mature into a fully blown embraceable cultural shift.”

“Wow, that was nicely stated,” I said in awe.

“Now Robert, the question is, do you think you have what it takes? Is your company ready for such an incredible challenge? What have you got to lose... your job? Forget about the college tuitions, the mortgage and all of your other financial responsibilities just for a moment. When you have a Worthy Ideal that is warmly embraced and your primary aim is to be ‘of service’ you won’t have to worry about where the money comes from, it will

just manifest and flow to support you on your leadership journey.”

“Thanks to you, I believe that I am ready, Myron. In fact, I can’t wait to begin.” “That’s what I want to hear. You have a lot of information to assimilate so let’s call it a day. Next week we’ll pick up where we left off.”

As Myron walked me to the door I felt that a new page was turning in the evolution of my company and more importantly, my life.



Empowering Others

“Good morning Myron, how’s it going today?” I said as I approached his front porch. Myron sat on an antique rocker, smiling back at me.

“Robert, it’s always going the same. In fact, that reminds me of a story my grandfather used to tell me when I was a young boy. Several thousand years ago in Lebanon, there lived a wise man by the name of Useff who, throughout his life was always happy. It didn’t matter if he had enough to eat, sufficient clothes to keep him warm or even a place to sleep, he was happy. People in the town would always ask him why he was always so happy but he would never tell them. On the last day of his life with just minutes to live, one of his oldest and dearest friends knelt down beside his bed and whispered in his ear, ‘Useff, before you leave this earth you must share with me your secret of how you have remained so happy all these years.’ With a smile, Useff looked up at his friend and told him that each day when he would awaken, God would ask him, ‘Useff, today you can be happy or you can be sad, which will it be?’ And very calmly, Useff told his friend that he always chose to be happy.”

“That’s a great story. I guess, all in all it’s really as simple as that,” I admitted. Myron looked inquisitively at me and asked, “So Robert, how are you doing today?”

“Myron, I’m here with you on this beautiful, sunny Saturday, how else could I possibly be but excellent?” “On that note,” and a slight chuckle Myron replied, “Then let’s go to work.”

He then rose smoothly from the chair and ushered me into the house. “Today I would like to discuss a critical step in our work which is the process of empowering others.”

I took my traditional place on the sofa as Myron poured us both a cup

of tea. He then walked to his book case and began searching the shelves as I have watched him do so many times before. As I looked at him, I was overcome by a feeling of gratefulness for having the opportunity to study with such a learned man. Myron, with all of his foibles truly set a great example of how to live a quality life.

One of his trademark pirate laughs underscored the fact that he had found what he was looking for. With an old leather-bound book in hand he seemed to bounce back across the room, sat down, flipped it open and removed three folded up, weathered-looking sheets of parchment paper. He smiled approvingly as he held them in his hand.

“I do not know the author of this marvelous document. When I purchased this first edition many years ago, I was pleasantly surprised to find these sheets neatly folded between the pages. I have tried many times to identify the author but to no avail. As it is too frail to carry around, I would like for you to write down the information.

“This will be a good way for you to acquaint yourself with the *Thirty Six Steps to Empowerment*.” He carefully unfolded the sheets. “On day one of your first reading write down how you rate yourself on a scale of one to five with one being the lowest and five the highest, on your *observance* of each one of the thirty six steps.

“Then, add up the numbers and that will give you your base-level score. Once completed, put your ratings away in a safe place. Then, on day thirty six rate yourself again. Once you have totaled *that* score, subtract your score from day one from your new score on day thirty six and the difference will show you how much progress you have made.”

He looked into my eyes with a concern that I have become quite familiar with, “Of course, I highly recommend that you then, pass it on to every person you value with the same instructions and be sure to tell them to read it every day for the rest of their lives.”

He then carefully handed the three sheets of parchment to me as I

42.

began to slowly read the neatly handwritten text.

36 Steps to Empowerment

Close your eyes and take 3 slow deep diaphragm breaths. While doing so, visualize yourself becoming calm and relaxed and totally in the moment. When you feel like beginning, allow yourself to become completely absorbed in each facet of the process.

1. I am grateful and give thanks for the difficult aspects of my life as I know that adversity is my greatest teacher, and I am here to learn.

2. I know that I am always at the right place at the right time and that each person that comes into my life is perfect.

3. I have the courage to be different as I no longer need the approval of others.

4. I manage my expectations accordingly as I know that there is great suffering when there is a contradiction between my expectations and the reality of the moment.

5. By trusting in my infinite self, I am less vulnerable to the manipulating fear of my ego.

6. I open my heart to hear the answers instead of depending on my intellect.

Use a timer set for 5 minutes. Close your eyes, put your feet flat on the floor and take three long, slow deep breaths and then relax. Then, think of a question, the answer to which will have a major impact on your life. For the next five minutes, keep asking yourself the question over and over. Don't worry about the answer, it will come in its own good time.

7. I resonate with the confidence of my Infinite Self as opposed to the insecurity of my ego.

8. I do not compare my unique self to anyone else.

9. *I accept what I have and where I am today.*
10. *I am satisfied as I know that all is well within the world right now.*
11. *The less I care about the future, the freer I become.*
12. *I need less and less to be happy as I know that happiness is ALWAYS my choice to make.*
13. *By maintaining my balance, I create energy and power.*
14. *I continue to give thanks for what I have and know that I am blessed.*
15. *I maintain a tranquil state of consciousness by being ever mindful of my infinite self as opposed to the temptations of my ego.*
16. *I maintain harmony by not judging, criticizing or complaining about others or the perceived difficulties which I encounter.*
17. *I am conscious and respectful of the needs of others and they are conscious and respectful of my needs.*
18. *I maintain objectivity by being an unemotional observer.*
19. *I achieve my goals by thinking, feeling and experiencing them in my mind's eye "as if" I already possess them.*
20. *I attract my goals by being centered and having a clear intention of what I want.*
21. *I don't talk about myself or explain what I know, what I want or what I'm doing unless it's absolutely necessary for me to do so.*
22. *When I feel anger, fear, jealousy or sadness, I STOP, and emotionally go within to figure out what I think I'm losing and then agree to lose it.*

23. *By respecting other living things, I am respected.*

24. *I practise "non-action" by objectively observing the ebb and flow of events "as if" I'm watching a movie.*

25. *I effortlessly attract my goals by allowing them to come to me.*

26. *I know that my responsibility on this planet is to experience life, express myself, create, learn, help others and be happy.*

27. *I know that nothing is permanent and all change is a gift.*

28. *I continue to expose myself to the present moment, which brings me closer to my Infinite Self.*

Use a timer set for 5 minutes. Close your eyes, put your feet flat on the floor and practise Transformational Breathing (Consult with Michael on this process). When done, take three long, slow deep breaths and then relax.

29. *I serve humanity through my silence.*

30. *I easily change as I have no fear of the unknown.*

31. *By changing, I create energy. By creating energy, I affirm life.*

32. *I am light-hearted and laugh a lot. I avoid being serious as it is a disease of my ego.*

33. *I accept being here and not being here as equal in value.*

34. *My actions are only initiated by my certainty. When things don't feel right, I DO NOTHING.*

35. *I know that life is a sacred journey and feel humility and gratitude for the opportunity to experience it.*

36. *I fear not death as it gives context to my life.*

After carefully compiling my score I looked at Myron feeling humbled and excited at the same time, “Wow, that’s quite a process. I can see how working on these concepts each day could have a major impact on myself, my family and my company. I’m almost embarrassed to say that I scored less than 40 out of a possible 180 points.”

“I think you’re starting to see there are vast untapped resources and potential that you have hiding in plain sight. I’m reminded of a story of a beggar in ancient China who sat on a great chest outside the gates of his village. Anyone who entered or left the village was approached by the beggar for food, clothing or some form of sustenance. One day a very wise man came to his village and was approached by the beggar for something to eat. The wise man asked him how long he had been begging. The beggar replied that both his father and his grandfather before him had sat on this very same chest. The wise man then asked if he’d ever opened the chest that he, his father and his grandfather had been sitting on for all these generations and the beggar said ‘of course not, it was just a place for them to rest.’ The wise man then said that nothing should ever be taken for granted and bid the beggar good bye without offering him a single crust of bread. Although the beggar was disgruntled at his lack of compassion, he became unsettled with the wise man’s comments. All these years he had never considered looking inside the chest, so he opened it up and low and behold he found that it was full of gold.” A smile warmed his features as he put down his teacup and continued.

“This story is similar to many of your contemporaries. Some will continue to run their companies with the idea that profits can only be made from external means and never consider the vast treasure they have in their employees and some, like you, will have the presence of mind to open the chest and find the gold.”

Myron rose from his chair and said, “In the meantime Robert, let’s call it a day and go out and enjoy the sunshine.”

As I was heading for my car I realized that it wasn’t going to be easy

but I knew I was about to open the chest and find the gold.



The Mastermind

As I drove up in front of Myron’s house, I saw him on top of his roof. If this was someone else it may not have been such a peculiar sight, but Myron is almost one hundred years young as he likes to put it. With one eye on Myron I parked and got out of my car. “Myron, what the hell are you doing up there?” I shouted.

“Oh, every so often my pine trees get the best of my gutters and I’ve got to clean them out. I’ll be right down,” he said without looking down. He took off his gloves and with the grace and speed of a much younger man he glided down the ladder and met me with a big grin.

My curiosity got the best of me and I had to ask him, “Myron, why is a man of your years and means cleaning his own gutters?”

He started to sigh patted me on my shoulder, “Because I can.” “What is that supposed to mean?” I expressed in amusement.

“Because you can, is the irrefutable reason why any one can accomplish anything they set their mind to...because they can. So just sit with that for a while and come in and have some tea.”

I followed him into the house and as I took my usual place on the sofa, Myron disappeared into the kitchen and returned with a tray that contained our traditional pot of tea and two cups. He set it down and poured us each a cup. Handing me mine he said, “Today Robert, we’re going to discuss a process for implementing what you have learned over the last nine weeks into your organization. Are you familiar with the concept of mastermind groups?”

“I’ve heard of them but I’m not exactly sure how they work.”

“Well, mastermind groups have been around for a long time. Jesus and

his apostles was said to be the first. But on a more contemporary note, in 1920, Andrew Carnegie, considered to be one of the richest men in the world, formed the Big 6, whose members included: William Wrigley Jr. of the Wrigley Chewing Gum empire, John R. Thompson the owner of a large restaurant chain, Albert Lasker, owner of the Lord & Thomas Ad Agency which was the largest advertising agency in the country, Jack McCullough, owner of Parmalee Express, the largest transfer company in the country and John Hertz and Bill Ritchie owners of the Yellow Cab Company. At the time, the estimated annual income of this group was \$25 million which equates to about \$269 million today.

“In 1772 the Leather Apron Club, nicknamed the Junto, was formed by Benjamin Franklin. Some of the things that came out of the Junto included, the first public library, the volunteer Fire Department, the first public hospital, paved streets and the founding of the University of Pennsylvania.” “That’s pretty impressive,” I said in awe.

“Napoleon Hill, one of the greatest motivators in the world believed that you could examine any outstanding success in business, finance, industry or any other profession and without fail find that behind their success is an individual who formed a mastermind group.”

“I guess my company can use some mastermind groups.”

“The power of the Mastermind groups is threefold; 1) everyone wants to be better than they are, 2) people have better ideas and more courage for each other than they do for themselves and 3) no one individual can accomplish nearly as much as a team of people working together for the benefit of each other.”

“How many people are on a team and how often would they meet?”
“The mastermind groups I put together in my company ranged in size from four to seven people and would meet once a week for two hours. Through the dual dynamic of team support and peer group pressure, my team members would assist each other in achieving their individual goals as well as the goals of the organization. I can wholly attest that my company’s

phenomenal success and eventual buyout was largely attributed to the mastermind concept. In fact, the conglomerate that purchased my company now uses mastermind groups in all of its subsidiaries.”

“If mastermind groups are so effective, why aren’t they more prevalent?” “That’s a great question. Typically they’re used in a business setting unless you’re lucky enough to find an organization that offers them to the general public. And, even though they have been around for many years, most business leaders are not familiar with their power and typically would not have the in-house expertise to set them up and run them properly.” “Are they difficult to set them up and run?”

“Well Robert, for our purposes today, I just wanted to introduce you to the concept. For such a technology to be installed in your company is a story unto itself. However, let me give you some context for why you would want to set them up in the first place. Are you much of a sports fan?”

“Why yes, I played baseball and football in college and I’m still a big football fan.”

“Great, then I’m sure you will be able to appreciate this analogy. Last week I watched the NFL Hall of Fame inductions in Canton, Ohio. As I listened to the introductions and the speeches of these great athletes, I was moved by what they had to say about their parents, past coaches, teammates and all of the people that had influenced them in their careers. Because of the support that these men received, they were able to utilize their potential to be the very best they could be.” He stopped and looked me in the eye. “You could do that, too.” “I don’t understand. I could do what?”

“Whether you realize it or not, you have the power and ability to create an environment within your organization that promotes greatness. A power that brings out the talents and abilities of your employees will positively impact their families, make a difference with your customers and substantially improve your bottom line profits. And it’s a beautiful thing to observe because everyone wins, your employees, your customers and your company. “I must say, that’s pretty exciting stuff.”

“Robert, between now and next week I want you to think about this and the tremendous opportunity you have to profoundly impact the lives of your employees, their spouses and children, your customers and basically all of the people your company touches.” He effortlessly rose from his chair and winked, “Now if you’ll excuse me, the gutters are calling.”

That evening I had trouble sleeping; I was so excited about setting up mastermind groups in all of the departments throughout my company. All this time building my company I never saw the possibilities, nor did I recognize the responsibility I had as the CEO. Many in my organization were very aggressive and considered ladder climbers. I used to think that was to my advantage. But when I compare that mentality to a team of people helping each other get what they want for the betterment of each other *and* the company, there’s no question in my mind which methodology needs to be implemented. Visions of mastermind groups played in my mind as I gradually succumbed to the gentle coaxing of much needed sleep.



The Practice

Today is bitter sweet. Although I'm enthusiastic about Myron sharing his personal formula for success, our time together is coming to an end. I came to Myron because of my inability to understand and absorb the meaning of a particular book and now as Myron promised, I not only can understand the book, I could probably write one of my own.

Perspective is such an amazing adventure. One day you see yourself and the world in a particular way and then by being willing to open yourself up to another point of view, everything can completely change and you can find yourself with an entirely new outlook on life which in turn can lead to a whole new life. Knowing that we are capable of not taking anything personally, understanding the power of our words and not making assumptions, truly gives us the power to lead awesome lives if we so desire.

When I pulled up to the house, Myron was playing croquet on the front lawn with a young man about twenty years old. I couldn't help but smile. "Myron, you can't find enough to keep you busy during the day so you squeeze in a little croquet?" I asked as I approached the walkway with a smile.

"The day waits for no man." He replied without looking up from his shot. "I'm getting my butt kicked by my great grandson, John for the third time. Let me just finish up here and I'll be right with you."

John and I exchanged pleasantries as I sat on the porch steps to watch. I couldn't help but admire Myron's energy and zest for life which always seemed so much beyond what his age would indicate.

He completed the game, barely losing this one, yet approached me with a completely satisfied look on his face. "OK, Robert, let's go to work, my ego cannot stand another defeat right now," punctuating it with his trademark pirate laugh. "Shall we have a cup of tea?"

I smiled warmly, “I insist on it.”

“Today, I’m going to discuss my daily practice which has made my life a *heaven on earth*. If you choose to follow in my footsteps you will be empowering yourself to riches far beyond your imagination and make the ultimate contribution to all who cross your path,” he said as we took our respective places on sofa and chair.

He handed me some paper and a pencil and said, “Now, write a short paragraph of the expectations you have about today’s session.”

“All right.”

When I was done, he carefully read it over, then without saying a word, took out some matches, set it on fire and dropped it into a small metal wastebasket sitting on the floor next to him. He then looked up at me with a look that I have come to expect. “OK, do you have any other expectations we should discuss?” he said wryly.

“No, that pretty much covers it,” I said with a slight chuckle. Myron was always a stickler about not having expectations. Throughout my lessons he brought me back to being *creative* and not *expectant*. “Without expectations,” he would say, “you spend a lot less time being upset which throws a wrench into the creative process. Remember, emotions trump thoughts.

“Now, for *my Practice*. The first thing I do in the morning is spend forty five minutes with Dr. Kravitz doing my Transformational Breathing, the benefits of this are too numerous to mention, however, I’m sure it is the reason I never get sick, don’t have high blood pressure and have an abundance of energy.”

He next picked up the three pages of parchment he had originally shared with me two weeks ago and continued, “Next, I read the *Thirty Six Steps to Empowerment*. When doing so, I stay ever vigilant for any steps which I have breached and make a mental note to improve in the future.

I then review my **Worthy Ideal** and my **goals** in order to see if they require alteration as I am continually receiving what I want and my perspective is always changing. As Lao Tsu so eloquently stated, ‘you can’t

step twice in the same river.’ My goals, in order of importance, are comprised of the things and conditions I choose to have in my life. I read this list aloud twice a day; before I go to sleep in the evening and before I get out of bed in the morning. As is fully documented in the *Science of Getting Rich*, I think about what I want on a continuous basis emotionally experiencing the changed experience or object already in my possession. With each new object or circumstance I go through a short period of being uncomfortable until I get use to internalizing it.

Last but not least, I reacquaint myself with my *Doctrine of Gratitude* of which I have made you a copy. He picks up a sheet of paper and hands it to me. The true benefit of the *Doctrine of Gratitude* comes from reading each of the nine steps *out loud*.” As he gives me the nod to do so.

Doctrine Of Gratitude

The Law of Gratitude states that action and reaction are always equal and in opposite directions. The more grateful I am for what I have today and what I wish for tomorrow, the faster my dreams and desires manifest in my life.

- 1) As nonresistance is my daily practice, I experience a STRESS-FREE life as I never argue with my current state of reality. When I see what I don’t want , I stop and give thanks for what I have and am blessed with more of the same.
- 2) I see that there is an abundant supply in the world - not scarcity - and I choose to create success from an unlimited supply, rather than compete for a limited one. By doing this I cease to be a victim of circumstances and reclaim my power over my life.
- 3) Whenever I’m experiencing insecurity or have that ‘don’t have enough’ feeling in the pit of my stomach I:
 - ✓ Become aware of the feeling.
 - ✓ Open myself up to experience the pain.
 - ✓ Then ask myself, ‘What do I really want RIGHT NOW?!’
 - ✓ Then relax, take three slow deep breaths and listen.

When I get an image of what I really want, I replace what I am currently experiencing with that image - using the feeling of I don't have enough as a REMINDER of what I DO want.

The Universe is a friendly place and there is an infinite supply of everything I want and need. There is always enough money, customers, time, love, friends, etc., so no situation can leave me without those things for very long, provided I invest my time in concentrating on what I WANT as opposed to what I DON'T WANT and being grateful for what I have.

I never need “any one certain thing,” and am happy to move on to something even better should circumstances dictate.

Although I am grateful for a lot of my accomplishments and blessings, I always know the value of accomplishing even more in the future as growth is the natural order of things.

The Universe works by law, not chance. There are no coincidences in the people and experiences that show up in my life. And, because the Universe is friendly, no circumstance or person shows up to punish me, but rather to teach me and provide me with an opportunity for more growth.

I forgive everyone and take nothing personally as I know that the actions of others have nothing to do with me and everything to do with them. I am grateful for EVERYTHING that occurs in my life and forgive myself for the supposed mistakes and imperfections that have occurred in the past.

Through my giving, I demonstrate gratitude for a lot that I have been given today. I give money, time, support and encouragement for a lot that I will be given tomorrow. I know that I live in an abundant, friendly, cause-and-effect Universe and by giving, I open the channel to receive in return.

The Gratefulness Exercise

Now, make a list of everything you are grateful for including all of your goals you have not yet attained. Once your list is complete, take your time and review it.

At the end of each day, throw the list away and begin a new one on

the following day.

When I was done Myron said, “The last part is essential. If I don’t write down at least *twenty* things each day, I know I’m not trying very hard. The reason I don’t just read what I wrote yesterday is because it wouldn’t have any power and would be a waste of my time.”

He gently lowered the parchment paper and looked at me, “By doing my Practice each day I am reminded of how the Universe works and what I need to do in order to have my life be as wonderful an experience as it can be. My Practice puts me in the right frame of mind to start each day with an *empowered* perspective.”

He lovingly smiled, “Now, Robert, let me bring a little reality into the picture. My business career is over, so I have plenty of time on my hands. You don’t. What I might suggest, is that you streamline the process, doing certain things at different times of the day, and although I get tremendous benefit from my Transformational Breathing sessions, you could substitute that 45 minutes with a 10 minute session of being alone, sitting in a comfortable position and breathing slowly in and out through your diaphragm. During this session, try to keep the mind clear. When you have a thought, acknowledge it and then go back to having no thoughts.”

He rose, signaling me that our session was sadly coming to a close. “So there you have it Robert, you now know everything that I know.”

I slowly got up from the sofa that I have grown so accustomed to sitting on and feeling a bit anxious said, “Right, I wish.” My mentor was cutting the umbilical cord and even though I thought that I was mentally prepared for this moment, I realized I wasn’t.

“Just do what I do each day and you can stop wishing and start *having*. You can do it, I know you can.”

I didn’t know what to say as I found myself looking down at my shoes and feeling like I felt when I was going to school for the first time so many years ago. “I guess that’s pretty much it, huh?” He patted my shoulder, nodding his head and agreed, “Pretty much.”

I looked at him and in that single moment I realized that Myron had given me a gift. A gift of unequalled proportions that would change my life forever. And in that moment I knew that everything was going to be alright. "Myron, thank you. Thank you for everything."

He smiled warmly and said, "If you really want to thank me then just make me proud, walk the talk and don't stop sharing it with others." He opened the door, "Now get the hell out of here, I think I've got a fourth game of croquet left in me."

The End...

or **The Beginning.**

You can reject or accept what you have read.
You can remain as you are or have everything you want.

The choice is yours.

Author's Note

During the course of this book, I mention Wallace Wattles and *The Science of Getting Rich* numerous times. I believe it to be one of the most important books ever written and the amazing thing about it is that it was written long before most of us were even born. I truly believe that everyone should be exposed to the wisdom in Mr. Wattles' book and if you become a coaching client I will send you the e-book of Myron's edited version as a gift of your patronage.

It is my sincere hope that between reading *emPOWERMENT: Creating Lives, Families and Organizations That ROCK!* and my coaching, you will gain a sense of the world of possibilities that are available to you by always being open to alternative perspectives.

If you are ready to make the commitment to "do the work," your life will improve in an infinite number of ways. And, if enough people care sufficiently to do the work, this world will be a far better place to live.

As Myron says to Robert in the closing sentences of this book, "If you really want to thank me then just make me proud, walk the talk and don't stop sharing it with others."

It really is your choice.

Peace and Light,

Michael Shenker

Dare 2 Be Great

www.TransformU.net

The Next Steps

If you can relate to where Robert was coming from and would like your life filled with more meaning, passion and success, **START TODAY** and make a contribution to yourself, your loved ones and your business associates with the following process:

Step 1

Commit to do your Practice **every day**.

Step 2

Go to my website at www.transformu.net and download my **special edition of The Science of Getting Rich (SOGR)** for just \$.01.

Commit to reading at least one chapter **per week**.

Step 3

A. If you have questions about the SOGR that are prohibiting you from *continuing* to read further. **Please write them down**. Then, take advantage of my special offer of **1 Free Coaching Session**. E-mail me with the message "set up free coaching session," let me know what **time zone** you're in and perhaps some **alternative times to talk** and we'll set up a session. During that time I'll answer your questions, maybe solve some problems... ***and I'll even pay for the call.***

B. If you feel that your life is in *overwhelm* and you want to immediately take advantage of my **Free Coaching Session**, just follow the above instructions and let me see if I can be of service.

It is important to note that I am not a doctor, nor do I provide any medical advice what so ever. If you are plagued with thoughts of suicide or harming yourself or others, please contact a medical professional or call the suicide hot line.

Michael Shenker
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**What others have said about
Michael Shenker and his Dare 2 Be Great A-TEAMS Program...**

"From the first workshop on, I thoroughly enjoyed it. The process of empowering the group was right on. Michael, we all enjoyed the entire A-TEAMS Program and if I had to do it over again, the only difference is I would have said yes immediately!"

Larry Laissue, Vice President of Sales
Pitney Bowes Office Systems Group, Portland, OR

"Michael, you flat out never missed a beat on this project. I'd say you earned every dollar I paid you - plus a few more! I look forward to our follow-up audit."

Patti McCoy, Senior Vice President, Director of Marketing
First Consumers National Bank, Portland, OR

"I say without reservation my time with Michael Shenker's A-TEAMS has been the richest, most productive time I have spent in my life so far both personally and professionally."

Michael R. Coates, Managing Partner
Columbia Business Advisors, Lake Oswego, OR

"Michael has a genuine passion and talent for helping others challenge themselves to achieve the greatness that is inherently inside each of us, and to go beyond ordinary effort and fear to become fully engaged in the proactive pursuit of their greatness."

Ross Macdonald, Entrepreneur/Businessman
Portland, OR

"The A-TEAMS program is the most impressive personal and corporate development program I have ever seen. It works because it is based on human nature."

Jerry L. Fletcher, President
Z-axis Marketing, Inc. Co., Lake Oswego, OR

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