

A close-up portrait of Donald Trump, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a red tie. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with a blue sky and some greenery.

An  
Informal  
Education  
In Business  
and Life

DONALD J.  
**TRUMP**  
THINK LIKE A  
CHAMPION

WITH MEREDITH MCIVER

Foreword By Robert Kiyosaki, Author of *Rich Dad Poor Dad*

# FOREWORD

by Robert Kiyosaki

One of the benefits of working with Donald is observing him in action in real life. Over the years, I have gotten to know the real Donald, as well as the “celebrity Donald.” I have found he is the same person . . . In fact he is actually bigger in real life than his celebrity.

Working with him, I have observed him thinking, then listened to his thoughts become words and his thoughts and words become actions. In most instances, his thoughts, words, and actions are the same. Maybe this is why he is direct and blunt. He can be blunt because his thoughts, words, and actions are integrated, congruent, operating as one.

Many of us know people who are, actually, three people. They think one thing, say something else, and do not do what they say *or* think. I have observed these kinds of people, who are really three people, achieve limited success and live conflicted lives.

In early 1980, I lost my first major business. Losing everything was as horrible as you might expect. Losing everything gave power to the loser in me. Worst of all, I had lost confidence in myself. I knew what I had to do, but for some reason I simply did not do what I knew I had to do. My personal battle between 1980 and 1990 was to gain power over my own thoughts. To regain power

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over my thoughts, I began reading and listening to great thoughts from great people . . . and then made those thoughts mine. Slowly but surely, my business life began to turn and I began to win again.

In 1987, just after the stock market crashed, I came across Donald's book *The Art of the Deal*. My wife Kim and I put aside everything we were doing and read that book. As the world was crashing down, we had the opportunity and benefit—through Donald's thoughts, words, and actions—to see the world of business. By 1994, Kim and I were financially free. In our quiet moments, Kim and I often discuss how Donald's book inspired us to go on, even though the world was crashing down around us.

In 1997, reading his book *The Art of the Comeback* verified for us that we were following the thoughts of a great man. Very few people will talk publicly, much less write, about their mistakes, their lessons, and their comeback.

In 2004, Kim and I met Donald for the first time. Obviously he did not know who we were, yet he was extremely gracious and we thanked him for sharing his thoughts through his books.

In late 2006, Donald and I published our book, *Why We Want You To Be Rich: Two Men, One Message*. Fueled by our shared concern for people and our desire to teach, Donald and I collaborated on this book, predicting much of the financial chaos 2008 would bring.

It is an honor to write this Foreword for his book, *Think Like a Champion*, because teaching me to think like a champion is the gift Donald has given my wife and me . . . a gift he shares with the world . . . a gift more valuable than money.

# INTRODUCTION

Over the years, I have watched many people aspire to success. I am one of them, and while I haven't peaked yet, I've had a good share of success already. So I'm often asked what my "secrets" to success are. I don't think they're secrets, but every one of us needs to have a formula that works for him or her personally.

This collection of writing is an indication of the thought process that I believe can lead people to success. It has worked for me. It's another side to my personality—the more reflective side that reveals my sources and how I apply them to the big picture that is life. The persona you so often see via the world media is someone who is outgoing, confident, sometimes brash—but honest. One reason people like me is because I'm blunt. One reason people don't like me is because I'm blunt. But one reason I'm successful is that I can cut through nonsense quickly and get to the core of things.

*Think Like a Champion* is an example of that approach to life and business. I take a topic, think about it, dissect it, and put it back into a formula that becomes what I believe is solid advice. I have always relished putting time and energy into digging below the surface of a problem and coming up with a unique and effective answer.

While I was in school, my father, Fred C. Trump, would send inspirational quotes to me every week. Many of them were about

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leadership, how to be a champion in life. I learned a lot from them and I still refer to them, so they are included here for you.

I was fortunate to have a mentor in my life like my father, and I hope these writings will prove to be helpful to you. I would like to dedicate this book to the memory of my father and all that he taught me. I would hope that sharing these thoughts with you will provide you with guidance as well as inspiration.

—*Donald J. Trump*

THINK LIKE A  
CHAMPION

*The future belongs to those who believe  
in the beauty of their dreams.*

—ELEANOR ROOSEVELT



## Barack Obama Election Ushers in a Different World

After the election in November of 2008, I was interviewed by Dominic Carter of New York 1, on his program called “Inside City Hall.” New York 1 is an all-news program that is popular in New York City, and Dominic Carter is someone for whom I have a great deal of respect. He should have a national show, but then New York would miss out on his full-time and dynamic presence here. He describes me as “a man not known for keeping his opinions to himself,” and we covered some interesting topics.

Dominic asked about the election and I was honest about it. McCain was in an almost impossible situation. Bush had been so incompetent that any Republican would have a hard time unless they could bring back Eisenhower. Bush was a disaster for the country as well as for the Republican Party.

Then he asked me about Barack Obama. I told him that Barack will need to be a great president because we’re in serious

trouble as a country. It hasn't been this way since 1929. So he doesn't have much choice—he will simply *have* to be great, which he has a very good chance of being.

What he has done is amazing. The fact that he accomplished what he has—in one year and against great odds—is truly phenomenal. If someone had asked me if a black man or woman could become president, I would have said yes, but not yet. Barack Obama proved that determination combined with opportunity and intelligence can make things happen—and in an exceptional way.

He is not walking into an easy or enviable situation. As of October of 2008, the U.S. government reported a \$237 billion deficit. The good news is that Obama seems to be well aware of the situation. His comments have led me to believe that he understands how the economy works on a comprehensive level. He has also surrounded himself with very competent people, and that's the mark of a strong leader. I have confidence he will do his best, and we have someone who is serious about resolving the problems we have and will be facing in the future. To me that is very good news.

After 9/11, this country received a lot of compassion from countries and people around the world. Within a short amount of time, however, we were hated. How did that happen? We had no dialogue with other countries because they just plain hated us. What's different today is that we have a new chance, a new beginning. The world is excited about Barack Obama and the new United States. Let's keep it that way.



*Whatever games are played with us,  
we must play no games with ourselves.*

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON



## Essays, Assets, and Stephen King

In the *New York Times Book Review* of September 30, 2007, is an essay by Stephen King on the short story. As you most likely know, Stephen King is the prolific and very successful author of sixty books and nearly 400 short stories. One of his short stories won the O. Henry Prize in 1996. His point in his essay is that in reviewing the state of the short story today, he notes that they seem to “feel show-offy, and written for editors and teachers, rather than for readers.” This is an insightful comment and it got me to thinking about why we write and who we think our audience might be.

I like essays and so I can relate to the short story, although the short story is a fictional prose tale. The short story is not an easy medium, as any writer will tell you, because you must be concise. Essays are a bit the same, because they are succinct and specific. If you read Stephen King’s essay, you will see that he gets his point across beautifully in the span of one page.

I may not be Stephen King, but I can appreciate what he does. You may not be a mogul yet, but I think you can appreciate the complexities of what I have to deal with daily. Stephen King is pointing out that the market for short stories is limited these days, so the writers of short stories seem more determined than ever to make their mark—but on the editors who might be able to get their story into print, not the reader, who might be expecting to be entertained. A valid consideration, I will say. We all have target markets and the demographics are important, no matter what your industry may be.

In short, Stephen King is astutely acknowledging that the short story writers of today are protecting their assets by targeting their writing to the people who will most likely be able to get it into print. Their second consideration is the reader because, unless they consider the editor first, their reader will have no chance of ever seeing the short story, no matter how wonderful or how mediocre it might be. It's an intelligent approach, but I can understand the point Mr. King is making when he laments the fact that the stories seem prefabricated to appeal to a certain audience—editors and teachers, in this case.

When I build a residential building, for example, I will first consider who will be living there. I study the demographics, as does any business person, whether you're in advertising or residential property management. To get the message out, I will also have to appeal to the people who will choose—or not choose—to promote the building. By now, my name is big enough and equated with the gold standard to the extent that I don't have to say too much about it. The name Trump is a guarantee of a certain level of quality. Stephen King mentions that short stories seem to be delegated to the bottom shelf at the bookstores. He says the American short story is alive but not well these days. The main reason seems to be that the target market is simply dwindling.

I think that he does a spot-on analysis of the situation when he notices that the stories seem to be written for publication purposes, not for the edification of the reader. I know that if I did something that was intended to impress the so-called critics that I would be selling not only myself short, but other people as well. That's one reason I'm liked as well as disliked. In fact, one critic from the *New York Times*, Herbert Muschamp, mentioned that I do better when I choose to ignore my critics than when I pay attention to them. I have to agree, and Stephen King might agree to that as well when it comes to the fate of the short story.

Being true to yourself and your work is an asset. Remember that assets are worth protecting. No one will ever tell you it will be easy to stick to your own convictions, but I believe it is necessary. Otherwise, what are you doing and who are you doing it for? Keep it straight and simple. You will be richer—in more ways than one—in the long run.

*There is one thing stronger than all the armies of the world,  
and that is an idea whose time has come.*

—VICTOR HUGO



## Innovation

People often talk about something new being “innovative.” Most of the time, it’s simply putting together existing elements to create what appears to be new. I was touted as being innovative when I came up with the mixed-use condominium and hotel tower, which I did with the Trump International Hotel & Tower in New York City. Since then, the concept has been copied (by myself and others) and it has proven to be tremendously successful, nationally and internationally.

To me, the idea was common sense, and I didn’t think I was being particularly creative. When I look back, maybe I was. But when I read subsequent articles about innovation and certain inventors, it got me thinking about how one might become an innovator, which is something I think is important for students to think about.

I remember reading about a composer named Steve Reich who came up with a new idea called phasing, which is like windshield wipers going in and out of synch. Apparently he was caught in a traffic jam one rainy day and the rhythm of the windshield

wipers caught his attention and he applied what he heard to his musical compositions. He has had a significant influence on contemporary music, and I think he's a great example as an innovator. Sometimes new ideas can come from something as mundane and functional as your windshield wipers. The key is to pay attention and keep your brain and senses open to new stimuli.

It also helps to be thinking of two things at once—multilevel focusing is what I call it. The intersecting of ideas is when innovation will follow—thinking in musical terms while listening to your windshield wipers, or thinking of a hotel tower and condominiums at one time, or maybe watching a stone roll and imagining a wheel. Who knows what will result? Sometimes it will be fantastic and other times it won't, but it gets the mind working in new dimensions that can sometimes prove fruitful.

This can also happen without deliberately attempting to be innovative, so the other technique to employ—consciously and unconsciously—is to keep an open mind. That's very important in business as well as in the creative arts. Don't limit yourself to staid thinking because you want to excel in business. My first book was called *The Art of the Deal* because I view business deals as being an art form. Maybe that's why I've been a successful dealmaker. I employ both sides of my brain when I'm thinking and working.

You may be aware of the number phi (pronounced “fee”), which has an astonishing history. It's been employed by people from Pythagoras to da Vinci, and most likely the builders of the pyramids used it as well. It's been around for a long time and the number itself is 1.6180339887. It's called the golden ratio, and if you want to know more specifics, you can read *The Golden Ratio* by Mario Livio, who goes into great detail about it. My point is that it appears that some people use the number deliberately, and other people know it subconsciously and it can appear in their work with or without intention. But it can be used intentionally,

and very often is. It's very mysterious, as this ratio appears in unrelated works and natural phenomena, from the chambered nautilus to galaxies to artwork and architecture. It can make your innovative attempts a little easier when you make an effort to understand that there are mysteries in life and to be open to them.

I'm not advising you to dwell on the mysterious—a successful life requires common sense and hard work—but to be aware of things that are sometimes inexplicable because they can be a big step toward innovation. We don't really create, but we assemble what has been created for us. Be a great assembler—no matter what your interests may be—and you'll be on your way to inventiveness. A big mind requires a variety of thoughts and impulses to keep it well occupied, so make sure you keep your mind engaged in the best ways possible. It could very well be your calling card for success.

*Coming together is a beginning, keeping together  
is progress, working together is success.*

—HENRY FORD



## The Importance of Being a Team Player

I have always known the importance of having the ability to be a team player, even though I am an entrepreneur. In a big sense, we're all in this together, and thinking otherwise won't give us the results we might be aiming for. More than ever, working together is integral to survival as well as to success.

As I was thinking of this, I remembered a couple of good examples of team players. Most of us know of Tom Brokaw, the television journalist and author. He has received many awards and is highly esteemed within his industry as well as with the public. I remember when *The Apprentice* first premiered and it was doing very well—it was the number one rated show that week and I had been invited to sit in George Steinbrenner's box for a Yankees game. Tom was there with his lovely wife, and he tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Thanks, Donald, for what you've done for NBC. We really appreciate it."

What he said was a perfect example of team spirit. We were on the same network, and he cared about what I'd done for them. "Them" became "us," and I understood where he was coming from immediately. He may be famous, but he knows his programs aren't just about him. My program isn't just about me, either. In fact, as you will discover as you gain wisdom over the years, most of the things you do will rarely be just about you. Tom cared about the network, and his team was being helped by the success of *The Apprentice*. His comment gave me great insight into his integrity as a person—and maybe that's why everyone at NBC, as well as the public, loves and respects him.

Likewise, while I was standing backstage in Los Angeles for the Emmy Awards when *The Apprentice* had been nominated for an award, Debra Messing, who had won acclaim and an Emmy Award for her performance in *Will and Grace*, was standing nearby. I had always liked Debra, maybe because her hair is so great, but she came up to me and very graciously thanked me for the success of *The Apprentice*. Once again I realized that here was another team player of note—her show was also on NBC.

It's been a few years, but I can clearly recall the day Jeff Zucker came to my office to ask me if I'd host *Saturday Night Live*. One reason I wanted to say yes to Jeff was that *Saturday Night Live* was an NBC show and I was a part of their team. Team spirit was important, and I have to say it was a great choice. Everyone had a good time, and everyone won.

My point is that keeping the team spirit alive and well in your personal and professional lives will give you some very good, even surprising, results. Plus, it's a great feeling to take the high road. Never negate the power of the team, and you'll be a team player of note as well as power.



*At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by  
a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to  
think with deep gratitude of those who have  
lighted the flame within us.*

—ALBERT SCHWEITZER



## An Early Thanksgiving

On the day before the Rosh Hashanah holiday each year for the past eighteen years, I receive a message from a Rabbi in Los Angeles. I am not Jewish, but have many observant Jews who work for me, so I am well aware of the holiday schedule and that Rosh Hashanah is their New Year, a time for celebration.

I find his message of thanks to be especially resonant because he and his wife lost their son years ago, yet they call to remind themselves (and me) of the many blessings they've had in life. The reason the Rabbi calls me every year is a wonderful example of the spirit of thanksgiving: Back in 1988, he and his wife had a three-year-old son who had an illness that was confounding the doctors in Los Angeles. One day the boy's father called me to see if they could borrow my jet. He didn't know me, and I didn't know him. But he explained that no commercial airline would fly

his son due to the extensive equipment required to sustain his life. It was considered too big of a risk. I had small children at the time, and I immediately said yes to his request. How could I say no?

I sent my jet out and brought the little boy and his parents to New York with the hope that doctors here might find a cure for the severe breathing illness from which he was suffering. His cure was not to be, but his parents have remained grateful to this day. I am always touched that they remember me.

In these recent days of upheaval in our country, I found the Rabbi's yearly message to be an insight into a good way to handle difficult and even tragic times—to find a blessing in the midst of adversity. This family and their faith is a wonderful example for all of us, and I would like to thank them for their yearly reminder. We should realize that we all have a lot to be thankful for, whether it's New Year's, Thanksgiving, or just another Wednesday in our lives.

*The beginning of every government starts  
with the education of our youth.*

—PYTHAGORAS



## Learning Is a New Beginning

Pythagoras interpreted the universe through numbers. As a businessman, that always appealed to me. It makes sense. He was a philosopher and a mathematician, and he knew the importance of learning. Pythagoras lived a long time ago, but a lot of things have remained the same, like the significance of education for both individuals and society.

Whenever I start something new, I know I have a lot to learn. This does not discourage me—in fact it gives me energy. It is similar to the feeling of a new beginning, a fresh start. When I started building golf courses, I had a tremendous amount to learn, but it was fantastic to be doing something brand new and I loved learning the details of golf course design. If someone had told me thirty years ago I'd be developing golf courses, I would have thought they were joking. But it's something I've truly enjoyed doing.

It's important to remain open to new ideas and new information. Being a know-it-all is like shutting the door to great

discoveries and opportunities. Keep your door open every day to something new and energizing. Sometimes I wonder what will show up, which is a terrific way to start every day. Other times I might have to search a bit on my own, which is why books and educational tools can be wonderful and should be readily available. Maybe I'm just fortunate, but I'm never bored. In fact, I think that's a big reason behind my success.

Once in awhile—or often is even better—ask yourself this question: What do I need to know more about? Maybe it's world history. With the events of today being what they are, it's probably a good idea to know a little about how different cultures have evolved and are operating. Maybe it's something else. I make an effort to read newspapers with ample international coverage and the *Financial Times* on a daily basis because it's important to my business to know what's going on worldwide. That alone can require serious attention every day. For you it may be something else.

These days, we don't have many excuses for having a blind spot. We all have access to information with relatively little effort, and, back to the ancient Greeks, Socrates is famed for having said, "There is only one thing I know, and that is I know nothing." Pretty tough words coming from an esteemed scholar and philosopher, but it opened him up to more knowledge every day. In other words, start every day with a clean slate. Give yourself a new beginning by opening up your mind.

If I'd started in business thinking I knew everything, I'd have been sunk before I got started. Don't make that mistake. There are a lot of hidden aspects in every industry, and you will find out how complex seemingly simple things can be. For example, to get a building built in New York City requires knowledge of zoning, contractors, architects, air rights, tax laws, unions, and about a thousand other things. I had a lot to learn and no one else could learn it for me. But every day I would learn something, apply it,

and make progress. Believe me, being a developer didn't happen overnight.

Never think of learning as being a burden or studying as being boring. It may require some discipline, but it can be an adventure. It can also prepare you for a new beginning. Notice the first word in my *Think Big* credo: Think. That's the first step. Use everything in your power to utilize and develop that capability, and you'll be in for some great surprises.

*A leader has the right to be beaten,  
but never the right to be surprised.*

—NAPOLEON BONAPARTE



## Learn to Think on Your Feet

I've already spoken about complacency and how it can ruin your chances for success. It's the same as being in a rut and deciding to stay there. That's why I like to advise people to live on the edge—it's the opposite of complacency, and the same as thinking on your feet.

Ever notice how your senses are heightened when you are in challenging situations? It's like having an adrenalin rush that gives you extra energy. If you see every day as a challenge, you'd be surprised how efficient you can become and how much can be accomplished. People often say they "hit the street running," which is another way of saying they did their prep work and were ready.

One of the most obvious lessons on *The Apprentice* is for the candidates to learn to think quickly. They are under a time constraint to finish their assignments, and as we've noticed, it's important that they have a Plan B in line. If Plan A doesn't work, they're prepared for it and they won't lose much time. They are

learning to think ahead, to be prepared, and to cover their bases. These are basic ingredients for success in business.

When I started out in business, I spent a great deal of time researching every detail that might be pertinent to the deal I was interested in making, and I still do the same today. People often comment on how quickly I operate, which is true. But the reason I can move quickly is that I've done the background work first, which often no one sees. Just because you don't see someone working doesn't mean they haven't been working in their spare or private time. I prepare myself thoroughly, and then when it is time to move ahead, I am ready to sprint.

Being able to think on your feet is the result of training and discipline. You can't sprint unless you have built up the strength to do so. Building the stamina is up to you. If you don't work at it, it's not going to happen by wishful thinking. You have to dedicate yourself to it every day. In other words, set a goal and work toward it. Athletes know that no one else can do the training for them, and business people should have the same discipline. You have to be self-reliant.

Have you ever said to yourself, "I wish I'd thought of that!"? I've heard people say that when they come across something very clever or something fantastic. One way to learn to think on your feet is to ask yourself what you should be thinking of this very moment. Do it right now, and then see other people saying, "I wish I'd thought of that—what a great idea!" You'd be surprised how many good ideas you might have if you'd give yourself the opportunity to think about them. Thinking takes time. It's the preparation for being able to think on your feet. First things first: First we walk, then we run, then we sprint.

Thoreau said, "I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestioned ability of a man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor." That is not only an encouraging statement, it is also an

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empowering one. It means you can accomplish a lot by applying your brainpower and then moving forward with it. Thought without action won't amount to much in the long run. Those great ideas you have will remain great ideas unless you actively do something with them.

Don't wait for dire circumstances to test your quick-thinking ability. Test yourself daily. Be on alert at all times. As Napoleon said, "A leader has the right to be beaten, but never the right to be surprised." See yourself as a leader—starting right now. It will mean you are self-reliant, responsible, and not apt to being unnecessarily surprised by the vicissitudes of life, whether you are in business or not. Being prepared cannot be overestimated, and if you want to hit the big time running, you'd better be able to think on those feet of yours.



*He who can no longer pause to wonder  
and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead;  
his eyes are closed.*

—ALBERT EINSTEIN



## Strive for Wholeness

Ever hear the saying “Get the big picture”? It amazes me when people can leave out or ignore big pieces in a picture or pretend nothing is missing. It’s like ordering a pizza and getting a pie with a few slices already removed—and still thinking it’s a whole pie. Wouldn’t you wonder where those pieces went?

I’ve encountered people who don’t wonder about anything. Sometimes I wonder if they are in shock or something. Maybe they’re just afraid to strive for the big picture or the whole pie, or maybe they don’t think they’re worth the whole pie. Whatever it is, don’t let yourself fall into any of those categories. Don’t ever sell yourself short. That’s bad business on every level, even the metaphysical.

If striving for wholeness means diminishing your competition, then your competition wasn’t much to begin with. A lot of life is about survival of the fittest and adaptation, as Darwin pointed out. It’s not all there is, but it’s an indication of how the world has evolved in historical terms. We’ve seen many empires come and

go—the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and so forth. There have always been surges of power. Sometimes they last for centuries. Even so, some of us have never heard of them as of today. In other words, things change. We have to keep up with the changes and move forward or we will be holding some moldy pieces of the pie.

As The Trump Organization has moved forward, I have very much seen it as a living organism that needs to be fed and replenished. It needs to be whole, which requires many sections fitting together and working together tightly. It is a daily requirement on my part to make sure all the ingredients are there and working together to make the best product possible. I can't have any missing pieces. I can't have any ingredients that aren't the best. Those are my standards, and it's my responsibility to make sure they are kept.

See yourself as an organization. Pay attention to every facet of your life. What's strong? What's weak? What's missing? What can you do to make the big picture better? Whatever you do, don't stagnate. Don't become complacent. Don't pretend that 50 percent is enough, whether you're giving or receiving. Things move too quickly today to fall into that trap.

When I realized how fast the world moves, I decided to double up on my work hours. That wasn't a big sacrifice because I love what I'm doing and I've always been a hard worker. I'm happier and more productive now than I ever was. But I kept the pace in order to keep up with my environment, which is a fast one. New York is known for being fast. You can adapt or lose out. I chose to adapt. Make your choices accordingly. People who want to compete with me will have to keep up with me.

I had a dynamic, very well-qualified, very well-educated young man come to work for me. I remember thinking, this guy is going to be great. Was I ever wrong. He took so long to explain anything that every time I saw him, I began to dread any kind of

interaction with him. He was just too slow. He was thorough and painstaking, but he couldn't keep up with the required pace. He couldn't adapt to his environment, and despite his qualifications, he was unable to get the big picture and figure out how to fit in. It was a happy day for me when he departed. Don't let that happen to you. Learn to adapt. Learn to keep learning.

Very few of us are completed projects. It's an ongoing process. Even being a prodigy, Mozart worked at what he did. We have to assemble the bits and pieces constantly in order to achieve the whole. But we have to assemble creatively and passionately to get anywhere near the whole. It's another way of covering your bases for the most effective game. Strive for wholeness and keep your sense of wonder intact, and you will find yourself ready for a grand slam.

*An achievement is a bondage.  
It obliges one to a higher achievement.*

—ALBERT CAMUS



## Give Your Higher Self a Chance

When the achiever achieves, it's not a plateau, it's a beginning. Achievers move forward at all times—they have anticipation for their next deal and have another goal immediately lined up. It's enthusiasm that can't be fabricated—it's either there, or it's not. Achievers go for the challenge, so the next deal is what they're thinking about. They have an obligation to themselves to best themselves. That's living in the highest realm.

Your higher self is in direct opposition to your comfort zone. An indication of life is growth, and signs of growth have to be there. You've heard people refer to a city as vibrant, and what that means is that it's growing and it's lively—it is not stagnating. See yourself as a city if you must, with all the inner and outer workings necessary to keep yourself thriving and efficient.

There are so many “fine lines” in life that when people say life is an art, they're not too far off. I've said before that I see my work

as an art form, and that's one reason why. We all know that fine line between something great and something extraordinary. Sometimes it's almost imperceptible, or impossible to define. What makes da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* so exceptional? There are millions of different answers, but it mesmerizes people. It's mysterious and brings us to another realm, a different dimension.

Our higher selves can serve to transport us to becoming visionaries. The word visionary evokes a lot of images and definitions, some even being a "castle-builder" or a Don Quixote. It often connotes someone who is idealistic. There is nothing wrong with that as long as it's contained within reason. Visionaries move the world along into new dimensions. Look at Bill Gates, for example, in technology; or Mark Burnett in reality TV; or Pablo Picasso, Stravinsky, and other greats of the twentieth century. They were groundbreakers who followed their own instincts and led us in new directions.

Our higher self will often lead us into new waters, and for a good reason. No one wants to spend their life treading water just to keep from going under. That is futile and disheartening. Sometimes we do things to build up experience and stamina to prepare us, but it's to prepare us for something bigger. Always know you could be on the precipice of something great—that's being connected to your higher self. It's also a good way to keep those negative thoughts far away.

Sometimes our goals aren't necessarily concrete. Sometimes it's a feeling of something great that will happen, and so we're open to it. That doesn't mean we sit around waiting for something to just happen—very often it happens while we're working away on something else. Being industrious can be a magnet for new ideas, while idleness and inertia can be magnets for negativity.

One of the worst fears we can have is the fear to attempt something. That can leave you feeling bereft for no particular reason

except that maybe you will have missed your purpose. There is always the possibility of failure, but there is a greater chance of success if you actually try to do something versus doing nothing. I wasn't sure I'd be a success on the radio, but I went for it and my program on Clear Channel was a big hit. But I had to take the chance first to find out.

Life can be an adventure of the best sort if you will give your higher self a chance. We all have something unique to offer. Our work is to find out what that is and to work at it with a passion. So don't tread water. Get out there and go for it.

*Experience is one thing  
you can't get for nothing.*

—OSCAR WILDE



## Wisdom

I remember reading a short book that was entirely based on the question: What does wisdom mean to you? People from every profession, every walk of life, and every possible background contributed their thoughts. All these people had been successful. The answers were diverse, but I realized they tended to have a few common denominators: experience, integrity, and knowledge.

I was relatively young when I read this book, and in fact I can't remember the title of it. It was left on a table in the library at school so I just happened upon it. I understood the emphasis on knowledge, and could see the value of experience even though I hadn't had much yet, so what stood out the most to me was integrity. Very often it was combined with the value of reputation, and I think that's when my approach to a quality brand name was in gestation.

My father had already established a strong brand name in the outer boroughs of New York City as a developer, and people knew his work would have an inherent quality to it. They wouldn't have to guess or feel they were taking a chance if it had the Trump

name on it. That's how he built his reputation. When I went into business for myself, I made a point to establish a reputation that bankers and other professionals would be comfortable with, and I knew that eventually my integrity as a businessman would be intact. People are more apt to want to work with you if they feel they can trust you—an important consideration especially if one wants financial backing for projects.

Whether you are a full- or part-time student now is a good time to think about your future, whether it's brand new or a new beginning. Make certain things your guideposts. It's a good sign you're reading this because that means you are serious about your education and gaining knowledge. That's something that was emphasized to me as a student, and I made a greater effort to learn everything I could in order to gain wisdom.

What was pointed out—and what I fully realized later—is that wisdom comes as a result of several factors: one being experience, and one being knowledge. It's something you can't teach someone else—you have to achieve it on your own. It also has to do with insight, which comes with experience as well.

I realize now when I can assess a situation quickly that it's a result of wisdom I've gained through a variety of experiences. It's a bit like being able to trust your instincts because you've had a good record of successes. It's very hard for me to just give you this wisdom—you have to get there yourself. But these pointers were helpful to me as a student, and they are worth thinking about.

Another way to gain wisdom is to read about the greats in history and those in your specific field of interest. I learned a great deal by reading about Winston Churchill, Abraham Lincoln, and people who had been in pivotal places in world history. They had to be very equipped to deal with what they were handed. Their situations may have been a matter of fate, destiny, and timing, but they had the experience and wisdom to deal effectively with their



circumstances. Imagine having many thousands or even millions of people affected by your actions and decisions, and you will have an inkling of the immense responsibility these people had. It can make our problems seem small in comparison, and it can enlarge our minds in order to comprehend a bigger picture of duty and competence.

I remember realizing back in school that two things in particular seemed to shape the world as I knew it then—war and nature. Nature is a powerful force and so is war. It changes the landscape of countries and cultures, and nature can just plain change the landscape. So I spent time studying wars and their impact on where we are today in civilization. That's a big assignment and I'm by no means an expert, but it is worth spending some time to know how and why we are where we are today.

One book that I would suggest to you, because it is valuable for business and managerial strategies, is *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu. This was apparently written in the sixth century BC and is a study of military strategy. It has been influential to leaders for many centuries, and General Douglas MacArthur studied it as well as other famed military strategists throughout history. It may sound like an unusual business school recommendation, but believe me, it isn't. It's valuable and worth your time.

By comparison, another famed book is Machiavelli's *The Prince*, which is more about political conflict and the qualities necessary for leadership than war or business, but its emphasis on power becomes a negative factor. Ethics and integrity seem to get lost somewhere in the shuffle, and therefore the word Machiavellian has become a pejorative term. It's a better use of your time to read *The Art of War*.

There are many roads to wisdom and many wonderful books to educate us on our way. I'm sure you'll discover your own favorites, but the first step is to take the time to read and learn in

the first place. In the long term, this will save you time because you will be learning from people who have already been faced with serious issues and who have been victorious. Remember, you need knowledge and experience first. Wisdom will come provided you give it a chance to develop. First things first, and you will be pleased at what will follow. The achievement of wisdom will be all yours.

*If you want to understand today,  
you have to search yesterday.*

—PEARL S. BUCK



## The More You Learn, the More You Realize What You Don't Know

I remember when a friend was studying history and he spent a long time on World War II. I mentioned that he must be an expert after the amount of time he'd spent on it, and he replied, "It only made me realize how much I didn't know. Because in order to understand WWII, you have to go back to WWI. So now I'm studying WWI, and I'm sure I'll have to go further back to understand how WWI came about. It will be a never-ending process." This guy was a real scholar, but he mentioned that studying history had made him very humble—because he knew he'd never know it all no matter how much he studied.

I always remember what this guy said, about learning how much he didn't know, and how every time you learn one thing, it leads to another thing and so on. He went on to become a highly respected historian, but I can assure you that he isn't resting on his many laurels. The humility that studying history has given him

keeps him young and eager to learn more, no matter how erudite he is considered to be. He's a great example of remaining a student—every day is another opportunity to learn something new.

Sometimes we are so zealous to become successful that we forget about what is significant. The background for success should include some intrinsic values as well as monetary values. We should be aware of our culture and other cultures, our history and their history, and we should not live in what has been termed “a cultural vacuum.” Someone once said that not knowing history was like being a leaf that didn't know it was part of a tree. That's an interesting visual and it applies to many people. We are individually responsible for our education, and that applies whether you're in school or not.

If I sound tough on this subject, I am. I see no value whatsoever in believing ignorance to be an attribute. It isn't. It's good to start each day by saying to yourself, “What can I learn today that I didn't know before?” It opens you up to more information and net worth as an individual. Why live restricted lives due to lack of knowledge when there are so many resources available to us today?

Another interesting aspect of history is that it will lead us to seeing that we are all a part of it. History isn't just in the past—it's happening now. How can you know what you're a part of if you don't know what it is to begin with? The world didn't start with your birth, and it won't end with your death either. That doesn't mean you're not a part of the scheme of things. To the contrary, it means that you are.

Back to the leaf image. What if you know you are a leaf, but you're not sure what a tree is? I'd say the best thing to do is to find out what a tree is. It's pretty simple. It reminds me of an *Apprentice* task that's enough of a challenge to set the apprentices out to discover and research some things before they jump in to the task at hand.

I was listening to some Europeans once and they seemed to agree that Americans didn't seem to know their roots. Of course, their roots go back for many more centuries than ours and may be easier to decipher because many of us have ancestors from different countries. But it gave me a reason to think about what they said, and I realized in many cases they were right. I recently went to Scotland, as my mother's side of the family is of Scottish ancestry, and I've spent time studying that country and therefore my heritage. It could even explain why I love golf so much—it originated in Scotland.

I found that I enjoyed learning about Scotland and it has broadened my horizons as well as my interests as a businessman. I am building a golf course in Aberdeen, Scotland, that will be spectacular, and I very much enjoyed my visit and meeting the people from that culture and country. I also realized I still have a lot to learn, which will no doubt lead me into more interesting ventures as well as adventures.

Take my advice and never be a know-it-all. First of all, it's impossible to know everything, and second of all, it's just no fun—for you or anyone else. And third, you will be missing out on some great adventures. So remember to think big by expanding your horizons at the same time you're expanding your net worth. That's what significant success is about.

*For what is the best choice, for each individual,  
is the highest it is possible for him to achieve.*

—ARISTOTLE



## Think Like a Champion

Champions are born and champions are made. One definition of a champion is someone who shows marked superiority. Another definition is someone who is a winner of first prize or first place in competition. We've all heard of Olympic champions, and we've probably all seen a few on television. What comes to mind when I see their amazing ability is the amount of training they have endured, the sacrifices they've made, and the courage they've had to have to get where they are. Those are some of the attributes of a champion.

They also wanted to achieve something special. Ordinary wouldn't be enough for someone who has the mindset of a champion. Champions think big. Champions work in a big-time way. Champions are focused. Champions are disciplined. Come to think of it, champions think like champions. As Jack Dempsey said, "A champion is someone who gets up when he can't." Let's hope that applies to you.

When I'm having an especially tough day, I often think it's like a race and I'd better have the endurance to get through it. Somehow the endurance will surface, because I don't want to wind up feeling beaten. Billie Jean King said, "Champions take responsibility. When the ball is coming over the net, you can be sure I want the ball." I understand what she was talking about, because I'm the same way in that respect.

I have a box at the U.S. Open every year because I love to watch those champions go at it. You can learn a lot from watching the experts, whether you're interested in sports, the arts, or whatever. One thing they all have in common is the same mindset: They want to win, they want to be the best. Not the runner-up, but the best. That's a very important thing to consider. I've seen very talented people fail because deep down I think they were afraid of winning. Winning comes with a responsibility. Champions rise to that responsibility. Search yourself carefully to make sure you're ready and capable. If you're not, do something about it. It's an important element of success.

Most of you know that I'm a golfer. I've always said that golf is a brain game, which it is, but it is a demanding sport technically and is a game of finesse. You cannot play golf halfheartedly and expect to get anywhere with your game. You have to concentrate and you have to have patience. As the legendary golfer Bobby Jones said, "It is nothing new or original to say that golf is played one stroke at a time. But it took me many years to realize it." We win in our daily lives by being careful with every day, by having a champion's view of each moment.

Let's take a look at Aristotle's quote at the beginning of this essay. That is self-scrutiny at its highest. It really is the best choice to go for the highest achievement possible. Why set your goals too low? Did you ever hear a child saying they want to be nothing when they grow up? They are full of dreams and plans, and rarely

are they mediocre aspirations. They want to be presidents, doctors, astronauts, scientists, and so on. They're on the right track and have the right mindset. If you need to, bring yourself back to when you had high achievement as a goal. Not everyone can be the world champion at something, but you can strive to be the best you can be. That's the first step—and a daily responsibility.

Champions go the extra mile. We all know when we've done just enough and when we've really exerted ourselves. Make an effort to exert yourself—every day. Don't fail because you never allowed yourself to get started! Don't avoid success because you think the responsibility might be too much—just focus and get going! You'd be surprised at what intelligent effort can produce. Alexander Graham Bell said something that I always remember: "Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus." Pay attention to these things and you will be on your way to thinking like a champion—and becoming one.



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