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Twenty One Secrets to Success in Work, Business and Negotiations....REVEALED!

Information is everywhere. Future historians will call this period the “information revolution”. Books, magazines, periodicals and of course the internet surround, embrace and even drown us in information. There is probably no topic on which information cannot be found.

If you want to succeed in business, do well at work or become wealthy through your own efforts there is no escaping an excess of information once you start to look for it.

But what use is this avalanche of information? **You need wisdom, not information, to make you successful.** By itself, an excess of information can lead to confusion. You can spend your time without limit reading information, but this does not in itself lead to wisdom.

For the past half-million years, spanning the lifetime of mankind, people have gone through life making mistakes and *if they are lucky, learning from their mistakes.* All the information in the world, which is now at your fingertips thanks to publishing and the internet, will not stop you making the same mistakes that generations have made before.

But I am offering you wisdom. I am offering you the lessons I have learnt from my mistakes. **I am offering you the benefit of my experience, built up agonizingly slowly over a long period of time.**

I run a business in London and interact with many people. Clients, suppliers, local authorities, those who enforce regulations, banks, lawyers, insurers etc: the list is endless. In my working life I have had to negotiate with people ranging from the poor to multi-millionaires and from hospital porters to members of the Cabinet. I also employ staff. I have found that there are a number of rules to follow in dealing with money and people, with what happens at work, in the office and in business more generally.

Nobody told me these rules. They are not available to read. They are not to

be found in the vast amounts of information online or in books – or if they are, it could take a lifetime of looking to find them.

Doing it yourself is like looking for a needle in a haystack: eventually – *if you are lucky* – you might find these rules for yourself. **But by the time you have found them, you have made many mistakes and lost out from not knowing them.**

You personally might lose time, money and prestige by not knowing the rules I am now giving you. You will have lost the opportunity to do things better, faster, more successfully and more profitably. You will have lost the chance to build your reputation earlier and younger.

These rules have been discovered by me through experience; tempered through adversity; and refined through use. **These rules have been hard earned and have never been shared before.**

These rules work for me. **And I wish I had known them thirty years ago.** I would have gladly paid to learn these rules thirty years ago. You are so lucky that you now have this opportunity.

This is your opportunity to learn from the experience of others, for you to benefit from the mistakes of others.

As far as I am aware, these rules are universal in their application: in all countries, economies and cultures. Younger people tend not to know them. Older people tend to have found some or all of them by trial and error if they are lucky – but now you can short-cut the process and **learn in half an hour what takes most people half a life-time.**

This booklet aims to give you an unfair advantage. It gives you wisdom you would not otherwise gain for many, many years. Or perhaps not at all!

And it gives you that wisdom at an absolutely knock-down, bargain, once-in-a-lifetime price. **Normally you would have to wait years and make many mistakes to find out what I will now tell you for just a few pounds.** You would suffer pain, humiliation and embarrassment, you would suffer financial loss – *just as I actually did in reality* - when making fundamental errors which my wisdom will help you avoid.

For the price of a bottle of wine or a couple of pints of beer, for the price of

half a pizza, **for the price of a gallon of petrol or a fresh chicken in Tesco, I am giving you knowledge without compare.** For the price of a box of washing powder, I am giving you the tools to help you make gains in your life, job or income.

These comparisons with what else you could buy for the price of this booklet might make you smile or laugh, but I am deadly serious. I run a successful business in London, employing staff, turning over half-a-million pounds each year.

What I have learned in business, in negotiations, in dealing with clients, suppliers, company reps, banks, agents, rule-makers, rule enforcers (and sometimes unpleasant people who are rule-breakers!) and others is invaluable. How I operate now is so much better, smoother, more profitable and more successful than when I started out years ago.

The rules to office, commercial and business success are what I live by.
Now you can find them out for yourself at a fraction of what it has cost me in time, effort and experience.

Ask yourself this: **do you want to be more successful?** Do you want to be more profitable? Do you want to do better in negotiations, agreements and deals? Do you want to do better in your office, workplace, enterprise, company or employment? **Do you want to benefit from the hard-earned experience of others?**

If the answer is YES, then my guide to the **Twenty Secrets to Success in Work, Business and Negotiations....REVEALED!** is for you.

DISCLAIMER

You have paid £4.99 for this book and have purchased the wisdom of the author gained during his working life of more than 35 years at the time of publication.

This is a bargain. In half an hour of relaxing reading, you can benefit from a lifetime's working experience.

The author would have gladly paid ten times the price of this book 35 years ago for the knowledge it contains.

You have purchased knowledge and experience that might otherwise take you years to learn by experience.

But what you have not purchased is an indemnity or any form of liability by and from the author and publisher. In return for £4.99, you do not get a guarantee that you will be successful or wealthy. You do not get a guarantee that if you follow the rules in this book, you will be correct and successful.

The content of this book is the sincerely held opinion and view of the author and no guarantee, indemnity, liability or warranty of any kind is accepted by the author or publisher.

Twenty Secrets to Success in Work, Business and Negotiations....REVEALED!

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RULE 1: AVOID MUDDLES

A muddle is making a commitment without the ability to fulfill it openly and honestly.

A muddle is when you say one thing to one person, but another thing to a different person and hope they never meet and compare notes.

A muddle is when you promise to do something for one person at one price, then give another person a different price.

A muddle is when you make various commitments or offers, but they are not mutually compatible.

A muddle is giving in to a request from somebody which you know is unlawful, unethical or impractical.

A muddle is doing something wrong and hoping/expecting you can get away with it.

Every muddle arises from a decision you made which you should not have made. If you end up in a muddle, it is always your own fault.

Rule 1 is the most important rule of all. It will be used throughout your working life and it will be required frequently. Avoid muddles.

In business and at work, always play things straight. There is no room for confusion, doubt or just hoping things will turn out all right. When you make an agreement, it must be clear and capable of being executed and enforced.

Sometimes muddles arise unwittingly, from lack of clear thinking, or lack of fully expressing or agreeing what must be done. This is just as much your fault and your responsibility as knowingly entering into a muddle.

Most times, muddles do not arise unwittingly but from your own conscious decisions. If you decide to take a chance, if you make conflicting promises or just rely on luck. If you hope that somebody, somewhere, does not find out what you are doing or that events will come to your rescue. If you depend upon various people involved not talking to each other or having no other form of contact. Most muddles arise from your own decisions.

People who make these decisions know at the time that they are going to create a muddle. The difference between applying and ignoring Rule 1 (avoid muddles) is that some people know the potential for the muddle and just do it anyway, while others know the potential and avoid it.

The former will cross fingers and just hope that everything works out OK, but in many cases it will not. They are often known as "chancers", a pejorative description.

The latter, those who know it will be a muddle and decide to avoid it, are planning for a long and successful career. Hopefully, you the reader, will now be in this camp.

Muddles can occur if a law is broken or an agreement reneged upon, or if an agreement is made which cannot lawfully be enforced. You might be tempted to bend or even break rules, regulations, company policy or the law. All these situations should be avoided: if an agreement is not sound, lawful and capable of being enforced, then it will lead to trouble.

Muddles can also occur when you are being exploited or taken advantage of, in particular when you are new to a job and do not understand all the rules. Always be wary of senior or more experienced people asking for favours or urging you to do something when you are unsure of the consequences or recently having taken on a new role. It is your responsibility to check that any agreements you make or actions taken are correct and will not lead to muddles.

Muddles will damage you: when things go wrong, it will show that you did not make clear agreements or proper arrangements. It will look like it is your fault, because it is your fault.

RULE 2: TAKE THE MONEY

Many situations arise when you are offered money. Rule 2 is simple: **take the money**. This means that there is a point at which you stop negotiating and **take the money**. Or when somebody is paying a bill, you **take the**

money on offer. When you are offered money: take it.

For example: you are negotiating a sale with a client, a salary with a new employer, a pay rise or some other deal involving a payment. The negotiations will draw to a close (if all goes well!) and the other side will offer to conclude matters. With luck, you will have made a sale, been offered a job or a pay rise etc. At this stage, when the other side offers to end negotiations and gets their cheque book out, provided you are happy with the result, you **take the money**.

The worst thing to do, when a prospective purchaser has agreed a contract and wants to give you money, is to reopen part of the contract specification.

If you have a sudden flash of inspiration and want to suggest a new clause, or change a specification - don't!

If you think, after the purchaser has agreed a design, that a new colour might be nice - don't say it!

If you are having an affair with a co-worker and your employer has offered you promotion and a pay rise and you suddenly feel like telling them about your affair - don't!

If a debtor has rung to pay a bill and the amount they are paying is less than the amount outstanding, **take the money!** Being part-paid is much, much better than being unpaid. Always **take the money**.

There is of course an exception to this - never take a bribe or unlawful payment. This conflicts with rule 1: avoid muddles. Not only would you be potentially committing a criminal act, but it could lead to all sorts of complications later on.

In business, work and negotiations, always **take the money** when you conclude negotiations, agree specifications or are owed money. Do not continue to negotiate after the other side has finished and offers to pay. Do not talk yourself out of a sale, lose a new job or jeopardise a pay rise or promotion by failing to understand when to **take the money**.

RULE 3: THE FIRST TO MENTION MONEY LOSES

In sales negotiations or any other situations where the money is negotiable, there is a general rule that **the first to mention money loses**.

In all such negotiations, whoever mentions an amount of money first will set the standard from which the final price will be agreed. Whoever mentions a price first will be showing their hand and – worse – showing that they are the more inexperienced and the weaker negotiator.

For a young person up against an older and more experienced negotiator, being the first to give a draft price is a sure sign of weakness, inexperience and volunteering to be out-negotiated.

By way of contrast, refusing to give a price until the other side gives one first is a sign of experience and strength. It is like a competitive dance. You dance around the subject of money and the first to mention a price loses!

In some cultures and traditions, negotiations can last a long time. For example, coming from a middle class English background, my approach in my early years was just to sort out a price, agree it and get on with the next agenda item. Wrong!

I have learnt through experience that many English middle class, educated and even prosperous people are mildly embarrassed and uncomfortable talking about money and thus in a hurry to settle a final price. Wrong again!

Negotiating a price is a serious business and must never be undertaken in a hurry. Being in a hurry – and the first to mention money – means you will be settling at the wrong price.

Shortly before drafting these pages, the writer was involved in negotiations with a factory in China. They delivered a master class in how to negotiate. The writer thought at first that he had been pretty smart and got a good deal. How wrong he was...

I negotiated in my normal way and thought I had got a deal, right up to the point of signing it. Then I found that all my negotiations had been no more than the opening skirmish and the resultant price, which I thought was the final price, was no more than the first stage in negotiations.

Two rounds later – each time I thinking mistakenly that I had reached a compromise but each time the terms moving in favour of the Chinese – we eventually reached an agreement.

An agreement to settle I thought! Finally! Wrong....it turned out to be

agreement for the negotiator to refer the draft agreement to their manager for upward authority, and thus the price and terms were opened up and shifted yet again.

The point of my story is this: a good negotiator does not hurry to settle and does not settle until they get what they want. A good negotiator, in refusing to settle, must keep the door open rather than be confrontational.

A good negotiator does not name their price or mention money until the other side does so first, then keeps going until the terms and price have moved to where they want them to be.

So, never be the first to mention money at the start of negotiations and never be in a hurry to close the negotiations.

RULE 14: NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED

It might appear that stating no good deed goes unpunished contradicts rule 12, “Be nice to everybody”. However in business, I have found it to be the

case. It is a paradox, but both rules exist and function at the same time.

In business, the office and workplace, I have identified the circumstance in which no good deed goes unpunished. It is when somebody with whom you have no connection asks you to do something for them without paying or offering anything in return. It is when a person who is not part of an existing contract or relationship asks you to do something without offering a *quid pro quo*.

I am sometimes approached by people asking me urgently to help them or do them a favour, without necessarily being paid. Or perhaps a small payment is offered but it is hardly worthwhile accepting on a commercial basis for helping somebody on a very small job.

However it is vital to recognize when you should help others and when you should be aware that “no good deed goes unpunished”.

When the person asking for help or a favour is a client, a business contact, a neighbour, a friend or a contact introduced by a client, colleague or other contact, then it is good to help, be nice and spread goodwill. What goes around, comes around.

When the person seeking your assistance is none of the above, but a stranger who asks for a favour and invariably dangles a carrot, then beware! The way it goes is this: the stranger appears out of the blue and says please, urgently, quickly, do something for me now and I will consider giving you a really good contract later.

When it comes to sales, they might show you a big potential sale and ask you to do something free of charge first. What is common is being approached to price up a large and complicated contract with a strict time limit: check the paperwork, do a site visit, check the specifications and materials etc, then to work out the best pricing and all very quickly.

Not once in my commercial experience has a sale ever resulted from the above scenario. Not once in my commercial experience has a contract come to me from a stranger rushing in and asking urgently for a favour.

Sales, contracts and other commercial agreements and relationships do not generally come about suddenly. Jobs have to be sought out, thought about and carefully applied for. Sales are generally negotiated over an extended

time period. Projects take time to develop. When a stranger suddenly puts a complete sale or project in front of you, dangling it as an incentive, and asks for a favour such as checking it, making a vital site visit etc, then I have found they are using me and have no intention of reciprocating.

It is vital to identify the relationship with the person you are dealing with. Are they clients, contacts, friends, neighbours or family? Are they being introduced by existing clients, contacts, friends, neighbours or family? Are they potential clients you can identify and know they are serious? If the answer is yes, then think about rule 12 and being nice to everybody.

But if they are total strangers who approach you, asking for favours and holding apparent benefits which might, or might not, come your way, then remember rule 14: no good deed goes unpunished. You will spend time and money and find that it can all be wasted or worse. Your reputation can be damaged and judgement called into question by your boss or colleagues.

This is a trap I have fallen into many times. It has taken me years to realise that in being nice to everybody, there are some people who will readily take advantage. So bear this in mind: no good deed goes unpunished! Be wary, wise and use common sense. Be nice to everybody, and do help others, but you have to know the difference between being nice to others and putting your commercial position and reputation at risk.

RULE 15: PEOPLE WHO AREN'T HONEST DON'T TELL YOU

Sad but true and best to learn this at the start of your working life rather than experience the consequence of not knowing it: there are people who are not

honest and they do not tell you. They lead you on, making you believe they are legitimate, until you realize you have been tricked or lose in some way.

There are dishonest people in the world and they are practised in coming across as plausible and believable. That is their skill and your weakness. They intentionally communicate and behave as if they are honest and straightforward. They put you at ease and you make your own decision that you are dealing with a normal person.

Of course, nine times out of ten, or ninety-nine times out of a hundred, things can be taken at face value. You will be dealing with a client, a colleague, a contact, a supplier or even a boss who is what they say they are.

But the danger is this: sometimes in your working life you are negotiating or dealing with somebody who is dishonest: a thief, cheat, con-man, liar, criminal or embezzler. Somebody who is making a deal with you and smiles and acts friendly, but who has a separate agenda running which they conceal from you while at the same time smiling, slapping you on the back and acting as if they are your best friend.

The rule here is that you do not know that you are being set up. When these people set out to deceive you and exploit your good nature, they do not tell you they are doing this. There is, apparently, no clue or sign that this is their true nature.

You must not believe that your own judgement is perfect and that just meeting somebody and getting on with them means they are honest in their business or office negotiations. Most of course are: but sometimes you will encounter people who are totally dishonest and you will fail to see it at first. That is their skill and their danger: they exploit your desire to believe that they are honest. They exploit your decision that you are dealing with a nice guy.

There are three ways to deal with this situation:

First, with everybody you meet in work, business and negotiations, always bear in mind the possibility that they are liars and cheats and you are being fooled. Do not become paranoid and over-suspicious, but always keep this in mind as a possibility. In this way, when signs appear that a deal might be going wrong or other warnings show up, you will notice them rather than ignore them. It might seem strange, but human nature is often to ignore

warning signs when those signs contradict a decision we have already taken – such as trusting somebody.

Second, always do a little checking on new people you meet and enter into negotiations with. This does not mean acting like a private detective, but it does mean using readily available information.

The easiest way is to google their name and see what comes up. Is there a trail of complaints and allegations about that person, or do they come across as the person they claim to be?

Other simple ways to check on somebody are to talk briefly to their company, colleagues, suppliers, clients etc – just call somebody who is in contact with them to check they are doing what they claim. And that they pay their bills and do not owe lots of money or have unpaid debts!

Third, always take warning signs seriously. This is particularly important because of human nature. Human nature – at least for normal, honest people – dictates that when you meet somebody, you make a pretty fast decision as to whether you like them and trust them. Having decided you do trust them, you then ignore the small warning signs that there is a problem.

With the benefit of hindsight, I have realized that every time I have been taken in and fooled by a dishonest person in the past (and I can think of three serious occasions when I have personally lost out because I trusted the wrong person), there were warning signs right from the start.

However, the warning signs were small and I overlooked them because I had already decided to trust that person. This is something that is hard to overcome but the lesson itself is simple: if there is the slightest reason to cast doubt on somebody's integrity then examine it carefully rather than ignore it.

In all three cases I am thinking of, small signs appeared which I did not act on because I believed the person was honest. It took me many years fully to understand that there are people in the world who really and truly dishonest and will exploit others around them - either lawfully or breaking the law – but they cover themselves in a cloak of honesty and friendliness and good nature.

Such people who are not honest do not tell you: so you must protect yourself and not assume that people are honest just because you get on with them and

think they are your friend!

Rule 17

For every problem, there is a solution

There is no such thing as an insoluble problem. For every problem, there is a solution. Never give up

When problems arise in the office, at work, in business and in life generally, it is human nature to try and find a solution.

Problems, snags, Difficulties and issues arising from lack of understanding and misunderstandings arise all the time. These could be described as "passive" problems: you come across them in the course of your work or life, but nobody is trying to sabotage you or deliberately make life difficult for you.

There are also "active" Problems, where there is a degree of maliciousness or a positive action by somebody else which causes you a problem.

RULE 18: MAKE SURE YOU GET PAID

After I graduated, I had a job as a salesman and my employer, a wonderful and jovial chap, put his arm around my shoulder and said “don’t worry, I’ll see you alright” when I asked to be paid.

Of course, I never got paid. And I will never forget those words and the lesson I learnt. When you are owed money, make sure you get it. Do not settle for weasel words, jokes, promises to pay later, arguments over the amount etc.

There was a second occasion in my working life when I was cheated of my pay and it was in a totally different way. I submitted an invoice detailing all my work, and the client, in a very friendly way, wanted to discuss its content.

So we met and I justified everything and then wrote in great detail to explain it all. Then the client discussed the new explanation and wanted more detail, then it happened again. It went on for months, followed by eventual agreement to pay. Followed by...nothing: a new round of excuses, including the famous “cheque is in the post”.

In hindsight of course, I realized that the client had no intention to pay and was using discussions and explanations as a reason not to pay. Just as with my first employer, I failed to get the money out of people who had no

intention to pay.

However, what is interesting, is that many people who want to get away with not paying do not have the courage or tenacity simply to default: they are seeking your agreement or at least your complicity in not being paid. They want you to co-operate in not being paid.

They do not say “I am cheating you, I refuse to pay”. Instead, they use one of a thousand excuses and keep talking and keep lines of communication open; they promise to pay but never do so. They are seeking your agreement that they can get away with not paying, by talking and pretending to negotiate but eventually not paying.

The lesson here is simple: make sure you get paid. Do not accept excuses, do not let them string you along week after week and then month after month. Be direct and assertive, but not confrontational and aggressive: demand your money and make them understand you will not accept failure to pay, or delays to pay or even discussions instead of payment.

And if they promise something else instead of payment: goods, shares, goodwill, something bigger and better tomorrow, my advice is simple. Rather than jam tomorrow, get what you are owed today (ie take the money (rule one)) and **make sure you actually get paid that money** (rule 17).

RULE 19: DON'T WASTE TIME WITH COMPUTERS OR SOFTWARE THAT DON'T WORK

Computers are great. They really improve productivity and enable us to do things which we could not otherwise do. But when they go wrong – or more accurately when we do not use them correctly – they become an enormous waste of time.

I have found that it is better to abandon a computer or software application

rather than waste time trying to repair it or make it work correctly. If a problem can be fixed in five or ten minutes and it is up and running again, then it is worth trying.

But...in many cases, I have found myself at my desk after one hour, then two hours, and still not got the system working.

The reason is that it is almost impossible for a lay person to work out why computers and software do not function. A specialist might fix a problem in minutes, but I could spend hours and still not understand how to do it.

When you get error messages on the screen, references to something called a “registry”, missing files, the screen freezes or worst of all, the “blue screen of death” appears, rule 19 comes into force. It is tempting to start to work out what the problem is, but that is the first step towards wasting time and taking hours off from work, producing nothing.

Being busy and being productive are two different things. You can be very busy spending two or three hours getting drawn into trying to solve a computer problem and not being able to do it. After that time, you have achieved nothing and produced nothing. Worse: you look a bit of a fool, spending hours trying to do something that you are not capable of.

So when a computer or software goes wrong, rather than getting drawn into a challenge of wits with a witless machine that always wins, the first thing I do is switch the computer off and on again. This solves a lot of problems!

If the re-boot does not solve the problem, do not get drawn into a long a fruitless campaign to analyse the software or other problem and attempt to correct it. That is for an expert, a specialist who really does know the system and how it works and what to do.

This is the time for creative thinking: to find another way around the problem. Almost anything you now do will be better than wasting time trying to solve a problem you cannot solve. As long as you now spend two hours doing something productive, it is time better spent than failing to sort out an impossible computer failure.

I can give you a list of things that I do when a computer or software failure stops me working. I try the following, after the initial re-boot:

Change tasks and do something else – two hours producing something is better than two wasted hours failing to repair a computer or software.

Use somebody else's computer – log back in on another computer and continue the previous task or start a new one.

Call an IT person and ask them to wave their magic wand.

Tell my boss the computer is a piece of junk and ask for a new one that works properly to be sent quickly.

If you were in the army and your gun did not work or shoot straight, you would simply discard it and get a gun that works. You are not going to sit down in the middle of an attack and start to do gun maintenance while all around you the action is taking place.

The same applies to computers and software in the workplace. You must develop zero-tolerance of faults: do not spend your working day messing around and achieving nothing in an area in which you know little.

Of course, each reader of this booklet and each office is different. There is no universal rule when it comes to a solution. But there is a solid and unbreakable rule when it comes to wasting your time trying to solve a problem that you cannot solve: don't waste time with computers and software that do not work.

Additonal copy:

measure your output. 7 hour working day of which 5 hours doing the job and 2 hours working on a computer or software that does not function. This means 2 hours producing NOTHING. Two working hours with a absolutely nothing to show for it.

It is totally wrong to think of this as an heroic effort to keep going, as persistence in the face of a problem, of a search for a solution. It is a foolish waste of time that as worthless as it was inevitable. Just because you might tinker with computers occassionally and think you understand software, in an office and commercial environment you are NOT a hardware or software expert who can do the real job of repairs and maintenance. By even attempting it, you make yourself look foolish and by wasting your time you show that you are not even aware of your lack of competance. You are not aware that you are embarking upon a fool's errand and that failure is as

inevitable as ice cream melting on a summer's day.

If you decided to take a two-hour lunch break, or to watch a 2-hour film on the computer in your office, you would rightly be failing in your work and be subject to reprimand by your boss. Why is wasting two hours in failing to remedy something in which you have no professional expertise any different? Your net output is zero. You have achieved nothing and have knowingly wasted your time or the time of your employer who paid you to do a proper job, not mess about with computers that are not working.

If you cannot get a computer or software to function properly after a quick re-boot, then set it aside. Find another computer or do something else. Do something that is productive - never waste time on computers or software that do not work.