“Emotions are what make us human. The word ‘emotion’ stands for ‘energy in motion.’ Be truthful about your emotions and use your mind and emotions in your favor, not against yourself.”

“Whoa!” said Mike. “Don’t worry about what I just said. It will make more sense in years to come. Just be an observer, not a reactor, to your emotions. Most people do not know that it’s their emotions that are doing the thinking. Your emotions are your emotions, but you have got to learn to do your own thinking.” “Can you give me an example?” I asked. “Sure,” replied rich dad. “When a person says, ‘I need to find a job,’ it’s most likely an emotion doing the thinking. Fear of not

having money generates that thought.”

“But people do need money if they have bills to pay,” I said.

“Sure they do,” smiled rich dad. “All I’m saying is that it’s fear that

is all too often doing the thinking.”

“I don’t understand,” said Mike.

“For example,” said rich dad. “If the fear of not having enough

money arises, instead of immediately running out to get a job, they

instead might ask themselves this question: ‘Will a job be the bestsolution to this fear over the long run?’ In my opinion, the answer is

no. A job is really a short-term solution to a long-term problem.”

“But my dad is always saying, ‘Stay in school and get good grades,

so you can find a safe, secure job,’” I interjected, somewhat confused.

“Yes, I understand he says that,” said rich dad, smiling. “Most people

recommend that, and it’s a good path for most people. But people make

that recommendation primarily out of fear.”

My father was just leaving as I said that. “Boys,” he said. “You’re

only poor if you give up. The most important thing is that you did

something. Most people only talk and dream of getting rich. You’ve

done something. I’m very proud of the two of you. I will say it again:

Keep going. Don’t quit.”

Mike and I stood there in silence. They were nice words, but we

still did not know what to do.

“So how come you’re not rich, Dad?” I asked.

“Because I chose to be a schoolteacher. Schoolteachers really don’t

think about being rich. We just like to teach. I wish I could help you,

but I really don’t know how to make money.”

Mike and I turned and continued our cleanup.

“I know,” said my dad. “If you boys want to learn how to be

rich, don’t ask me. Talk to your dad, Mike.”

“My dad?” asked Mike with a scrunched-up face.

“Yeah, your dad,” repeated my dad with a smile. “Your dad

and I have the same banker, and he raves about your father. He’s

told me several times that your father is brilliant when it comes to

making money.”

“My dad?” Mike asked again in disbelief. “Then how come we

don’t have a nice car and a nice house like the rich kids at school?”

“A nice car and a nice house don’t necessarily mean you’re rich or

you know how to make money,” my dad replied. “Jimmy’s dad works for

the sugar plantation. He’s not much different from me. He works for a

company, and I work for the government. The company buys the car for

him. The sugar company is in financial trouble, and Jimmy’s dad may

soon have nothing. Your dad is different, Mike. He seems to be building

an empire, and I suspect in a few years he will be a very rich man.”

With that, Mike and I got excited again. With new vigor, we began

cleaning up the mess caused by our now-defunct first business. As we

were cleaning, we made plans for how and when to talk to Mike’s dad.

The problem was that Mike’s dad worked long hours and often did not

come home until late. His father owned warehouses, a construction

company, a chain of stores, and three restaurants. It was the restaurants

that kept him out late.

Mike caught the bus home after we had finished cleaning up. He

was going to talk to his dad when he got home that night and ask him

if he would teach us how to become rich. Mike promised to call as soon

as he had talked to his dad, even if it was late.

The phone rang at 8:30 p.m.

“Okay,” I said. “Next Saturday.” I put the phone down. Mike’s dad

had agreed to meet with us.

On Saturday I caught the 7:30 a.m. bus to the poor side of town.

***Thirty Cents Later***

By 9:00 a.m. that day, Mike and I were working for Mrs. Martin.

She was a kind and patient woman. She always said that Mike and I

reminded her of her two grown sons. Although kind, she believed in hard

work and kept us moving. We spent three hours taking canned goods off

the shelves, brushing each can with a feather duster to get the dust off,

and then re-stacking them neatly. It was excruciatingly boring work.

Mike’s dad, whom I call my rich dad, owned nine of these little

superettes, each with a large parking lot. They were the early version

of the 7-Eleven convenience stores, little neighborhood grocery stores

where people bought items such as milk, bread, butter, and cigarettes.

The problem was that this was Hawaii before air-conditioning was

widely used, and the stores could not close their doors because of the

heat. On two sides of the store, the doors had to be wide open to the

road and parking lot. Every time a car drove by or pulled into the

parking lot, dust would swirl and settle in the store. We knew we had

a job as long as there was no air-conditioning.

For three weeks, Mike and I reported to Mrs. Martin and worked

our three hours. By noon, our work was over, and she dropped three little

dimes in each of our hands. Now, even at the age of nine in the mid-

1950s, 30 cents was not too exciting. Comic books cost 10 cents back

then, so I usually spent my money on comic books and went home.

By Wednesday of the fourth week, I was ready to quit. I had

agreed to work only because I wanted to learn to make money from

Mike’s dad, and now I was a slave for 10 cents an hour. On top of

that, I had not seen Mike’s dad since that first Saturday.

“I’m quitting,” I told Mike at lunchtime. School was boring, and

now I did not even have my Saturdays to look forward to. But it was

the 30 cents that really got to me.

This time Mike smiled.

“What are you laughing at?” I asked with anger and frustration.

“Dad said this would happen. He said to meet with him when

you were ready to quit.”

“What?” I said indignantly. “He’s been waiting for me to get

fed up?”

“Sort of,” Mike said. “Dad’s kind of different. He doesn’t teach like

your dad. Your mom and dad lecture a lot. My dad is quiet and a man

of few words. You just wait till this Saturday. I’ll tell him you’re ready.”

“You mean I’ve been set up?”

“No, not really, but maybe. Dad will explain on Saturday.”

***Waiting in Line on Saturday***

I was ready to face Mike’s dad. Even my real dad was angry with

him. My real dad, the one I call the poor one, thought that my rich dad

was violating child labor laws and should be investigated.

My educated, poor dad told me to demand what I deserve—at least

25 cents an hour. My poor dad told me that if I did not get a raise, I

was to quit immediately.

“You don’t need that damned job anyway,” said my poor dad

with indignation.

At eight o’clock Saturday morning, I walked through the door of

Mike’s house when Mike’s dad opened it.

“Take a seat and wait in line,” he said as I entered. He turned and

disappeared into his little office next to a bedroom.

I looked around the room and didn’t see Mike anywhere. Feeling

awkward, I cautiously sat down next to the same two women who were

there four weeks earlier. They smiled and slid down the couch to make

room for me.

Forty-five minutes went by, and I was steaming. The two women

had met with him and left 30 minutes earlier. An older gentleman was

in there for 20 minutes and was also gone.

The house was empty, and here I sat in a musty, dark living room

on a beautiful sunny Hawaiian day, waiting to talk to a cheapskate who

exploited children. I could hear him rustling around the office, talking

on the phone, and ignoring me. I was ready to walk out, but for some

reason I stayed.

Finally, 15 minutes later, at exactly nine o’clock, rich dad walked out

of his office, said nothing, and signaled with his hand for me to enter.

“I understand you want a raise, or you’re going to quit,” rich dad

said as he swiveled in his office chair.

“Well, you’re not keeping your end of the bargain,” I blurted out,

nearly in tears. It was really frightening for me to confront a grown-up.

“You said that you would teach me if I worked for you. Well, I’ve

worked for you. I’ve worked hard. I’ve given up my baseball games to

work for you, but you haven’t kept your word, and you haven’t taught me anything. You are a crook like everyone in town thinks you are.

You’re greedy. You want all the money and don’t take care of your

employees. You made me wait and don’t show me any respect. I’m

only a little boy, but I deserve to be treated better.”

Rich dad rocked back in his swivel chair, hands up to his chin,

and stared at me.

“Not bad,” he said. “In less than a month, you sound like most

of my employees.”

“What?” I asked. Not understanding what he was saying, I

continued with my grievance. “I thought you were going to keep

your end of the bargain and teach me. Instead you want to torture

me? That’s cruel. That’s really cruel.”

“I am teaching you,” rich dad said quietly.

“What have you taught me? Nothing!” I said angrily. “You haven’t

even talked to me once since I agreed to work for peanuts. Ten cents an

hour. Hah! I should notify the government about you. We have child

labor laws, you know. My dad works for the government, you know.”

“Wow!” said rich dad. “Now you sound just like most of the people

who used to work for me—people I’ve either fired or who have quit.”

“So what do you have to say?” I demanded, feeling pretty brave

for a little kid. “You lied to me. I’ve worked for you, and you have not

kept your word. You haven’t taught me anything.”

“How do you know that I’ve not taught you anything?” asked rich

dad calmly.

“Well, you’ve never talked to me. I’ve worked for three weeks and

you have not taught me anything,” I said with a pout.

“Does teaching mean talking or a lecture?” rich dad asked.

“Well, yes,” I replied.

“That’s how they teach you in school,” he said, smiling. “But

that is not how life teaches you, and I would say that life is the best

teacher of all. Most of the time, life does not talk to you. It just sort

of pushes you around. Each push is life saying, ‘Wake up. There’s

something I want you to learn.’”

“What is this man talking about?” I asked myself silently. “Life

pushing me around was life talking to me?” Now I knew I had to quit

my job. I was talking to someone who needed to be locked up.

“If you learn life’s lessons, you will do well. If not, life will just

continue to push you around. People do two things. Some just let life

push them around. Others get angry and push back. But they push

back against their boss, or their job, or their husband or wife. They

do not know it’s life that’s pushing.”

I had no idea what he was talking about.

“Life pushes all of us around. Some people give up and others

fight. A few learn the lesson and move on. They welcome life pushing

them around. To these few people, it means they need and want to

learn something. They learn and move on. Most quit, and a few like

you fight.”

Rich dad stood and shut the creaky old wooden window that

needed repair. “If you learn this lesson, you will grow into a wise,

wealthy, and happy young man. If you don’t, you will spend your

life blaming a job, low pay, or your boss for your problems. You’ll

live life always hoping for that big break that will solve all your

money problems.”

Rich dad looked over at me to see if I was still listening. His eyes

met mine. We stared at each other, communicating through our eyes.

Finally, I looked away once I had absorbed his message. I knew he

was right. I was blaming him, and I did ask to learn. I was fighting.

Rich dad continued, “Or if you’re the kind of person who has

no guts, you just give up every time life pushes you. If you’re that

kind of person, you’ll live all your life playing it safe, doing the right

things, saving yourself for some event that never happens. Then you

die a boring old man. You’ll have lots of friends who really like you

because you were such a nice hardworking guy. But the truth is that

you let life push you into submission. Deep down you were terrified

of taking risks. You really wanted to win, but the fear of losing was

greater than the excitement of winning. Deep inside, you and only

you will know you didn’t go for it. You chose to play it safe.”

Our eyes met again.

“You’ve been pushing me around?” I asked.

“Some people might say that,” smiled rich dad. “I would say that

I just gave you a taste of life.”

“What taste of life?” I asked, still angry, but now curious and

ready to learn.

“You boys are the first people who have ever asked me to teach

them how to make money. I have more than 150 employees, and not

one of them has asked me what I know about money. They ask me for

a job and a paycheck, but never to teach them about money. So most

will spend the best years of their lives working for money, not really

understanding what it is they are working for.”

I sat there listening intently.

“So when Mike told me you wanted to learn how to make money,

I decided to design a course that mirrored real life. I could talk until

I was blue in the face, but you wouldn’t hear a thing. So I decided to

let life push you around a bit so you could hear me. That’s why I only

paid you 10 cents.”

“So what is the lesson I learned from working for only 10 cents an

hour?” I asked. “That you’re cheap and exploit your workers?”

Rich dad rocked back and laughed heartily. Finally he said,

“You’d best change your point of view. Stop blaming me and thinking

I’m the problem. If you think I’m the problem, then you have to

change me. If you realize that you’re the problem, then you can

change yourself, learn something, and grow wiser. Most people want

everyone else in the world to change but themselves. Let me tell you,

it’s easier to change yourself than everyone else.”

“I don’t understand,” I said.

“Don’t blame me for your problems,” rich dad said, growing impatient.

“But you only pay me 10 cents.”

“So what are you learning?” rich dad asked, smiling.

“That you’re cheap,” I said with a sly grin.

“See, you think I’m the problem,” said rich dad.