

Advanced Success Secrets

(The Sequel to “The Laws and Secrets of Success”)

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Introduction

This book, “Advanced Success Secrets” is a sequel to “The Laws and Secrets of Success”.

“The Laws and Secrets of Success” was fortunate to have a testimonial from Brian Tracy, probably the world's leading author on success.

and strong reviews from elite reviewers. For example:

“Very, very highly recommend this UNIQUE book, it is the best book regarding how to be successful that I have ever read.”

-Daisy S. TOP 10 AMAZON HALL OF FAME REVIEWER “The power of his intuitions is infectious.”
Grady Harp, TOP 50 AMAZON

HALL OF FAME REVIEWER

“This is one of those books where you will want to underline something important on each page. This is one of the most important books I have read in 2013.”

Rebecca of Amazon - TOP 100 AMAZON HALL OF FAME REVIEWER

As life is always evolving and growing, there is, of course, probably no limit in regard to what can be said about the topic of success, or any topic really.

I think that I tried to lay more of a foundation in “The Laws and Secrets of Success” and that in this book, as the title strongly implies

“Advanced Success secrets” I have tried to build upon foundational success principles in this sequel in a, perhaps, more advanced way. This does not mean that this sequel is not meant to stand alone on its own if you haven't read the first book, nor that “The Laws and Secrets of Success” is lacking in its own right.

Life is like a river, always flowing always different. Just as each book has different chapters, each book on success may be (if we are lucky) perhaps a chapter on what we are seeking to capture, in this case the notion of success.

I've got more to say (if I get around to it) on the topic of success. Of the seven books I have been fortunate to publish, two now are on success, two are on technology (especially the future of technology), two are on Maine and Maine politics (I am from Maine and once ran - although I didn't make it all that far - for Maine Governor) and one is a romance novel/erotica.

So go figure.

“Advanced Success Secrets” has ten chapters . Here is the title and a brief excerpt from each one to hopefully whet your appetite.

Chapter 1 - The Law of Attraction Excerpt:

“The law of attraction incorporates faith as a key component, but this is not a blind nor inactive faith.

While the Bible clearly states that faith can move mountains, it also states that faith without works is dead.”

Chapter 2 - Preparation and Acclimation Excerpt:

“Life is perhaps always difficult, in at least some sense, because we keep rising up to ever higher and higher levels of challenge. As Joyce Meyer says, “New Level, New Devil”. Because, as we evolve, we are continually placed in increasingly difficult positions and situations (and relationships) than we have faced before (for example higher levels of responsibility or relationships with more mature and higher functioning individuals), of course they are going to be challenging and difficult.

But here is some more good news. Not only do the challenges increase in difficulty, but our resources to be able to deal with them increase as well. So we acclimate to a certain degree.”

Chapter 3 - Less is More

Excerpt:

“I’ve discussed how success is a function of

value. Value is determined by the recipient, by the marketplace, including the customer, not by the giver.

I may think that I have something of great value, but if I have no takers, or a shortage of takers, then if I am honest with myself then I need to start re-examining, or re-evaluating, the value proposition of what I am putting out there.”

Chapter 4 The Bottom Half Manages Up, While the Top Half Manages Down

Excerpt:

“Carl Jung has a famous theory that in the first

part of life we work on developing our more pronounced qualities. So, for example, if we are outgoing, we may use more and different ways to develop this skill. The second part (or half, I don’t believe that this represents an actual timeline as much as a conceptual one), once our more pronounced qualities have become more developed, then we shift to developing our less pronounced ones. So, those who were really into strength start working on their softer side. Those who worked hard on their independence start working more on their relational or interdependence needs. The idea I guess (someone correct me if I am wrong because I possess only a very general understanding of the theory) is that we are working in this life to become more whole and balanced creatures. We do this by first developing our more pronounced qualities, and then by integrating them better, once we have developed them primarily over a period of time, with their “opposites”.”

Chapter 5 - Survival of the Fittest by the Denial or Withdrawal of Resources

Excerpt:

“If I want to marry the world’s most beautiful

available model (tossing aside for a moment whether a consensus on such an individual would ever be possible) but I am an unemployed 69 year old janitor with \$46 (and change) in the bank who has lost my hair, most of my teeth and is a good hundred pounds overweight to boot, those marriage or dating resources (i.e. opportunities) from this top model are likely to be withheld from me.”

Chapter 6 - Forgiveness and Accountability Excerpt:

“It is said that “forgiveness is the gift that you give yourself”.

But is it really?

Yes it is.”

Chapter 7 - The Competitiveness vs. Spirituality of Success

Excerpt:

“In “The Laws and Secrets of Success” there is

a chapter entitled “The Strength of the Ant”. Basically it discusses how ants can do phenomenally impressive things (for example carry many times their body weight over distance) but that because other ants can do the same things while it is phenomenally impressive, it is not unique.

It is the same principle with humans. We can do incredibly impressive things, and do, but lest we become overconfident in our own abilities we merely need to look around and see what others are capable of as well.”

Chapter 8 - Perfect Moments

Excerpt:

“You may have heard of the expression, “Follow your bliss”.

Life can have quite a bit of tension. Perhaps as much as we allow. Certainly, even survival can sometimes be a struggle. But some of that struggle comes from holding on.”

Chapter 9 - “Follow Your Bliss”

Excerpt:

“The Bible talks about “from glory to glory”.

All of life is meant to be holy. But it takes a heroic consciousness and sensibility to get there.”

and not but not least, your favorite chapter :)

Chapter 10 - Sex and Love

Excerpt:

“Money, in some sense, keeps us alive, but it cannot buy the things (such as love, respect and joy) which we stay alive for!

Sex and love are somewhat analogous. Sex is the primary life force. It is the reproductive force and the primal energy force. Of course it can be sublimated into art, culture, career, a million and one things.

Note: saying that sex can be sublimated is not the same thing as saying that all drives can be reduced to sex. Although some theorists have postulated this, I believe that one has a multiplicity of drives, with sex being one and a powerful one. It's a hierarchy of needs. If we're sexually deprived or frustrated than sex may take a prominent role in our energy and in our thinking. But if our sex drive is sated (and this is not to be confused with any form of sexual addiction, the natural fulfillment of the sex drive is a healthy thing) then our energy can flow to many other things.”

If it does not sound too corny or esoteric, I try to put blessings in each book. As I discuss in the notion of “perfect moments”, I attempt to find these (actually live these would be a more accurate statement) each day, and if you feel some of them while reading this book, I would be a happy author indeed.

Thank you for taking a step with me along this wonderful journey.

Chapter 1 - The Law of Attraction

Of course I discussed the law of attraction in “The Laws and Secrets of Success”, but not in its own chapter.

The law of attraction is, perhaps, one of the very strongest spiritual laws in the entire Universe. It is also, I believe, sometimes somewhat understood.

The law of attraction incorporates faith as a key component, but this is not a blind nor inactive faith.

While the Bible clearly states that faith can move mountains, it also states that faith without works is dead.

The law of attraction, while extraordinarily popular and well-known, has also been criticized by some as potentially leading proponents to become too mystically or magically inclined, believing that a wonderful life is all about thinking, while taking doing out of the picture.

I believe that this can be a valid criticism, if one thinks that one can just sit back and have loving, profound thoughts and everything will be transformed, within and without. Certainly, living in stillness and waiting for God, or Life, to move us with its still small voice is critical. Man and woman is not meant to live - and certainly not to prosper - from toil alone. This is the efforts of Man (capital M, for mankind), and toil does bring results. But it is the sweat of one's brow type of results.

Grace goes beyond this. As is also famously said, God can take you places which you could never reach on your own. So it's not about just achieving through our own efforts.

But neither is it about being passive, and just wishing or willing good results into existence. Here's the key point. I believe that the law of attraction requires activity, but it does not require struggle. This is a critical distinction.

We are meant to be active beings. I discussed in “The Laws and Secrets of Success” the role of challenge in our lives, how it promotes growth and indeed, when well utilized, makes us stronger. But we are not meant to be prideful, willful, ego-based striving beings.

Phil Jackson, the world famous NBA coach with a total of 13 NBA championships including his playing days, has a notion of essentially selfless aggression, if I am paraphrasing him correctly. One can be hyper alert, hyper engaged, but smooth and effortless. Not effortless in terms of passivity, but effortless in terms of resistance.

It is not our effort that wears us out, as we are made to be expending effort. It is our resistance.

Resistance is swimming uphill. It wears us out quickly.

Neither does this mean that we are meant to take the path of least resistance. We will be lead

moment to moment in regard to the decisions and actions that we will be meant to take. And if we are truly meant to take them then we will also be given the energy and means by which to do them - smoothly.

Joyce Meyer refers to this, I believe, as anointing.

When we're struggling to accomplish something, perhaps that is a sign that we're attempting to do something that we are not meant to do.

This does not mean that self-discipline does not also play a role. We have to develop the good habits by which Life can use us to the fullest. Developing these good habits tends not to be easy, and in fact difficult.

But things can be difficult without being resistant. When we are exercising it is difficult but we are making ourselves stronger. It is difficult because we are building muscles, lung capacity, etc. and pushing boundaries.

Good habits are like that.

Discernment is the ability to separate out the important from the unimportant, and make fine distinctions which have value. Being able to determine which activities - and this is really a moment to moment thing - have meaning even though they are difficult, because they are in line with our present purpose and/or are strengthening us, as opposed to which are merely difficult because they are ego-based and which we do not have grace for but only the effort of the sweat of our brow, can be difficult to differentiate.

The more that we are honest with ourselves, the more we can make this distinction, and make it quickly.

One good guide, perhaps the most effective actually, is our feelings. When we are doing what we are meant to be doing, we feel a sense of alignment, a sense of rightness. This does not mean that things are easy. We are pushing boundaries and that is a lot of work. But we are not struggling with ourselves. People have more heart attacks on Monday morning, I have heard, perhaps because they're facing another week of work in a job that they do not really love. It may seem impractical to do the things that we love, to "follow one's bliss", but from another point of view, it is in fact impractical not to.

When you think about all that you give up just to have the illusion of safety, that is quite a trade. This does not mean that one is impulsive. Certainly, the cookie will look more blissful unless we're quite well conditioned - than the apple. And cookies have their place as well (but not as the main course).

If our feelings are blissful, joyful, or at a minimum feeling aligned with our present purpose, we are infusing our lives and bodies with energy, which is healing. I say present purpose, because sometimes we hold on to dead or dying things. Something that was really right or best for us but is becoming less so. It can be people or relationships, it can be a job, it can be some other facet of our identity.

So examine your feelings to see where your life may be headed. If you're blissful and joyful, no easy task admittedly in this world sometimes, chances are you are bringing good things into your life. If you're struggling by the sweat of your brow, resentful, angry, fearful or depressed, see if you can make an adjustment to your attitude, perspective and disposition. The heart is a creative force, and we can't just will ourselves to positive results if the heart is not centered, confident and kind.

That about that!!

In some sense, the law of attraction is about attracting ourselves to ourselves, or like to like. That is what we call comfortable, pleasurable or familiar. When something, by contrast, feels uncomfortable to us, it means that it is a lot different from us, it is taking us away from what we are and thus, in an attempt to recenter ourselves, we push it away. That is why friendships and relationships tend to first strain and then break apart when people's lives, goals and values go in different directions. We feel that the other person is pulling us in a direction in which we do not want to go, and that is uncomfortable.

We are each guided with an inner compass. We attract the things into our life that resonate to that compass direction and also those things which will help address obstacles in our way limiting or curtailing progress in reaching that direction. A lot of the pain in life is simply a clouded mirror that is being shown the clouds. We all have obstacles, whether they be limiting thoughts or beliefs which cover over our center. The law of attraction brings those clouds into focus, by drawing the people

and circumstances which reflect these limitations, so that we can be more aware of them and deal with them (sometimes to a greater degree than we would like).

I know that for myself, for example, I have been somewhat of a people pleaser and people corrector as well. I've had to look at this to see what it means. A conclusion that I've come to is that each reflects an influence in the life of others. It's been important to me that I have an impact or effect, which can come either from a spiritual sense of contribution if one is more evolved, or from an ego sense of domination if one is less. We are related to each other and effect each other in countless ways, but we also have an important and strong independent element as well. This is a balance, and people can be lopsided in either direction, either overly involved, which leads to enmeshment, control, emotional entanglements, etc., or underinvolved, reflected in isolation, fear of relationships or interaction, etc.

In my case I've learned that I need to be my own best friend before I can have the best interactions and relationships with others. If I come from a place of fullness, then my interactions are not marked by neediness and people are more receptive. If, instead, I am trying to "help people for their own good", which can easily be the case in corrective or judgmental behavior, then, not surprisingly, people will draw away from this needy or dominating energy as a threat to their own autonomy and seek to create distance.

It's not that difficult to understand, but in the moment it can seem so, when one may or may not have objective distance from one's thoughts and actions.

Life is painful because other people are as strong as we are, and often stronger, and thus we cannot get them to do what we want or need (or feel we need). Others are independent actors, which can feel scary, even moreso that not only will others not do what we want, but they may do to us what we do not want.

However, this independence is only partial. The tree is not independent. It is rooted (literally) in the earth, dependent upon the sun, in a CO2/Oxygen reciprocal relationship with us and other living things, etc. It is affected by the wind and the rain, by animals which come across it, by time, by competition with other nearby trees for resources, and more.

Life is an ecosystem of attraction and relationships.

And here is another thing. It is said that space and time are elements of the mind and ego. Time can merge into timelessness when one is engaged, fully, in the present moment, the now. Love has a way of doing this, for example, and is why it is experienced as so blissful. And not only romantic love. Any type of selfacceptance, beauty or awe. Such as a love of nature in the moment, an acceptance of another human being or ourselves.

Space is also another imposed constraint. Thoughts can bridge the gap of space, for example. This may or may not sound

believable, but when you think about a person, you connect with them (to the degree, only, that they let you in and are receptive to you). Loving thoughts heal you both. Destructive thoughts do much more harm to the sender than to the recipient, as is famously said by analogy that acid corrodes the container in which it is contained.

We are all influenceable to each other to a degree, that is why, for example, even a famous person such as JFK could be assassinated by a stranger, but we are also protected by our evolution (not to say that JFK wasn't very highly evolved, we all have karmic and other factors at play in our lives and as a result one act, even one lifetime, cannot be well understood oftentimes without a much broader and longer time perspective), such that, in a general way, the lower cannot influence the higher but the higher can influence the lower.

Just as a single moment of light, it is famously said, evaporates a thousand years of darkness (of course sometimes our conditionings linger on for a period of time, we have mental and behavioral habits we have developed, etc.), hate, anger etc. dissipate in an environment of love.

Here's something else about thinking about others. When you think about another person you are communicating with that person directly on a psychic and/or spiritual level, and this is received, again, to the degree that the other is receptive to both the message and the messenger.

We think about others all of the time (or at least a good portion of the time) and they think about us. This is no real disconnect between minds across space or time - love is one famous bridge, so when you think about that person they are present to you, and if their heart and mind is open to you, to whatever degree, you can connect with them.

Life is about completing, in time in space, what is timeless, beyond space (infinite) and already perfect. If that makes any sense to you.

I'll repeat it again, because this recognition has made a real impact, at least in my life: Life is about completing, in time in space, what is timeless, beyond space (infinite) and already perfect.

That is why you can still communicate and feel close with someone who is deceased. Even death is not a firm barrier in that way. When you think about a person they are alive in that moment as they are alive to you, in you, and/or for you. Yes, they may be in another world, another place, I do not even know where that is or what it is, but they are still available to be touched by your spirit and your heart.

Love is eternal, as they say.

It is the love we experience that evolves us faster than anything else in this world. Pain and experience can teach us, but are primarily tools of the lower levels. When we're ready to be taught primarily by love, pain doesn't cease to exist, but it lessens in importance as a teaching tool.

We communicate with each other by thoughts and feelings, again across space and time, to work to perfect our relationships, as these relationships perfect also, in a reciprocal manner, ourselves. We each play roles in the world, husband, wife, teacher, doctor, daughter, son, etc., and these develop and bring out qualities, capabilities, emotions and experiences etc. in ourselves and others upon whom we have an impact.

When you think about someone you are, in a fundamental sense, seeking to move forward that relationship, that development, including at times by negative emotions and thoughts which indicate some obstacle or impediment or barrier to outright love. We also equate this with justice. If we feel that we have been wronged by another, thinking about it is a recognition to us, and to them if they are open to it, that the scales of love, if such a thing exist, or at least of life, feel out of balance.

It is all an attempt, fundamentally, to rectify a perceived imbalance in our relations or relationships with others as it relates to our own lives and ourselves.

So, how does all of this relate to success (you were thinking that question, now, weren't you)?

We're wearing on the outside of our lives what we feel and believe on the inside. As the famous saying states, "as within, so without".

The amount of change that I felt that I needed to produce in the world emanated from a compensatory lack of confidence in the perfection of the world (as others) as it exists. People sensed the urgency in my energy and were motivated to turn away from it (I think I also needed to learn to a greater degree not to be dependent upon the approval or acceptance of others, this has been a life lesson for me from the beginning). It was not an inviting energy of sharing, but of direction and control. Not that I was out of the ordinary by any means. That is perhaps what most of us do, most of the time! We apparently feel deficient, if you look at our collective actions and results.

Perhaps that is why only 5% of the individuals in the world, or less, are prosperous even though prosperity is available to all of us.

Prosperity is not something that we attain out in the world. It is something that we build inside of ourselves and then is reflected out into our circumstances in the world.

Talk to rich people and they feel rich. Not deficient. Not needy. They're independent emotionally (to a degree, successful people do not repress relationship needs because we're all connected as well), but at the same time realize that "success is a team sport".

And you know what, you'll attract the people that you need into your life to get to the next level when you are already satisfied, and better yet grateful, for where you are at.

Gratitude is the magic formula because it represents a state of fullness. Others can sense that in your energy, that you have enough for you and them both, rather than feeling deficient and needing to take something from them.

Which type of energy would you be more attracted to?

If you're thinking throughout your day about what you need from other people, how they did you wrong, or something else along these lines, then you are sending out the wrong type of energy into the Universe for you to prosper.

Instead, cultivate the feeling and belief that the Universe and others are your friend. Exhale. Look at each person as they are in their own state rather than as an extension of you, your wants and your drives. This love and lack of neediness and desire unlocks the best from the other that you are capable of receiving. Remember, as I have said, that “the universe expands or restricts opportunities based upon one’s ability to receive them”.

Use the law of attraction as a powerful tool in your success by growing your success from the inside out, and then see it flower in the world.

A conclusion:

“Be careful what you wish for...”

The mind and the heart (and the soul) are very powerful tools. They are always creating, it is just a matter of what type of content they are creating.

Use your life experiences as a mirror into your thinking processes. There is a temporal gap, and sometimes the things that you are experiencing may be holdovers from a previous lifetime (if you believe in that kind of thing). In addition, sometimes higher souls increase their level of suffering in the world so that they can grow even faster (to clean out whatever “junk” is still remaining, as much as possible) so don’t think that there is a 1:1 correlation between what you are experiencing and what is in your mind, but at the same time as your thinking and feelings evolve, watch also how this does translate into your experiences in the world. As is famously said, if you stop looking down on those who mistreat you (but I would add still take practical steps as may be necessary, such as to avoid them at times) then either they will start treating you better, or you won’t care. Spiritual laws, such as the law of attraction, can’t be controlled but they can be utilized or followed. Make sure, to the degree that you are able, that you are aligned with your highest good and your highest self, confident in the knowledge that good things, things that you want and or need or both, are quickly coming your way.

Chapter 2 - Preparation and Acclimation Because of the law of attraction, and like attracting to like, as we mature psychologically, emotionally and spiritually and continue to evolve we will attract higher and higher quality individuals and opportunities into our lives.

That is the good news!

Life is perhaps always difficult, in at least some sense, because we keep rising up to ever higher and higher levels of challenge. As Joyce Meyer says, “New Level, New Devil”. Because, as we evolve, we are continually placed in increasingly difficult positions and situations (and relationships) than we have faced before (for example higher levels of responsibility or relationships with more mature and higher functioning individuals), of course they are going to be challenging and difficult. But here is some more good news. Not only do the challenges increase in difficulty, but our resources to be able to deal with them increase as well. So we acclimate to a certain degree.

This notion of acclimation explains why we can do more and more, and have more and more, without it feeling any different over time.

Whatever level we are at, over time, if we adjust to it, becomes, as they say, “the new normal”. So, the major candidates for President, for example, they don’t run out of a National debate screaming, “I can’t handle the pressure”. Most of them, if not all who rise to that level, have had a good deal of experience dealing with the press, including National media. The reason that they are leading Presidential candidates is that they currently or previously, generally, have been Governors, or Senators, or very successful businesspeople, or some other acclaimed role in the public eye. So running for President after doing one or more of those other things is, (especially if you’re doing it for the first time) definitely a step up, but you have a foundation of experiences upon which you are prepared, to some degree, to successfully meet the challenges which you will face in this endeavor.

If you weren’t, then, yes, running out of the National debate screaming would probably appear to be your best option.

The notion of acclimation also applies to money. Most of the rich were not always rich (although some were). Perhaps they, as a teenager, became used to a few hundred dollars a week from a part-time job. Perhaps after college they secured their first full time job (depending upon the field) for \$40,000 per year. Perhaps ten years down the road they were making \$100,000, and then ten years after that a million dollars a year (including from their investments). So, it happens over time and you get used to it, even dependent upon it sometimes. If you are making a million dollars a year for awhile and then go down to half a million, you might feel poor!

So that few hundred dollars a week that seemed pretty good when you were a teenager (hey, I bought a new bike! – or for some a “new” car) seems pretty meager as you get to the higher financial levels.

So we trade in our expectations based upon our circumstances and history.

Acclimation can also set into our relationships. They say that what is familiar is taken for granted, and this can be true, but this is generally the case for what is “too familiar”. If relationships are growing stale and not changing or growing, then, yes, we can get bored with them pretty quickly. If they are dependent type relationships, or exploitative, or if we are dependent or exploitative individuals, than yes, the same can easily occur.

It is famously said that we always want what we don’t have, and also that we don’t appreciate something until it is gone. Certainly, there is some power in the contrast of loss, but mature individuals appreciate what they have very much. It may be the valuing of it, in fact, that helped to bring it into one’s life in the first place, and keep, maintain and grow it.

As was discussed in “The Laws and Secrets of Success”, everything in life either grows or dies, that is a well-recognized principle. This applies not only to individual endeavors, but to relationships as well. So, to apply my Dad’s maxim to relationships, if your relationship is not moving forwards, then it is moving backwards. This is not to imply that we should be in a sense of striving in our relationships, or dissatisfied. Clearly, enjoying what we have and the fruits of our relationship efforts is important. But there is a difference between this and a sense of complacency. We can certainly enjoy something, but at the same time it is important to remember not to hold onto something too tightly, doing so can kill the spirit of the thing that we are seeking to maintain. Two famous quotes come to mind:

The first is, “Kisses aren’t contracts”, and the second is “a ship is safe in (the) harbor, but that’s not what ships are for.”

We’re all ships in this life (hopefully not passing each other in the night!) but we can’t anchor ourselves, nor our relationships, to shore, as tempting as that may seem. When things are good we don’t want to lose them, but, as Gibran so poetically reminds us, “And think not you can direct the course of love, for love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course”.

And kisses aren’t contracts. Have you ever slipped into the “after all I’ve done for you” phenomenon. It is easy to go there, but generally unhealthy.

Just as Gibran also said, and just as poetically, he is so amazing, “your children are not your children...They are the sons and daughter of life’s longing for itself. They come through you but not from you, And though they are with you yet they belong not to you”, so also in a sense is your spouse not your spouse. We each have independent minds, destinies and souls. Some people come together for a moment, some for awhile, and some, perhaps, for a lifetime, but they do so through choice.

DO NOT THINK THAT YOU REALLY HAVE THE POWER TO CONTROL SOMEONE WHO DOES NOT WANT TO BE CONTROLLED, WHOEVER THAT PERSON MAY BE.

A wise person knows this well.

Chapter 3 - Less is More

Impatience is not a quality of the successful. When we try too hard on things – to force a specific thing through or make things work with a specific person – this can be received as an act of desperation and is as a result, surprise surprise, not generally well received.

We’ve all felt that energy when someone is trying to push their ideas on us, their product on us, their perspectives on us.

Even their love on us.

We pull away instinctively. I’ve discussed how success is a function of value. Value is determined by the recipient, by the marketplace, including the customer, not by the giver.

I may think that I have something of great value, but if I have no takers, or a shortage of takers, then if I am honest with myself then I need to start re-examining, or re-evaluating, the value proposition of what I am putting out there.

Unsuccessful people tend to do just the opposite. Rather than being open to the feedback of the marketplace and other people to make changes – this is a sign of confidence that the successful employ – the unsuccessful when they see that their products or ideas are being rejected bear down

harder. Double down. They put pressure on people to buy or to accept their ideas. They start casting blame. The customer is stupid. Here we have put out a clearly superior product and only an idiot of a customer would not recognize it.

No, customers are not stupid. Not by a long shot. They want to solve their problems and when they see a product that will do it better than what they are using or exists in the marketplace they will use it (yes, it is true that there are barriers to entry, but there is also the expression that "build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door".).

You've heard the expression, "the customer is always right". This is true. This doesn't mean, as I interpret it, that the customer knows everything. Far from it. But it does mean that the customer is in charge of their life and their buying experiences. They want to be respected. They don't want to be bullied. They don't want to be talked down to. They don't want to be judged.

As is also said, "Money talks, BS walks". As the customer is spending money on your product (or not) that puts him or her in charge. Never forget it.

Now that does not mean that education does not sometimes, even often, need to occur. There is a sales buying cycle and generally consumers will not buy a product the first time that they are exposed to it. They need to get used to it and comfortable over time.

The same principle exists in human relationships. In employment we call it a probationary period. In romantic relationships we call it dating, or courting.

It's the period when things are under consideration before a firm decision has been made.

Changes can always be made. A long married couple may divorce. A long time employee may quit or be fired. But at the beginning, things are more touch and go. Less is invested, so less is lost from walking away.

Less is more means that you have to give the person space, freedom and distance to meet you or engage with you- should they choose to do so - halfway. If you're hovering over them they can't consider your message, or your product, because the messenger is interfering and bringing out the desire to have it repelled.

One of the basic rules actors learn is "leave them wanting more". End your performance while the audience is still enraptured, there is still a bit of mystery and they are clamoring for more.

Don't wear out your welcome by becoming too familiar and too obvious.

Successful couples realize this by giving each other space, some separation, and developing their own separate (which is different than hidden) abilities and lives so that when they come together it remains constantly fresh and there is always something new to share.

If your partner is always growing, always learning, then it is exciting because you are always stimulated by the person in a new way. By contrast, if the person isn't growing, isn't developing, it is the same old story (same old sad story you might say) over and over again. You start to feel as if you're living in a story of a broken record. A rut. The same thing over and over again.

This is when relationships start to grow stale. Now of course couples differ in the degree of growth, separation and distance which is optimal and comfortable for their relationship. For some it may be a boys or girls night out at a certain interval, and for some couples, even some who are married, it is living on different coasts!

We all have different intimacy needs, and a cornerstone relationship compatibility is when these intimacy needs match up. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. When relatively mature people come together, they have resolved a lot of the basic intimacy issues, and thus there is a greater probability that the intimacy issues that arise in the relationship will be able to be successfully navigated by the couple. By contrast, those with greater unresolved intimacy issues, may draw a partner to themselves, often subconsciously or unconsciously, who will trigger these unresolved issues in an attempt to learn how to better face and resolve them. That is when we start talking about "father figures" or "mother figures" or reliving the past through another person.

This is why dynamic-oriented schools of psychology (only one branch of many) trace issues in current relationships back to childhood and family issues, etc. In this view, we develop behavioral styles, or personalities if you will, based upon early experiences which shape our later reactions. So

we become defensive (or “histrionic”), withdrawn (or “passive aggressive”) or angry (“borderline”) to name but a few.

The world is made of energy and from this develop the pushes and pulls of relationships. We feel drawn to someone, or repelled.

Or both.

It's difficult enough when we feel both at differing times. When we feel both at the same time that is a real quandary! (in Psychology they call that an approach-avoidance dilemma, or in layman's terms, “damned if you do and damned if you don't”)

It's also referred to as a double bind (or, again, in layman's terms, “you're screwed”). You get the general idea.

Less is Less

Ok, so that is less is more. But this is what less is more is not. Less is more is not being lazy, nor taking shortcuts. A percentage of the people who think that they are working smart as opposed to working hard, are, in point of fact, not working at all. Or not working hard enough to really matter. Working smart is critical, and at times can even be more important than working hard. That is if you had to choose. Which you don't. No matter how smart you work, how are you doing to compete against someone who is working smart AND working hard, if you are just working smart?

Doesn't sound so smart after all now, does it?

Less is more also doesn't mean a lack of innovation and just copying what other companies are doing is what works. Of course there are exceptions. Microsoft, Dell and many other companies have famously waited until technologies were mature before they implemented them as offerings, with a new spin, to make massive amounts of money. This can be a sound principle, as often the inventor of a breakthrough technology is, sadly enough, not the one who most profits from it. But when this copying of others occurs with a spin, the spin itself has to be an innovative expression of value to work. Going back to Dell, they didn't invent the computers they were selling but they did invent, or more accurately perfect, the direct selling model of them which made them rich. And the personalization which tied into their success. Getting back to Microsoft. Yes, Windows was based upon acquired technology, but it was packaged in a way that was consumer friendly and more available to the masses than it had been before.

Less is more is also not I am always going to keep you at an emotional distance so that you don't know if I really care about you and as a result you will always have to prove yourself to me to win my love. This works better on lower self-esteem individuals, who already believe that they have something to prove. But for those with a good (but healthy) sense of themselves, yes a good challenge may be a turn-on which gets the juices flowing, but if there is a lack of reciprocation than this quickly gets old for a person with self-esteem. Such an individual respects oneself and understands one's value. So they are not going to settle for less.

Less is more is not, I am going to take shortcuts or cheat my way to the top. The world, and other people, are, one will quickly find out, much too sophisticated than that. Life may not be 100% fair at all times, but the cream does tend to rise to the top. In “The Laws and Secrets of Success” we examined that “talent may take one to the top, but only character keeps one there”. Those with bad character, no matter their level of talent, tend to invariably waylay themselves along the way. It is practically inevitable, and referred to as a tragic flaw.

Character is destiny, as we discussed. Those with less talent can make up for it through perseverance, honesty, good relationships, reputation and the like. Because of the law of karma, when we seek to shortchange others we invariably wind up shortchanging ourselves, because that is the energy we are putting out there. We attract others who wish to shortchange us, and repel those who are honest and expect a fair deal (and would gladly pay for the same).

In short, we can say that those who work to outsmart others, learn over time, if they get tired of being beaten by life over the head, these methods merely lead to outsmarting oneself. Less is not more in this circumstance. Less is less.

Chapter 4 - The Bottom Half Manages Up, While the Top Half Manages Down

Life is a process of opposites (polarities or dualities is probably more accurate terminology) working to come more into balance.

Carl Jung has a famous theory that in the first part of life we work on developing our more pronounced qualities. So, for example, if we are outgoing, we may use more and different ways to develop this skill. The second part (or half, I don't believe that this represents an actual timeline as much as a conceptual one), once our more pronounced qualities have become more developed, then we shift to developing our less pronounced ones. So, those who were really into strength start working on their softer side. Those who worked hard on their independence start working more on their relational or interdependence needs. The idea I guess (someone correct me if I am wrong because I possess only a very general understanding of the theory) is that we are working in this life to become more whole and balanced creatures. We do this by first developing our more pronounced qualities, and then by integrating them better, once we have developed them primarily over a period of time, with their "opposites".

This makes sense to me. Of course we don't all necessarily develop in the same way at all times nor at the same speed, and then you also have the issue of "arrested development", when one seems to be going through the same issue, or even crisis, over a prolonged period, or over and over again.

So, in essence, we're each programmed to look to reconcile (or challenge) our opposite. So how does this relate to managing up and managing down? We're all here to be foils and challenges to each other. Those who have less authority "question authority" and those "in authority" exercise it and keep their eye on keeping the masses more in check. Let's examine this.

If we have relatively less power in the world, then power is something which we may experience more in terms of it being applied to us than applying it to others. Both the powerful and the less powerful learn about power in its exercise, being either on the giving or receiving end.

When we are earlier in the pursuit of working to establish ourselves in the world we judge those above us, and are motivated to keep them in check. This is the managing up. So, for example, as an employee, we're watchful that our boss and company are doing the right thing. We may watch our government to make sure that it is doing the right thing in our eyes (and speaking out when we feel it doesn't). When we are younger we watch and judge our parents, often in a critical way especially at certain developmental ages or stages.

In a sense, managing up is a process of attempting to lift ourselves up in the world by pulling others down. Not always in a negative sense as that may sound, but by poking holes in established and establishment figures. Keeping them honest as it were.

Therein comes the reforming element of youth. As we're working our way up in the world, we look for weaknesses in the current system and in those who are more established than us or have power over us. We are optimistic about a "better world", a "better future" and resent or blame others who we feel have "sold out", "taken the easy way out", and of course against those who we view as selfish or exploitive of others.

Our motto may well be "Question authority".

And this serves a useful societal function, by insuring that those in power are being watched to make sure that they do not overstep their bounds (or that if they can be demonstrated to convincingly have done so, that they are held to account).

But all of this watching, criticism and blame can also serve a more individual function. It is also a transition from a narcissistic orientation towards a more selfless and integrated one.

We examined in "The Laws and Secrets of Success" how the infant is essentially egoistic. It cries to get its needs met, out of necessity as the infant has not yet developed the sophisticated life skills to function more autonomously or interdependently. The infant is in a highly dependent position.

As such, to survive it is important that we be able to see and make note of deficiencies in others. I cry, realizes the infant, but the meeting of the need is not always immediate.

What in the name of all that is good is going on here?

So our managing up starts early. The baby learns how over times and in various ways, to ingratiate itself further. A little extra smiling here. Taking a break from crying when no immediate response is forthcoming (perhaps triggering in the parents a response of, "uh oh, silence, what is wrong"). Or crying louder or in a more urgent tone.

We are relational creatures who learn from each other and our greater environment, and this starts right from the beginning I suppose.

Sure, a baby can manipulate down as well. It can move its blanket, shake its rattle etc. But the amount of the world that is seemingly out of control is vast compared to the amount within it. So the baby has a lot of managing up to do.

And of course through life we continue to self-regulate as well. We alter our own responses and behavior based upon what has worked or not worked for us in the past. This is learning.

There is also observational learning. What we see happen to others as well (or hear about).

So, the world is big and we are small. Especially when we are young (the world collectively is of course always much larger and more powerful than we are individually, but remember how large your house seem as a child versus when you see or visit it as an adult, or how powerful your parents seemed, if you can remember it at all, at a very young age).

So, managing up is critical for survival. As a baby you can see how easy it can be to hold a "vulnerable in the world" mentality. Yes, I need to develop my ability to make friends in the world, we have an entire process of socialization for that, but I also have to have a growing and astute awareness of the powers that be, how they are impacting me and have the power to impact me.

I must be vigilant and learn, including learning about others.

A important aspect of managing up can be the phenomenon of magical thinking. When, objectively, you may be more weak and helpless, dependent in the world, it is a scary and likely terrifying thought to think to oneself, I am weak and helpless in the world. So we develop magical thinking to make ourselves more powerful. If I count to ten nothing bad can happen. If I ignore things they do not exist. I can make somebody love me or want to take care of me.

These are the types of things that we begin to tell ourselves.

Magical thinking begins to explain a lot about managing up, especially in regard to our being critical of authority, etc. How can it aid in our survival if we are alienating those who are more powerful than we are? Well, magical thinking, as its name implies, creates kind of a distortion field. I am not powerless, I am powerful. Hence you see that youth, for example teenagers, take the most reckless and dangerous chances. I am invincible, nothing can happen to me. It's scary, I'm sure being a teenager (every age of life has its great challenges). I'm still young as a teenager with a limited number of years of life skills, but so much is now expected of me. I have pressure to develop social skills with the opposite sex, and all the challenges therein. My parents (in some cases at least) want me to start doing more things on my own (chores anyone?, get good grades, play a sport or have an after school job), hey where did all those grown up pressure come from?

They're even talking about me developing a career and learning to support myself in a few short years. Hey, let's not get carried away here.

Because we are not objectively at a point where we may feel ready to handle life fully on its own terms (who of us ever fully is?), the realization of that feeling could be disabling and terrifying. We compensate through magical thinking. Hey, life is a piece of cake. I've got it all under control. Nothing can happen to me. I am invincible.

And a lot of dangerous and reckless type of behavior can (and certainly does) occur out of that mindset.

How do we ever know what the boundaries in life are if we haven't tested them?

Those a little older have more life experience, more years of going through "the school of hard knocks" and have come to learn that life is not all "peaches and cream". This awareness breeds a certain amount of caution, and in some more than others, jadedness and cynicism, which is hard for the younger person, with the magical thinking and less life experience to understand. A caution borne out of life experience can seem to the young to be weakness, and as such possibly something to be exploited. My parents, or other adults, they're so old school. They're boring, they're dull, they're afraid of everything. They were brought up in a different world and don't understand how the world is now.

I am smarter than they are.
Why would I listen to them?

You start to get the idea. We need some of this pushback against others to develop our own identities. The child who is throwing temper tantrums in the “terrible twos” (and terrible threes) is learning, in perhaps an extended but more powerful manner than crying, about his or her own power, basic to a sense of self.

I'm an autonomous being apart from what my parents or others want from me. As I get older, I pick my own clothes, I pick my own friends, if my parents don't like it, sometimes, so much the better.

I have more confidence to do this when I know that my parents love me and won't abandon me. If I don't feel that, then I may become overly dependent and fearful and timid so that they do not abandon me (or in bad cases abuse me), etc. Or I may overcompensate in the other direction by acting out my distress. Doing more reckless or destructive or self-destructive behaviors. I can get into a power struggle with my parents.

You see how strong this need to develop an autonomous self of self is. At some level we must realize that our future survival extends beyond the parents, and into our own ability to survive outside of them. So we better get to work on ourselves.

Unfortunately, however, it seems, in order to bolster ourselves as we work to do this, we have to go a little topsy turvy in our view of the world, feeling that we are more capable than we really are.

Hence, the great confidence of our younger years, tempered later by experience, may be viewed as a sense of overconfidence.

But overconfident into the adult world we go. They have done research on optimism, and have found that optimistic people are significantly less realistic in their perceptions than are pessimistic individuals, but also significantly more successful as well. Optimistic people are much more resilient and persistent, likely because they believe in the best outcome, even if they are overrating their skills (as optimistic people have been shown by research to do). But maybe this result also bears out that we have to be a bit unrealistic in order to keep going. If we saw and focused on everything that can (and sometimes will) go wrong then maybe we'd never even start out in the first place, and/or give up more easily along the way.

Perhaps optimism, or blind faith if you will, is sort of a gift that allows us to persevere much more than we otherwise would, solving problems and overcoming obstacles in the process.

When we're younger we sometimes don't know enough not to give up. Which can be a big part of our success (of course the wisdom of experience is helpful as well).

Successful people retain the optimism of youth, but temper it with the experience and wisdom of learning. If we remain overly optimistic in our later years we may be in for a heap of pain over time, but, conversely, if we become resigned and pessimistic based upon our losses or failures over the years then that will also limit our success in the future. Somehow we have to be able to simultaneously see the best but recognize the worst, the “hope for the best but prepare for the worst” well known mindset you might say.

Successful people are well aware of the pitfalls that may be out there, but they're also well aware of their strengths as well, and their ability and history of solving problems and overcoming obstacles. Perhaps their continuing confidence, while tempered, is still strong not because they think that success will be easy but instead because they realize that they can persevere and continue towards their goals even when success is difficult.

Managing up also involves an in/out aspect. It takes time and effort to establish oneself in this world. And life is very very very competitive. Once you get in a position, those on the outside who crave your position eye you warily. It is a sad fact of life that perhaps everything that we have in life, or at least many things, others want. They want our money, our positions, they may even be envious of our relationships, our good looks, whatever.

There are a lot of reasons why those who have a lower station in life would like to bring down, a peg or two, a level or two, those above them. Jealousy is a human emotion. And so is ambition.

It is famously said that there are two ways to build the tallest building. You can build a building that is taller than any other, or you can build a building which is shorter and then tear down anything which is larger than yours.

In “The Laws and Secrets of Success” it was discussed how the successful do not let themselves be baited, by and large, by those less successful than them (and they also have a lot of institutional support to have their back as well, everything from the legal field to the legislature, etc.). Successful people have mastered their own behavioral responses to such a degree

that they very carefully pick their battles and have learned to let those less than successful than them just wear themselves in futile attacks. Kind of like the legendary boxer Ali, I guess, when he employed the rope-a-dope strategy.

Successful individuals understand well that they are targets. They have resources to hire others to back them up, lawyers, accountants, employees, etc., but they also relentlessly stay on task without allowing themselves to be distracted to focus on the task at hand.

This is part of taking responsibility for their lives and not blaming others. Successful people know that their self-control is critical for their success. Less successful or unsuccessful people do not have this degree of self-control. They lash out at others and blame them. They do not take responsibility for the events in their lives, but instead, as noted in the previous book, live in woulda, coulda shoulda.

This emotional self-regulation and control is a tremendously critical factor in success. Those who can master their emotional states, especially in their interactions with others, are at a major major advantage for success.

So, those in the bottom half manage up the top half. They do so because of magical thinking, they do so because of competition and in/out conditions, and they do so because of elements, sometimes, related to self-control (of course there are additional reasons as well).

No matter the reasons for this managing up, it serves many useful purposes. It keeps those in power in check, at least relatively speaking, because they know that a lot of eyes are on them. We live in a world of accountability, at all levels of society, but as one reaches higher levels a higher degree of scrutiny takes place. The President of the United States, for example, is going to receive a higher degree of scrutiny, and from more people, than a local baker. And for good reason. It is important that the local baker does a good job, and customers and the state hygiene department, for example, can be factors in the baker's success or lack thereof, but the degree of damage that a President can do if he or she does a poor or corrupt job - getting us into an unjust war as just one example - is on a much larger scale. So newspapers throughout the country will be focusing on the President's performance (a form of managing up, although the media, in general, also often supports also the status quo), as will news and talk shows, bloggers, etc. When you're in the public eye, criticism and appropriate scrutiny from basically all levels is considered essentially fair game.

Perhaps that is why individuals who rise high in politics are often termed highly "political". They know how to give "political" answers when questioned, they don't crack easily nor at the first tough question. They don't show uncontrolled anger easily (sometimes the anger shown is for effect) and they are, if they are to be successful, able to talk to and relate to a wide swath of constituencies and show interest and knowledge about their situations and plights.

Perhaps that is why politicians are sometimes criticized also, as being, or trying to be, all things to all people.

Or of speaking out of both sides out of their mouth, whoever the constituency is at the time.

I am not anti-politician. Not by a longshot. I ran for Governor myself. I believe that any profession, essentially, can be noble or not, based upon how it is approached.

So, let's talk now about managing down. Those in the bottom half, if it can be phrased that way, because we're not in the top half or bottom half in all areas, of course, manage both up and down, as do those in the top half. But those in the bottom half of a specific area predominantly manage the top half in that area, while those in the top half in a given area predominantly manage the bottom half in that area.

So, what does it mean to manage down? One aspect may be thought of as exerting power or control over those "lower" than us, although an alternative aspect may be teaching or guiding others. For example, do parents control their children or teach or guide them? Neither, or both? Do judges and police exert power over those who come before them, or are they simply guiding others through the meting out of society's rules?

Certainly, the person in the role can be as critical as the role itself. You have abusive parents and you have loving parents. And what it means to be a loving parent is not, certainly, universally agreed. Is tough love part of being a loving parent? Is nurturing essential for being a loving parent? What if it bleeds into fostering dependency or enabling?

One of the way in which the "upper" half manages the "bottom" half is by roles. Teachers teach. Parents parent. Judges judge. Police police. And bosses boss.

You get the idea.

But what are some of the goals of this managing down?

One aspect is socialization or implementation of societal norms (diverse as those are and may be). While hopefully not quashing all individuality by any means, teachers teach pupils how to conform in an academic setting. If schools are preparation for jobs (more so than for life - if schools were preparation for life wouldn't they teach parenting, financial skills and life skills as much as they do chemistry and biology) then one significant aspect of this is learning conformity. Schools have a task and time structure, like jobs. Do you have a choice about doing your homework and doing it well. Well, you have about the same amount of choice as you do in doing your work on the job and doing it well. If you don't do your homework over time you will fail. And if you don't do your work over time you will be fired.

And the comparisons only start there. Until a certain age you may have to raise your hand in class before you can go to the bathroom (I have been out of school for many years, so I am not sure how things may have changed). And if you were home for a day sick you need a parent's or doctor's note. If you plan to miss a day or work you need to put in a request first, or if you're suddenly ill you need to call in to let them know. A lot of jobs you need to call in if you are going to be late, otherwise you can face disciplinary action. While in many jobs you may not have to raise your hand to go to the bathroom (being an adult does have some advantages) depending upon the type of job there are many things that you may need to ask your boss or company for permission for.

We accept going to school because we accept being part of society and being part of the job market. Some individuals are entrepreneurs and may have some greater degree of occupational autonomy and decision-making day to day, but interestingly successful entrepreneurs were not always the best students in school by any means, and often they have not pursued the most advanced degrees (e.g. lawyers, doctors and academics are much more learned, in terms of formal education than most entrepreneurs). Of course learning doesn't end when we get out of school, as well. As discussed in "The Laws and Secrets of Success" power can either be used or abused. We need lawyers, we need police, we need teachers. But each of these professions, as well as all others, can be used in providing a legitimate service or can be misused for attempted personal power, benefit or gain.

I suspect that some roles in society are "high power positions" and thus perhaps more likely to attract those drawn to power (for either good or ill). Of course the maturity and character of the individual in the role will go a long way in mediating how such power by the individual may be, or may attempted to be, used.

One line of thinking is that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely". I believe, rather, that power, like money, more so accentuates who you already are. Greedy people with money have more capacity to attempt to be greedy. Generous people with money have more capacity to work to be generous. Although there is a tendency to demonize rich people, as discussed earlier, and it may also be that certain personality characteristics both desirable and undesirable may drive a person towards the attainment of great wealth, we all have an accountability in life, and if we cannot handle well the power (or money) at a certain level then we are likely to lose it.

There is a famous saying that when a person with money meets a person with experience, the person with experience gets the money and the person with money gets the experience. I don't think that we live in a completely predatory society but I do believe that we live in a highly competitive one, and those with significant power and money need the self-regulatory character traits, such as discipline, to be successful with their money and/or power or else it will flow away from them.

They say that the first rule of money is that it moves to where it is well treated. People who think that making money is a sin, for example, are not likely to make or accumulate much of it. Those who do not respect money by overindulging themselves are not likely to accumulate large sums of money. Those who make a lot of enemies through the misuse of power are (e.g. live by the sword, die by the sword being a famous metaphorical saying) likely to have this catch up with them over some period of time.

Life may not be completely fair (although some think it is if you look at it cosmically, beyond our human understanding) but it is certainly not completely unfair either. There are rules and principles in society, the world and the universe which govern money, power and other things.

So, back to managing down. As money, and success, is an expression of value, those who manage down by creating value will be more successful and or make more money. The coach who can win a high school football state championship will make a certain amount of money, but the coach who can win a NCAA Division 1 national championship will certainly make quite a bit more.

An assistant manager of a McDonald's who is entrusted to manage ten people can make a certain amount of money, but the top assistant to the President of the United States, namely the Vice President, will not only make significantly more (and government salaries are lower than respective responsibilities in other disciplines) and have, of course, much greater impact to boot (although perhaps this is not the best example as some claim that the office of Vice President, famously enough, can have little to no impact).

While one form of magical thinking can limit the success of those in the "bottom half", another type of magical thinking can limit those in the "top half". Specifically, one limiting form of magical thinking by those in "upper half" professions is overidentification with their roles. Teachers (which I think is one of the noblest professions in the world) who overstep their bounds (and not putting your heart into things can instead be a different problem) such that they burn themselves out, don't respect the parents or students (some parents and students are challenging) etc. Policeman who think that they are powerful because they carry a gun. And any employee, regardless of profession, who goes through major anguish or trauma when they are laid off or lose a job, because they believe that the job defines them.

A job may be part of who we are but the most successful individuals know and realize that we have a core and deeper identity of "who we are" beyond "what we do".

Just as children may think that their parents are stupid (well beyond any objective measure, let's say, some parents of course do make more serious mistakes) and some employees may think that their bosses are stupid (I'm not saying they are or they aren't, but the first pertinent question to ask may well be, "Why is this individual still the boss?"), the shoe can be on the other foot as well. Parents may not recognize the strengths or intelligence of their children. Bosses may not recognize the skills or potential of their employees.

Successful people get the best out of others. Successful employees get the best out of their bosses (and other employees), and successful bosses get the best out of their employees (and other bosses).

It's been said that every boss has another boss. You may be the boss at work over 10,000 employees, but when you get in your car the police officer can still pull you over for a perceived or actual offense. Your kid still may or may not listen to you. Your wife still may or may not love you (or to be equal, if the boss is a woman, your husband).

What I am trying to say is that even though the bottom half manages up and the top half manages down, and there are differences between the two, we're all in the human soup together, we all have some similar experiences (along with others which may be different) and we all can certainly learn something from each other.

Chapter 5 - Survival of the Fittest by the Denial or Withdrawal of Resources

Say that you need money so you go to look for a job. As an employee, am I likely to hire you out of charity?

Probably not.

So, in order for me to give you the financial resources of a paycheck, you have to, to the employer, meet his or her criteria of contribution ability for hiring. Otherwise the resources will be withheld.

If I want to be the President of IBM but am fresh out of high school with no college and no work experience, those resources that go along with being President of IBM, are likely to be withheld from me.

If I want to marry the world's most beautiful available model (tossing aside for a moment whether a consensus on such an individual would ever be possible) but I am an unemployed 69 year old janitor with \$46 (and change) in the bank who has lost my hair, most of my teeth and is a good hundred pounds overweight to boot, those marriage or dating resources (i.e. opportunities) from this top model are likely to be withheld from me.

Life is a competition for resources, and the survival of the fittest element indicates that the greater resources we can effectively control (including but not limited to money) the more successful that we will be.

I realize that this seems like Success 101 (i.e. everybody already knows that) but the implications from this simple principle are almost endless.

Here's one. The wealthy don't need to be aggressive to you, they can be passive aggressive. They can merely ignore you (especially if you do not have something you are offering them that they want). Of course this is why you could call a world famous individual 100 times, as an average Joe or Jane, and gain nothing more than a bunch of form letters (and possibly a restraining order after the 45th call :).

Here's another. We're not prostitutes but we trade the best years of our lives to our employers, doing tons of stuff we don't want to do, sometimes things we really don't want to do, to make a living.

Is that healthy or unhealthy? Personally, I believe that there is enough grace in the world that you do not have to work a job that you hate. There is enough opportunity to find something better. But at the same time, we can't start on the top most of the time in this world. We have to pay our dues. We may start out in menial jobs and it may be our good attitude in those jobs that help lead to better jobs.

I believe strongly in what is termed "growing where you are planted". If life put you in a certain spot, then that is probably the perfect spot for you right now. Do what you can to the best of your ability, right where you are, and with a good attitude. This opens doors, and is a productive and healthy way to live.

Now life may move you on (hopefully up). But it will be clear when this is the time. Sometimes we want to promote ourselves, but life is not yet ready to promote us. This is where a lot of our aggravation in life may emanate. If we spent as much energy trying to do a good job in the job we were in as trying to get out of it (or bemoaning being in it) then our future might be much brighter indeed.

But this can feel like a challenge, sometimes, ok even often, to do. That is why it is also famously said that a person's attitude determines their altitude.

Gratefulness is an incredible fruit of the spirit, and major contributor to success. As an entrepreneur, I see that the greatest predictor of employee success (not just with me but overall) is helpfulness and attitude. We all think we're great, and we are all great in terms of our value, but many of us may also feel that "we're too great" for this or that. Certainly we should maintain high personal standards. But we also, if we want to be optimally successful, should not think that we are "all that" and be too easily offended. Those people do not seem to catch nearly as many of those "lucky breaks" that successful people generally do.

It may seem like people are denying us resources, but often people are just the medium for life. Sometimes we want the promotion (occupation, relationship, family or otherwise) but we are not ready for it.

Joyce Meyer has a famous, fantastic expression. "Sometimes we want life to change our circumstances. But sometimes life uses our circumstances to change us."

Here here.

If we hold a beneficent attitude towards life, then life is more beneficent. I can't prove it, but try being hostile to everyone that you meet, and see how far that gets you. Now, back to withholding of resources. Successful individuals are pros at this. They're tough negotiators and they have high self-esteem. It doesn't mean that they think they are better than you, but they think, without being arrogant, that they are pretty darn good.

The successful know the sacrifices that they have made to be successful, and I'll be radically honest with you here, they know also that most people want shortcuts (maybe it is human nature) and to take what the successful have worked hard for but which others haven't earned. Don't hate your boss for having you work hard. It's a marketplace, and there are probably a lot of people who would like to have the job that you have. And if not, what does it say about you that you are still there?

You can put up with a bad boss (within reason, don't let people go too too far) if you understand that life has put you in a certain circumstance to grow you, and you are committed to that growth. That is a lot different than playing a victim or a martyr, which is also way too common. We let people mistreat us, we don't do anything really about it, but boy do we like to complain. Put up with what you have to put up with to move your life forward (but not more) because all successful people do this, and in fact successful people do it with a good attitude.

Then watch how far you go.

A few more words about withdrawal of resources. Life has both the carrot and the stick. If you do your job you'll get paid (and if you do your job really well you may get promoted or build the skills to get a better job) and if you don't show up for work often enough you'll get fired. Be thankful that you do not get everything you wish for in life. Look back on your life in regard to what your life would have been like with no effort or struggles, and how these (again, without ever being a martyr, keep things in balance) have hopefully developed and refined you.

Life kind of seems to know what it is doing. Don't blame others for what they are not giving. BE THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO CAN ATTRACT THE THINGS THAT YOU WANT FROM OTHERS AND FROM LIFE.

Perhaps that is what is meant by the expression that "You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

There is a famous "entity" entitled Abraham Hicks (e.g., do a search on YouTube, actually Abraham refers to themselves as a collective) who explains that experiencing what we do not want plants the seeds of desire for what we do want, and that by desiring what we do want, and being focused and drawn into that more and more, we are manifesting or attracting it into our lives.

A word about being punitive in the withdrawal or holding back of resources. Holding others accountable is good. It respects you and it respects them. But being punitive with others goes beyond this. Accountability is win-win. Punitive is win-lose. And how in this world of karma and the law of attraction can you ever seek to punish or injure/slight another without limiting if not injuring/depriving yourself.

If you want abundance in your life see abundance in the world. See the good in other people, and work to develop it. Don't hold them as more important than you. And don't let them hold you down. But accept the challenges of the world in good cheer, knowing, with great and joyful expectancy, that you are well on your way. The famous preacher Joel Olsteen quotes Scripture, I believe, about one's blessings chasing one down.

That is you, when you are ready to accept and harmonize with it.

I came up with an expression for this principle. "The Universe expands or restricts opportunities based upon our ability to receive them."

The world is full of opportunities. It is each of us, sometimes, as a vessel, which is limited. As we grow, the world seems to grow with us. Isn't that grand?

Chapter 6 - Forgiveness and Accountability It is said that "forgiveness is the gift that you give yourself".

But is it really?

Yes it is.

Although many of us don't believe it. How do I know that? Take one look at the world.

For many years I lived with a heavier footprint. No, not a carbon footprint. But a life footprint. I felt a weight on me, a struggle, a battle in life.

It seemed so hard at times even to make ends meet, much less thrive.

I didn't realize that life IS a battle, but a battle with oneself. When others antagonize us, they're doing us a favor (within reason). They're teaching us, if we learn the lesson, that we don't need to fight all the time to get what we want in life. In fact, this is precisely the thing that is holding us back.

When we don't forgive, we see enemies. Fundamentally this is because we feel vulnerable in some way. And remember feelings are powerful in regard to the law of attraction. When we feel vulnerable we are vulnerable. Maybe not in the deepest sense, in which life loves us and (I believe, but can't prove or know for sure) that we are perhaps immortal, but in our life experience.

Call it Karma. Call it The Law of Attraction. Call it "What goes around comes around" (or Call it "Frosted Flakes" if you want to be original). The principle is the same. When we see enemies we have enemies. We create them. When we feel vulnerable we are vulnerable. We create it.

This is a little bit of a simplification, but not too much.

When considering whether forgiveness is a gift you give yourself, ask yourself this question? What is

the result of living in unforgiveness? What is the result of living with a heavy heart? What is the result of living with stress? What is the result of living with feeling that one is vulnerable?

You can come up with your own answers, I am sure.

They say that you cannot give away something which you already are. Another way of saying that, famously, is "You must be the change that you seek to see in the world."

YOU ARE THAT CHANGE.

I put it in caps because, to my mind, it is that important. It may seem a little hokey, perhaps along the lines of "mind over matter" or "faith can move mountains" - and you may be skeptical because when is the last time that you saw a mountain being moved - but we are creating our realities, at least to some degree. Because others are also creating theirs, we have some limitations, some solid limitations, in terms of what we may be influence in the public space (we each have a sphere of influence), but you do have a major effect on your own life (and to a lesser extent on the lives of others as well).

We're not passive agents. No. We are creators. So, that is a great power that we need to learn to harness well.

Another famous saying I like is, "Wherever you go, there you are". To me that is a gentle reminder to try to be at peace with oneself (I also like the similarly minded saying "grow where you are planted").

If you believe in perfect timing, and perfect moments (as I do), and even perfect results (perhaps a little bit more bold on that one), then you know as is also famously said that "God doesn't make mistakes" or (as Einstein said, "God doesn't play dice with the Universe").

If we are where we should be, learning (or at least with the opportunity to learn) what we should learn, that why does it all seem so difficult? Glad you asked (and it's a question we all ask, I have asked it many many times). The best answer to that question that I have been able to come up with is that, to a certain measure, life is often as easy or difficult as we make. There are certain objective things in the world. This includes plenty of challenges to be sure. But when we struggle against them. When we fear them. When we hate them. Then things can reach a point of seeming almost unmanageable.

I said earlier that I believe that as human beings we can generally, for the most part at least, be about as happy or unhappy as we make up our minds to be. It's a choice. It seems more difficult because we have put a lot of conditions on life. Because we have put a lot of conditions on ourselves. It will not then surprise you to hear, following from this logic, that it is difficult for us to forgive others because it is difficult for us to forgive ourselves. Remember, the outer world is an expression or mirror of the inner, and it is, as noted impossible to give away something which we do not already have.

Imagine if we were at peace with ourselves. How would we relate to others if we didn't feel that we needed something from them? I'm not saying that this is the ideal state, or even possible, I am just asking the question. Love comes from a place of fullness. Unforgiveness, including grudges and bad feelings, comes from a place of vulnerability or lack.

But I also wish to take a look at the other side (or another side, at least) because I am not advocating that we should always be forgiving angels one hundred per cent. Remember when we recently discussed managing up and managing down. Accountability, the flip side perhaps of forgiveness, is involved in this process. When we manage up or down (or sideways) we are utilizing accountability. Our notion of accountability anyway. We may call it fairness. Justice is a notion of accountability, expressed in its (I believe) watered-down but still valuable rubric of laws (entitled the criminal JUSTICE system).

Laws do not always have justice, but that is the ideal. That is what we are after (or should be after).

Accountability is good because it is a learning tool. If we did something wrong and we were not corrected, how would we know not to do that wrong thing again. We can learn from our own experience, and also through the experience of others (observational learning). Sometimes we don't forgive because we are focused on accountability and fairness. But sometimes we don't forgive because we are just petty. Or jealous. Or small.

How can we separate out the two?
Discernment.

In "The Laws and Secrets of Success" the next to the final chapter was entitled "The Wisdom to Know the Difference".

Discernment is this ability (along with character which plays a big role). Sometimes accountability is accountability, and sometimes it is unforgiveness. This is not so much an objective evaluation of course, as much as it is often dependent upon the players at play, and their motivations, needs and drives etc.

But we shouldn't be too hard on ourselves regardless. Who among us hasn't engaged in a bit of unforgiveness at times? (sometimes with a nice spin of accountability thrown in for good measure).

Perhaps this is why the Bible reminds us ("judge not lest ye be judged")

We need to make judgments in our lives of course. But perhaps this is very different than being judgmental. Perhaps judgments lead to accountability, but judgmentalness (if that is a word) leads to unforgiveness.

Sounds good to me.

Discernment is critical to character. If we can't differentiate between when we are practicing accountability and when we are practicing unforgiveness, then this is a stumbling block for us. Our feelings can be a guide. At some level it feels good when we work to make the world in some way be more fair (as we define it). This is an important and critical part of life. But it feels bad when we seek to punish someone, for example, to try make them feel bad, out of our own weaknesses.

Although it may be tempting to try, we can't really feel better at another's expense. We're all related, and the energy of life is like a boomerang, what we put out is what we ultimately receive.

Forgiveness IS the gift you give yourself. If you're smart and successful you will have already realized that by now.

Chapter 7 - The Competitiveness vs. Spirituality of Success

I'm continually amazed with how competitive life is. It is brutally competitive, and the higher in life one goes, the more competitive it is.

In fact success is based on competition to an extraordinary degree.

In "The Laws and Secrets of Success" there is a chapter entitled "The Strength of the Ant". Basically it discusses how ants can do phenomenally impressive things (for example carry many times their body weight over distance) but that because other ants can do the same things while it is phenomenally impressive, it is not unique.

It is the same principle with humans. We can do incredibly impressive things, and do, but lest we become overconfident in our own abilities we merely need to look around and see what others are capable of as well.

Today I was watching the 2014 Winter Olympics. I was a very good athlete in college, but these Olympians are doing feats I am scared and intimidated even watching.

The problem is, as detailed, ego bias. We're well aware of what we can do, but, in order to feel more secure in an insecure world (and a lot of this insecurity is based upon this competitiveness factor) we have to downplay or ignore the abilities of others. Why is that? Anxiety. The more we are aware of the capabilities of others, the more frightening, from a competitive standpoint, that can be. Too much anxiety and we wouldn't function or function well. So we need to tamp it down.

So, we overestimate our abilities and underestimate others. It may not be accurate but the world feels a whole lot safer that way!

This is a double edged sword. Successful people look at the world more objectively, they are better able to manage competitive pressures and other fears and sources of anxiety. It is only by recognizing problems, obviously, that we can hope to effectively deal with them. If we have too much fear or anxiety to be able to do this substantially, and hence believe instead what we tell ourselves to feel better, we'll feel better but we'll perform worse.

This is where the idea of comfort zone comes from. We feel comfortable within a certain zone where outcomes are more predictable and known. But we manage and shrink our level of participation in

the world in order to keep that comfort.

“No pain, no gain” reminds us of another related truth, that “nothing worthwhile in life comes easily”. So learning to successfully manage our fears, and/or act competently in the face of fear, is a major component of success.

While the successful are more realistic, they are more unrealistic as well.

I'll explain. At our core we have to be realistic. This includes true humility (felt in the heart, not just the mind), persistence, etc., all of those qualities that allow us, when utilized well, to thrive in a competitive environment. At a more surface level to be successful we have to be unrealistic. I've mentioned that optimistic people are shown in studies to be significantly less realistic than pessimistic people by objective measures. However, optimistic people, while being less realistic, are also more successful.

How is that possible?

As mentioned, it is optimism that allows us to persist. If we consciously realized all the things that can go wrong, and will go wrong, and how much pain and disappointment that might bring, we might well be afraid to ever get started.

Optimism is really kind of like a con job, but it can be a self-fulfilling one. Things are never really as rosy or easy as the optimist might think, but the optimist, in believing that things will turn around, or eventually turn around and go in one's favor and direction (got to love those silver linings!) persists until, eventually, if one is optimistic and persistent enough, things do tend to eventually go one's way.

If you can hang in there long enough without giving up. Or be able to continually make adjustments so that you can overcome obstacles...

In regard to competition, animals kill each other physically, for food, but humans kill each other psychologically. They take advantage of each other in relationships, in jobs, in the courts, and in a million other ways.

The reason that “birds of a feather flock together” in significant part, is because life is largely a power struggle, or competition if you like to think of it as such, and if you hung around with those much stronger than you, they would figuratively “eat you for lunch”. If you hung around with those much weaker than you, there would be a lot less resources to gain, bargain or negotiate for.

So, for example, in marriages people often match up on attractiveness, or money, or trade attractiveness (or other highly desirable traits) for money. Life is constantly negotiation because life is constantly competitive.

This is why rejection can hurt so badly. We need others to survive. Physically. But also psychologically as well. We are social creatures. And when we are outcast, or lose the love and the assistance and resources that go with it, physical and/or psychological, it feels like a death because we think we may die. We were counting on a person for so much, and now that has been ripped away.

Holy smokes.

I'm going to contradict myself a little bit here, by stating that we can also rise above this, to a substantial if not total degree, by an evolution of consciousness. On a physical, psychological and often emotional level, life is, or can be, highly highly highly competitive as detailed.

But on a spiritual level...

The higher has power over the lower. The child is afraid that there are monsters under the bed, because the child has less objective skill to survive in the world than the adult, and the child manifests this anxiety in different ways, including monsters (the classic notion of identification is another way, and why, except in extremely bad circumstances, when push comes to shove at a minimum children will generally listen to their parents and teachers and allow themselves to be socialized, rather than running away from home at a young age and setting up a base camp of their own).

Let's talk a little bit about this spiritual perspective, and what it means, in general and in regard to competition.

Here we go.

It's in the Bible, I believe, where it talks about God looking after every blade of grass. And it's true. Look at this world. Everyone in this life has their portion. Some portions may be greater than others, but people have their individual portions for food, for shelter, for relationships, for career, etc.

Everyone has a space in the world.
This is not by accident.

Our anxiety over competition actually makes us more vulnerable, due to the law of attraction and our emotions being the discerning guide. When we feel that the Universe has a place for us, for each of us, carved out for us, that is very reassuring.

Freud stated something such as "religion is the opiate of the masses".
And sometimes, perhaps often, religion can be used in that way. But there are spiritual laws just as there are physical laws.

Most of us have no desire to kill other people, not intrinsically because we want avoid jail or the death penalty, although certainly we would, but rather something inside of us just knows that this is not who we are, it is not what we are about, it is anathema to our basic being.

Now of course in wartime etc. this can be overridden to a degree. I am not a total pacifist although I do not generally believe in war. Why do you think so many soldiers who have seen mortal combat, despite their military training, come home with flashbacks, nightmares or PTSD.

Because spiritually we are programmed to act in certain ways and witness certain things and not others, and when we go outside of this there are repercussions. Spiritual repercussions and repercussions in other areas.

Now some people are more spiritually evolved than others, and as a result what some people might find suitable from a spiritual perspective might be different than others. So there is individual variation.

When you see yourself as a body you have physical power. When you see yourself as a mind then you have mental power. Emotions have great power as well. BUT WHEN YOU SEE YOURSELF AS A SPIRIT THEN YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL POWERS.

Love is an additional power of the spirit.
As is joy.
As is forgiveness.
And many others.

Was it Jesus who said that man (and women as well of course) does not live by bread alone). When it says that faith can move mountains I do not know if it is talking about mountains literally or not, but I do know that faith can be transformative. Do you know how many people have gotten through incredible tragedies (and disappointments) because of their faith?

I am not here to tell you that there is a God, that is outside the scope of this book. I am here to tell you that those who are successful draw on powers greater than their own.

This, if you want to be successful, is one of the greatest success secrets you can ever know.

If you count only on yourself and your own set of abilities, you will be living off "the sweat of your brow" or your own cunning. Many people live this way.

But there is a vast intelligence that we are not aware of if we only live this way. You can call it intuition, or faith, or another name, but there is a deeper wisdom that is available to us when we learn to tap into it. Some people do this through meditation. Some commune with nature. Some people do this by going to Church or Synagogue or Mosque, etc., some in personal or silent prayer. I am not here to say that one form of tapping into this wisdom is greater than another, but I here to tell you that if you can find an effective way to tap into that wisdom beyond your own critical thinking and planning mind and physical efforts you will be better off.

Much better off.

How do I know this? I could be wrong, but I have seen it many times. And heard many successful people talk and write about it as well.

I believe strongly also in something I call "perfect moments". If you believe that the world is perfect already, and that while we still have to expend considerable effort as we have various roles to play, then you will find it in your experience. And it will bring you peace and joy. And peace and joy are,

through the law of attraction, the key emotions or emotional states which bring you success.

It is being vs. becoming. Because the external world mirrors the internal, if you feel complete and perfect within yourself, this is a very powerful draw in terms of the energy that you are emanating to attract the desires of your heart. Because we live in a world of attraction, when you say no to things you may think that you are pushing them away but you are drawing them in instead.

Attention is attraction. Whether it is positive or negative (although I believe that positive thoughts are much more powerful than negative ones).

In my life, I don't go after things (or try not to). I attempt to live in these "perfect moments". I am highly active (including writing), so perfect moments is not just a reserved state. I see perfect moments as an attention to the energy within oneself, or the intuition or whatever you want to call it, and going with that. This doesn't negate planning. Planning can also be intuitive. Intuition will put a lot of planning into your mind. But it won't be a striving. It will be a moment to moment experience in terms of what is right for the day. Or the moment.

Life can be lived naturally, and this is much more productive, actually, than living competitively and from a sense of deficiency or fear. To live naturally, or in the moment, what Eckhart Tolle famously terms "the power of now", means also that one must be willing to give up things whose purpose has been realized or passed. Sometimes we hold onto relationships which have passed, or career, or ideas about ourselves.

We are changing and growing and evolving every moment, but our ideas of ourselves are not. Pain comes when our ideas of ourselves lag behind who are right now, today.

In these perfect moments.

So, life is highly highly highly competitive. But from a spiritual perspective, when we're living naturally (some call it grace), we're right where we need to be, with all the intelligence, energy and resources needed to do what we are meant to do. Not always what we might choose to do, or like to do, but what we need to do.

Like the expression, "we don't always get what we want, but we get what we need". That feels pretty good to me.

Finally, as mentioned, competition is essentially with ourselves. If we can be better people, stronger people (emotionally, spiritually, etc.), more forgiving people, etc., a lot of our problems in life can be met and/or overcome.

As stated by Joyce Meyer, "sometimes we ask life to change our circumstances, but sometimes life uses our circumstances to change us".

Don't be afraid of competition. Recognize it, and meet it head on. But realize that you are certainly more than this as well.

Chapter 8 - Perfect Moments

You may have heard of the expression, "Follow your bliss".

Life can have quite a bit of tension. Perhaps as much as we allow. Certainly, even survival can sometimes be a struggle. But some of that struggle comes from holding on.

When we hold to the view that life must take a certain path or a certain direction, we can easily become tense. Life is big, and we are small, and, unfortunately, we're not salmon who can be continually swimming upstream.

Our emotions are key. We discussed in the notion of the law of attraction that our emotions, positive emotions, through the law of attraction bring all good things into our lives.

Emotions are energy that manifest results.

When we are joyful, hopeful, calm and happy, we're attracting good things into our life.

"Follow your bliss", to me anyway, doesn't mean only do the things that you love, although there can be an element of that to be sure. It goes deeper. To me, it means, at even a more intrinsic level, love everything that you do.

Find a way to love everything you do. As much as you can if not completely. If you can't love it, no matter how much you try, question whether it is really something that is really worth doing, and something in your best interest.

This may sound a little radical. Enjoy your life? All the time?

I'll admit it. This is not how I have always lived my own life. Not by a long shot.

We think we can only get addicted to alcohol, or cigarettes, or food, or sex. But we can also be emotional junkies. Addicted to stress. Addicted to drama. Addicted to depression.

There is a famous expression that a person can be (and in fact will be) pretty much as happy or as unhappy as they decide they wish to be.

Happiness is not something thrust upon us from the outside. Happiness is something that we create from the inside.

By choice.

In this vein, happiness isn't so much a feeling as it is a decision.

Not happy because...

But happy regardless.

This is not an easy way to live. We talked about how successful people take responsibility for their lives. This includes not only behaviors, but "inner behaviors" as well such as thoughts, attitudes and emotions.

There is a famous saying that "As a man (or woman) thinketh, so he is".
"Or, so within, so without".

Our thoughts and our actions are critical, because they are, sooner or later, impetuses to our actions. And as such they drive our lives.

If we have, for example, thoughts of perseverance in the face of obstacles this leads to much different decisions and actions than if we have feelings of victimization and blame.

If we have feelings of fullness and generosity and love, these induce markedly different decisions and behaviors than hatred, jealousy and lack.

Perhaps that is why it is famously said that "forgiveness is the gift that we give ourselves" and that "the only way to keep another in a ditch is to remain there oneself".

As we examine this area in depth, it becomes all the more clear that we are in a battle not with others, which often seems to be the case, as much as in one with ourselves. What type of identity will we choose for ourselves. One emanating out of fullness and love. Or one emanating out of lack.

The idea of "perfect moments", to me, implies the notion all is right with the world, right as it is, here and now.

Shakespeare famously said that there is no good or bad but only thinking makes it so.

While I would not go so far as to slip into complete relativism, I do believe in objective standards - the 10 commandments come to mind - I do think at an emotional and thus experiential level, and how this plays out in terms of the experiences of our lives, that interpretations and mindsets play a critical role.

So, what are "perfect moments", and how do they relate to success?

Our ego mind conditions us to worry. Scan the environment for threats so that we survive. In Neanderthal days these were physical threats. Animals who literally wanted to eat us for lunch. Law of the jungle. Survival of the fittest. Today these battles are relational, and psychological. Will people accept us, and meet our needs, or will they reject us?
That is why rejection can hurt so badly, and feel, more than a little, like death.

This state of worry, often constant worry, paired with control (planning, guiding, scheming, etc.) is referred to by many terms. One, a religious term, may be "acts of the flesh". We keep ourselves alive by our own efforts. Hence, if we want to eat, we must work (trust funds and generous family members notwithstanding). We can sit around all day thinking pleasing law of attracting thoughts, but this isn't necessarily going to put bread on our table.

So we need to make the effort. But making the effort, being active, is not the same, in and of itself, as struggling and straining. We can work hard out of fear, but we can also work hard out of inspiration and love.

And love is more sustainable than fear. Because fear eventually corrodes us from the inside and

wears us down. You can only force yourself to do something you don't want to do for so long. Like the dieter who, in a moment of weakness because the person has been continually denying oneself, binges.

Opposed to the notion of struggle, or works of the flesh, is "grace". Or "anointing". Or "blessing". Or "love".

We have a choice. We can see the world as struggle and dog eat dog - I better grab mine and all that I can. Or we can see the Universe as more friendly and loving, and having a place for us all.

Let me explain.

Even in the Bible, and I'm paraphrasing because I haven't looked up the exact verse(s) and I'm not a Bible expert or scholar, it indicates, I believe, that God looks after each creature and blade of grass, and that they grow and fulfill their function without struggle or toil.

This is very significant. There is a force in us, and outside of us (as it is accessible to us but larger than us as well) which can guide us. You can call it intuition. You can call it grace. We each have a sense of what we can do. What we are capable of doing. And what we should do. It is said that this is a "still small voice" and, as such, relatively easy to ignore.

When we are scared, or angry, or any of a number of other negative emotional states, we are distanced from this inner guidance. This inner wisdom if you will.

How do we know that it is a wisdom? This is a little difficult to describe. We have all done what we thought was right at one time, and later come to regret it, for one reason or another. Despite this, there is something inside of us that is both like a calculator and emotional GPS (the famous channeled entity Abraham Hicks refers to this as an Emotional Guidance System).

Let's look at these two aspects (and there may well be more) one at a time.

The Calculator aspect. There is something inside of us that weighs, measures and sorts all of the information that we have, much of which at times may be subconscious or even unconscious, and organizes it for us in a way such that we can make the best judgments for our lives.

Pretty neat.

This is clearly well beyond the sole functioning of the conscious mind. Organization is somehow given to us (or perhaps we are organizing below consciousness, I am not sure). We've all heard the exercise of taking a piece of paper, drawing a line down the center and listing all of the pluses on one side and minuses on the other.

This is like that, but on steroids. There is this calculator ability, or call it a computer ability if you wish, that allows us to process all of the information available to us, even that which we are not consciously aware of, and integrate and personalize it in a way that leads not only to solutions but personal wisdom.

Not too bad.

Emotional GPS - Our emotions are a life guide. I don't know if that is what they are there for, but it is a significant purpose that they serve.

We're meant to be joyful. I know that may sound crazy in a world that can seem highly stressful or harsh, but all good things flow to us, all success, when we are happy and loving.

Why shouldn't it be so? Perhaps that is part of the meaning behind the saying "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer".

Our emotions are a guide to what we may be bringing our way. If we're tense and uptight, that is not a good sign.

It's important at this point to differentiate again between effort and struggle. This is a world of birthing. We can't just think about what we want and have it be so (if we could we'd all sit home or lie in bed all day) but we need to walk it out in the world.

So don't think in order to be successful that you need not work hard. Of course you must. But working hard doesn't mean that one needs to be stressed or all out of whack. If you are following your bliss, and doing what you love, then work and play come much closer together.

If you don't love what you do, then maybe you should either try harder to love it, or like it

substantially at a minimum, or, if this proves too difficult, trade it in for another line of work that you can feel really good about.

Positive emotions are health. They are wealth. They are all things that flow out of a sense of fullness.

So pay attention to what your emotions, your emotional guidance system, is telling you. If you can always move in the direction of feeling better and better, than you're on the right path.

Now positive emotions is not necessarily the same thing as pleasure. Not by a long shot. Sometimes we can feel good about something even when it is uncomfortable or difficult. Perhaps, for example, because we enjoy the challenge and see it as a positive, or perhaps also because we feel strongly that it is the right thing for us, part of our calling you might say, and what we were meant to do.

Effort, with love, feels good. Struggle feels bad.
I'm sure you can easily see that difference.

If you're struggling and struggling, take a moment or longer if you wish to take a step back and examine what you are going through. Life certainly has trials, and difficult ones at that, but it is amazing how many people can weather even the most difficult trial, and not in agony but with acceptance if not love, if we ascribe it the type of meaning that fits into what we love or are willing to do.

Some might call that faith, some sacrifice, some acceptance, some love.

So, back to "perfect moments". The successful have learned to be successful, in no small part, by getting the most out of "now". As Eckhart Tolle detailed, there is immense power in the now. When you think about it, the now is, in the most real sense, all that there ever really is. Whatever happened to you in the past, when it happened it was the now, the present. What is happening to you now, is of course, now, and what will happen to you in the future is, when it does happen someday, also in the now.

By definition you can't ever LIVE outside the present moment. How could you? You can imagine the future. But you are imagining it now, whenever that imagining occurs. You can remember the past, but you are remembering it now, whenever that remembering occurs.

Life can be seen as perfect at perhaps any time. I'm not saying it is easy, by any means, but more and more often, it is what successful people, have learned well to do.

Chapter 9 - "Follow Your Bliss"

The Bible talks about "from glory to glory".

All of life is meant to be holy. But it takes a heroic consciousness and sensibility to get there.

What gets in our way?

Anger. Jealousy. Depression. Greed.

You get the idea.

We can't be successful unless we are heroic, and we can't be heroic unless we are following our bliss.

Let me explain. You know already that life requires your very best. Constantly. That is, if you want any kind of quality of life at all. There are so many talented and hardworking people out there, that if you give in to negative emotions and habits such as laziness, pettiness, resentment, anger, jealousy and the like, how will you possibly hope to compete against those who are working hard without using those negative emotions?

It is heroic to be able to work hard constantly and at the same time put away all of these negative emotions. Sometimes we use these negative emotions as motivation to drive us to work hard.

"I'll show them" kind of thing.

At a deep level, we are afraid that if we put away these negative emotions, we'll have no real deep seated reason to constantly work hard. If we're content, if we're happy, why would we want to work hard to do anything?

It's kind of a paradox. To be successful we have to be perfectly contented from one perspective, but wanting more from another. Following one's bliss is not a giving up, resignation, sitting back and being passive and just enjoying life by being passive kind of thing.

Au contraire. Follow one's bliss, to me anyway, is not a lack of awareness of difficulties, but being able (and being willing is, I believe, a major component of being able) to subjugate one's feelings of lack and deficiency to the task at hand.

This is known as maturity. Or discipline.

The first level of this, no easy task at all (in fact extremely difficult and heroic) is to be able to do what we know we need to do even when we don't feel like doing it, just because we know it is good for us. Such as being a reliable and productive employee, husband or wife, and parent. People are heroes who can do those things consistently, because no one ever feels up to the task oftentimes. Every day, sometimes more and sometimes less, there is an urge to just pack it all in, curl up in a ball, and cry.

Admit it, you've been there too.

Small things can help a lot. It is heroic when we resist the curl up in a ball sensation, and we should verbally reward ourselves (or in tangible productive ways) when we are able to do so - even if it is just a small improvement over our usual level of performance.

We each of course are a work in progress, and that is where compassion comes into play. First compassion with yourself. Because as is said, you may not be where you want to be, but thank goodness you are not where you used to be. And then compassion with yourself. As you start to get your arms around your own difficulties remaining constructive at all times, it is easier to find more compassion also for others. Not that you just let people do whatever they want as they relate to you, that wouldn't be good for them or for you, but you let down the judge and the judgmentalness a little bit, and realize that we're each struggling, essentially, with this same thing.

The second step, after one has learned well how to consistently do what one knows one should or needs to do, whether one feels like it or not, is to be able to do this with a sense of true joy, as opposed to with a sense of resignation if not despair. Sometimes we can grit our teeth and do what we need to, but this is only going to get us so far. Gritting one's teeth is difficult. One gets tired of doing this after awhile. It is not sustainable over the long term.

But if we can love to do what we need to do...

Before you think about smacking me up on the side of the head because you know that it is indeed impossible for yourself, and possibly any human being, to do this, and especially do this consistently all of the time, let me qualify things a little bit. Step 1 was hard. It is heroic. Step 2 is pretty much even beyond heroic. For many of us it may seem frankly impossible. And it may or may not be. How could I, or anyone, possibly feel joy doing all the things that I need to do, even the things I hate doing?

Let's start off by saying that this is a standard that we can ascribe to. We shouldn't beat ourselves up if we are not reaching step 1 or step 2, because that sets us back from the beginning. As they say, "charity begins at home". Here's the thing, sometimes things are more difficult because of the pressure that we put on ourselves. Often this can take the form of an inner thought or belief that "I'll only be happy if..." (or more scarily, "I'll only survive if...").

I can't prove this, but I believe that life has a place and a guiding concern for each of this, and that within that as we increasingly do our part, in sort of a partnership model, that life will increasingly fill in some of the gaps of things that are necessary but difficult for us to do.

I believe that a lot of this has to do with attitude, and accompanying emotion. Have you ever noticed that you just can't control your temper, or your jealousy, etc., but then when, through these emotions, you've placed yourself at the precipice of losing something very important to yourself, you are able to pull back and stop doing the negative things that got you there, to try to save the thing that you value.

Often we can do more or better than we normally do, **if we feel, for whatever reason or circumstance, that we have to**. Like the stories, in the extreme, of people who have lifted several thousand pound cars to save people's lives. You can call it adrenaline, you can call it motivation.

For it to be lasting, I call it a quality decision. Often we make decisions but they are not quality decisions. We commit to something, or we think we do, but then when the hard challenges come up we back down. A quality decision is almost a decision that I don't care almost what happens in this world, I am following through on what I set out to do.

Those are relatively rare, but these type of decisions wind up changing the world. And personal relationships.

Maybe you made a quality decision that you were going to love your child, or your spouse, despite all of the challenges. That doesn't mean that you may not still wind up in divorce court or estrangement a longer way down the road, but it means that it will be much more difficult to get there, and you have a much greater chance of not getting there. Not because you're miserable but accepting it, but because you've put in and are putting in the hard work to solve problems and keep the relationship better.

A bit earlier I said that to optimize our success we need to be contented and not contented at the same time. A little more on how I believe that this can work. We are energy. Energy moves. Although we also need rest and sleep, we grow restless and bored if we don't also have enough activity and stimulation in our lives. There is a natural urge, a natural motivation to grow. In fact everything in life grows or dies. As is said in the Bible, the grass does not toil to grow. Not to contradict the Bible, but I think that in some sense even the grass toils, in that everything that is alive has challenges. There are challenges to the grass surviving and there are challenges to us surviving. In the animal kingdom, and in the plant kingdom as well, one can see that all living things seem to be programmed with a urge, some might even call it a will, to survive. Nothing in life dies easily. Of course, the stronger the organism is, the more it can do battle. But everything wants to survive. It seems to be inherent to life.

Following one's bliss perhaps starts out as will to survive. We each want to grow more, do more, be more. Some call this the "will to power", and I think it can become that when we seek to dominate and the life force is not also balanced with a respect, even a reverence for all life forms. It is difficult to be well balanced in this way. Some individuals are highly on the dominant side, and seek to impose their will on others. Others are highly on the meek side, and consistently come out on the short end by placing their own needs second, or last.

But following one's bliss can, and should extend beyond just will to survive. As humans we have extended the growth of the part of the brain that appreciates culture, art, music, storytelling, etc. And then there's love. Love is the regenerative principle. Follow one's bliss at this level essentially means, to me, follow one's nature. One's higher nature. When we have a sense of purpose and meaning, we can endure almost any challenge sometimes it seems. Just look at all of the types of difficult and horrific things which humans have, and do, endure. But there has to be a context for our suffering and our pain. We have to frame it for ourselves in a way such that we have the will to endure it, and persevere.

This is, or can be, a deeper meaning of following one's bliss. Beyond just survival there is a sense of meaning in one's life, if one can continually foster and find it, it is something which needs to be often renewed, that helps to bring a sweetness to life. And sweetness not in the absence of challenge or struggle but within it.

This is no small miracle at all when you stop to think about it. Life is sweet because of the meanings which we attach to it. We each are nostalgic for our own lives, and our own inner story. There is something inside of us which allows us to weave a tapestry of meanings from the experiences of our lives, giving them richness.

And if we allow it, joy. And here's the thing. It is the depth of that joy that we are able to create for ourselves that is a very critical factor in our level of success. Success follows joy, just as night does day. If you are joyful you will attract the best out of the people that you meet, and the situations in which you are in. Now, some situations are not that great, so the best may be less than ideal. And some people are not that easy, so the best may be less than great. But if you're constantly through your joy optimizing the results that you get from people and situations which you encounter, then you just might wake up one day and find that surprisingly, somehow, your life took a very bright turn.

Sometimes the little things can carry one forward. There is a spontaneity in each moment, and in each interaction, that if one is open to it and approaches it with joy, can lead to minor transformations which, when accumulated, can form the basis of a life change.

Sometimes we are not so much living as we are existing within our own minds. In "The Laws and Secrets of Success" I discussed how our realities can be just as much projection as receiving. We have scripts and stories that we tell ourselves, and these stories are sometimes leading our lives rather than us!

That is why we admire young children. The world is new them and they are experiencing it, with wonder and joy, rather than in a prepackaged way.

And we know that because of this children are often joyful, until they increasingly take on the "realities" and fears of the world.

Including our own.

Think about following your bliss and what it means to you. Think about how it might - if you truly let it, transform your life. And increase your success.

Peace to you.

Chapter 10 - Sex and Love

Money, in some sense, keeps us alive, but it cannot buy the things (such as love, respect and joy) which we stay alive for!

Sex and love are somewhat analogous. Sex is the primary life force. It is the reproductive force and the primal energy force. Of course it can be sublimated into art, culture, career, a million and one things.

Note: saying that sex can be sublimated is not the same thing as saying that all drives can be reduced to sex. Although some theorists have postulated this, I believe that one has a multiplicity of drives, with sex being one and a powerful one. It's a hierarchy of needs. If we're sexually deprived or frustrated than sex may take a prominent role in our energy and in our thinking. But if our sex drive is sated (and this is not to be confused with any form of sexual addiction, the natural fulfillment of the sex drive is a healthy thing) then our energy can flow to many other things.

Just as money is extremely necessary but shallow compared to the things which it cannot buy, sex is extremely important but shallow compared to love. Theoretically (and perhaps for some people in reality) you can have great sex with a person and still feel relatively like a stranger. If they only touch your body, but they do not touch you inside. If they do not touch your mind, your heart and your soul.

The body, while very important obviously, is, in some sense, the basest layer of us. This is not to diminish its value or purpose in any way. Sex can be primarily a physical act, or it can also be a spiritual, heart-based and/or mentally enriching act as well, depending upon the manner in which it is entered into at a given time.

Sex as a physical act only is perhaps a bit like empty calories. There is a time when you have a sweet tooth only for junk food, but how much is that going to nourish and satisfy you over the long run?

More mature people have more mature needs. They probably have more mature diets as well.

There may be some people who make their way through life on high starch, high fat and high sugary foods. Just as there are people who are highly promiscuous or more easily separate sex and love. Before I get myself in too much trouble, I'm not saying directly that if you have an uncontrollable sweet tooth that you are like a sex addict, or immature sexually. The analogy quickly breaks down if you try to compare it 1:1. But I am saying that there is a wholeness, a sense of depth and integration, in both diet and sex that gives it more richness and more life than if you just live on the surface of each. Further, it is the restraint in each, and the dedication to certain principles, without a rigid inflexibility, that gives each, perhaps, its depth and meaning.

Sorry for getting a little bit deep there.

You may be asking yourself (you smart little bugger you) am I going to address any potential gender differences? Some traditional common sense wisdom says that women are less interested in sex than men are, and that, additionally, men may think about sex most of the time, and may well want a woman primarily for sex. I think generalizations and stereotypes of any type easily become dangerous, but I won't avoid the topic of any potential differences between men versus women regarding sex (and love as well).

First love. Some people say that women are more loving and nurturing than men. That they sacrifice more in relationships, etc. Overall, I believe that it is more of an individual dimension than a gender dimension. I believe that you have highly loving women, and others who are less so. And I believe it is the same for men. I don't know whether it is considered modern vs. anti-PC to say this or not but I don't believe that one gender is more selfish (or more mature) than the other.

In regard to parenting, some people say that women are more nurturing than men, even more devoted and better parents. Or that the maternal instinct is stronger than the paternal one. While I do think that the individual dimension is again critical here, you can have good or bad parents of either gender, I do also feel, from an evolutionary perspective, that if you take the averages from

both genders women may place, to a modest degree, a higher value and put more effort into parenting than men (and conversely the world is full of extremely talented and also ambitious women interested in career, but on the average men may put, to a modest degree, a higher value there in regard to core identity overall). Hey, I could be wrong!

What does this all have to do with success? We're getting to that. One thing that I will mention here, as mentioned before, is that success is individually defined. What is important to one woman, in regard to the listing of priorities to one woman, may be different than it is for one man, but at the same time, it will be different as well as compared to another woman. The point being that we are each individuals, and thus have unique aspects as such.

One saying I heard once, and again, just to be clear, I tend to be inclined to reject all generalizations because people are more complex than that is:

"Women trade sex for love" while "men trade love for sex". If you look at the extreme case, prostitution, I have absolutely no idea, but I would imagine that there are more female prostitutes in the world than men. I think, again, individual differences apart from any gender differences which may or may not exist, play a very key role in any comparison between genders in regard to sex or love. I think on average, although some say this is also changing, some women may place a bit more importance on pairing love with sex than some men do, and as a result may be somewhat less inclined to engage in it when feelings of love or a desired level of commitment are not deemed to be present.

Gender identity is one integral part of overall identity. We are more than just a man or a woman, of course, although, and again this varies by individual, it certainly can be a prominent aspect of one's identity. How successful we decide we are in life will, for most people, include some determination in regard to how successful we feel that we are in the realms of love and sex.

Of course there are many types of love that transcend sex. Just as there are many types of nourishment which transcend beer, pretzels and pizza. And that is not a knock on sex, nor beer, pizza or pretzels!!

Earlier I talked about joy. Love is joy (and peace, and power, etc.). It is expansive. For many, and definitely for me, I could not say that I had a successful life if I had not loved deeply and been loved. And beyond a physical love. We discussed "perfect moments". There is the opportunity to find love and joy in all that we do, and in all that we experience.

No easy task, obviously. But it is a major aspect of success.

