

# The Book of Strategic Knowledge

by Peter Nguyen

NOTE: This book contains articles from the free portals  
[www.careerknowledge.net](http://www.careerknowledge.net) and [www.powerknowledge.net](http://www.powerknowledge.net)

Please visit those sites and register for the newsletter in order to receive future versions of this Book of Strategic Knowledge!

(Secret note: Register and I will give away tons of free ebooks that I wrote, based on workshops that I usually charge hundreds of dollars for).

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(\$10, \$20, \$50, \$100... any amount will be gratefully appreciated and will enable us to further develop this book and share it with more people for personal empowerment and joyful growth)

Feel free to share this book with friends, family and coworkers!

Thank you!

## About Peter Nguyen



Peter graduated from McGill University in 1999 with a degree in management specializing in B2B marketing.

Prior to going back to school in 1996, he worked in the 1990s for several Fortune 500 and large companies to perfect his marketing communications skills while learning about and adopting corporate-standard business practices.

### CORPORATE EXPERIENCE

At IBM, he learned about the spectacular turnaround strategies ingeniously crafted by famed CEO Lou Gerstner. At American Express, as a Fortune 100 corporate account administrator, he learned about high-level account management and relationship marketing. At CDI Corporate Education Services, he learned about the exciting corporate training industry and e-learning.

### ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURES

After winning an entrepreneurship contest while in high school, Peter launched several ventures in the 1990s: a commercial sign business, a handbound notebook distributed through retail outlets, a calligraphy studio and a graphic design studio. Except for the notebook business, most of these ventures did not succeed, yet served as valuable learning grounds for sharpening Peter's business acumen. Peter realized that despite repeated business failures, he was able – surprisingly – to maintain his passion for creation, innovation and entrepreneurship. This was a major insight which has served him to this day, and has sparked in him a strong interest in helping entrepreneurs and all those who wish to venture into business for exploring and actualizing their creative potential.

### FIRST ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS

In 2000, Peter launched Major Force, a marketing communications with an office in Old Montreal, and met with business success for the first time. He worked for three years with friend and partner Quoc Pham, and was able to serve several corporate clients successfully. By reverse engineering his own success, Peter was able – with much support and encouragement from sister Zoonie – to develop in 2006 the BMW workshop, which specializes in helping first-time entrepreneurs to understand, grasp and master business fundamentals so as to dramatically maximize their chances of success in the tough world of business. The workshop and its underlying tenets are described at <http://businessmodelworkout.blogspot.com> and is also available as an audiobook (DVD) shipped worldwide. Peter intends to teach the BMW principles to the 30 million users of LinkedIn, since it seems inevitable to him that most rational people will eventually decide to work for themselves rather than for someone else.

### SOUL SEARCHING

In 2003, he left Major Force to his partner and began a soul-searching journey to discover his true purpose in life. In 2005, through a close collaboration with his sister Zoonie, he created an informal network called Share & Learn, which consisted of various workshops delivered to people who wanted to better manage their career.

## SERVING WOMEN

On February 14, 2006 he co-founded Talentelle with Zoonie, and the firm was positioned as a strategic training firm specialized in serving women. Currently approaching its third anniversary, Talentelle is poised for taking off globally in multiple countries, thanks to two planned Internet-powered ventures designed to informate, digitize, globalize and automate its operations: eTalentelle.com and Innovatelle.com.

Peter views serving women as the best way to make the biggest difference, since most women eventually become mothers and mothers are usually in charge of teaching the young – the future of tomorrow.

## LIFETIME LEARNER

Throughout his entire life, Peter has always maintained a learner's attitude, and has suspended judgment about what may seem like failure. He has also developed the reflex of documenting all his lessons learned as well as mistakes made. This Book of Strategic Knowledge is the result of his unshakable belief in the power of knowledge to guide, empower and elevate the lives of all human beings. Without strategic knowledge, a good life is not possible. Without strategic knowledge, life will inevitably be filled with unnecessary frustration, disappointment, stress, suffering and even despair at times.

As a survivor of the Vietnam war who came to Canada when he was only five years old, Peter is keenly aware that Man is capable of the worst atrocities against fellow human beings. But he is also aware that Man can create knowledge of surprising ingenuity for the benefit of all.

## HOPE FOR MANKIND

After years of reflection, analysis and meditation since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 Peter has realized that knowledge-sharing is the only hope of mankind at this critical turning point in the history of human civilization. If those who know or who receive knowledge do not share it, the world risks entering a second Dark Ages, not characterized this time by the absence of knowledge but by the widespread presence of deceptive, fragmented and misleading "knowledge."

By creating this Book of Strategic Knowledge – a Herculean yet enjoyable exertion of all the brainpower he could muster – Peter hopes you will participate in this worthwhile endeavor by sharing it with friends, family and coworkers so that all the people within your reach can have a chance of sampling the ideas and knowledge in this book.

Although this book is forever incomplete and continually evolving (the latest edition is available at <http://bookofstrategicknowledge.wordpress.com>), it is the best that Peter can produce as a creative and passionate intellectual. And it is his gift to you, your friends and family.

## Table of Contents

About Peter Nguyen .....	2
Copyright notice.....	5
Other free products.....	5
Acknowledgments.....	6
Contact information.....	6
Welcome to the Career Knowledge portal!.....	7
What is CKN?.....	8
1. What is Failure?.....	9
2. How to Make Money From LinkedIn.....	11
3. LinkedIn is a Tool for Financial Freedom .....	13
4. The Biggest Problem of LinkedIn Users.....	15
5. Promote Your Work, Not Yourself .....	17
6 It Pays to Know People .....	18
7 Your Fortune Will Come Via The Internet .....	19
8 Do You Know What You Want? - Part 1 .....	20
9 Is Your Job Moving to Asia? .....	23
10 Momentum is The Best Friend of Motivation .....	26
11 Are You Winning or Losing in Your Career? .....	28
12 The Secret to Finding Motivation at Work .....	30
13 Can You Have a Career if You Don't Care? .....	32
14 Motivation Requires Critical Knowledge About a Subject .....	34
15 Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing a New Career.....	35
16 Excellence is The Key to Career Security and Prosperity .....	36
17 Knowledge-Sharing is The New Way to Network .....	38
18 Master Three Critical Skills for Career Success.....	40
19 How to Design Your Personal Training Program.....	42
20. 5 Systematic Steps to Acquire New Skills and Increase Your Value.....	44
21 Secret for Achieving Excellence .....	45
22 The Secret to Boosting Your Productivity .....	47
23 Measure Your Productivity to Control Your Career.....	49
24 The Art of Strategic Networking.....	51
25 Creating a Unique Professional Identity.....	53
26 Marketing Will Make You Successful and Rich.....	55
27. 5 Concepts to Package Yourself as a Complete Solution.....	57
28 How to Attract and Keep Talented Professionals .....	59
29 Leadership is a Matter of Ambition, Training and Determination.....	60
30 Leadership Ability Enables You to Go Far in Life.....	61
31 How Blogging Can Benefit Your Career .....	63
32 Technologies to Boost Your Productivity.....	65
33. 3 Steps For Using Technology More Productively .....	66
34 Everybody Will Be Naked .....	68
35 Aligning Belief With Desire is The Key to Success .....	70
36 Will "Romantic" Careers Be The Norm in The Future? .....	71
37 How Do You Feel About Your Career? .....	73
38 A Best-Seller is a Bet-Seller! .....	74
39 Welcome to The Olympic Economy! .....	75

40 Finding One's Ideal Career is Tough but Possible .....	76
41 Introduction .....	78
42 Welcome to PowerKnowledge.net!.....	79
43 Secret For Achieving Excellence.....	80
44 What is Failure?.....	82
45 Find the Seed of Wealth Within You.....	84
46 Success Comes From Systems!.....	86
47 Be Natural and You Will Win Effortlessly.....	89
48 Outprogramming Your Past Self.....	91
49 Only Two Follies, Fears And Regrets.....	93
50 Conquer Your Fear to Realize Your Dream.....	94
51 Creative Will Leads to Happiness and Prosperity.....	96
52 Are You King or Pawn?.....	98
53 Become a Teacher And You Will Master Your Life.....	100
54 Do You Know What You Want? - Part 2.....	103
55 Do You Know What You Want? - Part 1.....	104
56 To Become Your Ideal Self, Deliver an Oscar Performance!.....	107
57 How Specific Should Your Goals Be?.....	109
58 Your Personal Knowledge is Your Power.....	111
59 Your Natural Talent Will Bring You Peace and Prosperity.....	113
60 The End of Your Career.....	115
61 Your Ideal Career is About Your True Self.....	117
62 Finally, the Ultimate Wealth Secret!.....	119
63 The Ultimate Wealth-Creation Insight.....	121
64 Entrepreneurship is About Your Freedom to Create.....	123
65 Selling Ability is Key to Success.....	125
66 Wealth Comes From Systems!.....	127
67 Your Odds of Becoming a Millionaire.....	129

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## Other free products

Real-Time Success Secrets blog: here, you'll find over 800 posts where I share absolutely ALL my success secrets! For free!

<http://realtimesuccesssecrets.blogspot.com>

Linkedin User Manual blog: this is a blog to teach you how to use Linkedin strategically, for career or business purposes. Linkedin now has over 30 million users. The average Linkedin user is 39 years old, and makes about \$80,000 a year. It's a huge market if you are an entrepreneur.

<http://linkedinusermanual.blogspot.com>

eTalentelle is the online version of the local training company Talentelle. It will be operational in 2009.

<http://www.etalentelle.com>

Le Monde Des Femmes is a French newsletter that will promote women's talents, while providing information on wellness, happiness and success.

<http://www.lemondedesfemmes.com>

Innovatelle is my latest brainchild and will launch virally on the Internet in 2009 also. It's simply an Internet marketplace where women can create solutions for other women, and be able to sell them to hundreds of thousands of women. A bit like eBay, but more like "SheBay."

<http://www.innovatelle.com>

## **Acknowledgments**

Many thanks to my brother Joe for his support and encouragement, without which this book would not exist.

## **Contact information**

For more information on products, services and licensing or partnership opportunities, please contact Peter Nguyen at [omnidigitalbrain@yahoo.com](mailto:omnidigitalbrain@yahoo.com)

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# 1. What is Failure?

Someone asked this interesting question on LinkedIn Answers. I thought I'd share my answer with you.

Failure - An important factor to build success?

Failure is part of success, and certainly makes life more interesting. Indeed, most people will admit that they have learned more from failure than from success.

The concept of "failure" itself might be misleading, since it has a negative connotation and is something that most people try to avoid. This avoidance limits the richness of experience that life offers.

Men, for obvious cultural reasons, are more "afraid" of failure than women. The male ego has something to do with it, but it would be inaccurate to blame men for having this ego since it arises in a culture that overvalues performance -- often at the expense of authentic experience.

Women, for reasons that I have not yet fully understood, value experience more than men. They are willing to step outside the familiar path in order to experience life. However, I believe both experience and performance are possible and lead to a rich life.

I mean "performance" in the sense that we make progress in controlling ourselves and achieving self-mastery. Not performance in the sense of satisfying some external or societal standard, and winning medals or awards as a result.

For example, it is possible for a person to "fail" in his career or business, yet this apparent failure gives him a great opportunity to evolve by understanding more things about himself, his life and his ultimate purpose on Earth. Indeed, nothing starts a serious reflection and serious self-examination than failure.

Some people need to have a serious medical crisis before they sit down and think seriously about their lives. Others only require a certain non-threatening illness to halt the mindless momentum of their hectic career, and begin the process of self-examination and contemplative inquiry.

In most cases, it is quite useful to adopt the following attitude toward failure: "Oh, I now have the opportunity to explore another dimension of life and of myself! Great!"

Those who take advantage of such opportunities for meditation and for re-examining the meaning and purpose of their lives, often re-emerge into society with a powerful sense of alignment with who they truly are. It is as if they were born again, and were given a second chance at life. Many such people are destined to become teachers, for they have gone through the experience and can speak about it with credibility.

But back to the concept of "failure." At the mere thought of possible failure, many people recoil and take the beaten and familiar path – they seek security instead of experience and adventure.

The ultimate success might be to realize that failure doesn't exist in reality, and is only a concept we have been conditioned to focus on in our society and culture. A second illusion is the fear of failure, and this fear often paralyzes people who otherwise might have expressed or exercised their natural talents.

Let's not forget that even Pablo Picasso, the great artist, feared how the world would react to his first cubist painting, Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. No. 115). He hid that painting in a closet for two years before finally showing it.

Indeed, every person is engaged on a personal path of evolution, and cannot fail. If he is moving forward on that path, he is then evolving. If not, then he needs time to reflect and absorb earlier lessons and experiences. In either cases, he is not failing at all. He is simply deciding, consciously or subconsciously, to evolve on his own timetable, without comparing himself to others at the material level.

It is useful to remember that life is a school and that the same lesson, in different yet fundamentally similar forms, will keep coming to us until we absorb and master the lesson. This is necessary for our own personal growth and evolution. Yet there is no "failure" at all. Life is a process of self-perfection, and we are already perfect on the spiritual plane. Our "higher self" is already perfect. It's just that in this physical life, we have the extraordinary opportunity to taste and experience this exquisite process of perfecting ourselves.

## 2. How to Make Money From LinkedIn

I wrote previously about "productism" so let me expand on it, I think you will find this concept most fascinating -- and profitable.

There are many blogs and ebooks talking about how to use LinkedIn, and that's fine. People need to learn the basics of using LinkedIn.

Ultimately, though, you want to make money from LinkedIn because it is a capitalist tool. I'm often baffled by people who still maintain that "LinkedIn is a networking tool and should not be used to sell or make money." Such belief is okay, everybody is entitled to their own opinion.

However, for those who want to serve others and make money from their service, the real issue is not whether one should sell or not on LinkedIn. **The critical question is, "Do you have something to sell?"**

If you're only selling your time (whether you're a marketing executive or an administrative assistant), you won't achieve financial freedom any time soon. That's because financial freedom requires time freedom so that you can do what you want every day, such as scouting for business opportunities.

To make significant money on LinkedIn, you need to have a product to sell.

For example, consider John and Jane.

- John has no product to sell, but has 1,000 connections.
- Jane has a product to sell, but has only 120 connections.

Who do you think will make money from LinkedIn?

Let's assume that both John and Jane have a full-time job, and are paid the same salary of \$80,000 per year.

Assume also that Jane has a product priced at \$50, and it's the kind of product that is useful to most LinkedIn users. For example, a "How to use LinkedIn to make \$20,000 in extra income per year" ebook.

Since Jane has 120 connections, her sales potential is  $120 \times \$50$ , or \$6,000.

If she doubles the number of her connections to 240, she'll have a sales potential of \$12,000.

**John, for his part, could double the number of his connections to 2,000 and still not make any money. Why? Because he doesn't have a product to sell.**

But John is a very clever person, so he contacts Jane and proposes that they strike an agreement: He will sell her ebook to his 2,000 connections for a 30% commission. That is, he would make  $0.30 \times$

2,000 X \$50, or \$30,000. (Jane would make \$70,000, which is much better than \$12,000).

They both win. (Thanks to Peter, the wealth mastermind).

Suppose Jane's ebook were priced at \$25, then John would "only" make \$15,000 from his 2,000 connections while Jane would "only" make \$35,000.

Notice, by the way, that John's income is restricted by the number of connections he has, or 2,000.

Jane, who owns the legal rights to her ebook, could potentially sell to 21 million LinkedIn users. She only has to find more well connected people like John.

21 million X \$35 = \$735,000,000

WHOA!

From this example, you can easily understand why I maintain that **the first step on the road to wealth is to create a product, preferably a digital product.**

Of course, I'm conveniently ignoring many important issues, such as substitutability: Jane's ebook has many substitutes, so it is not at all certain that she can get 21 million buyers.

But the main point is that **Jane has economic power because she has a product.** She could even decide to reduce the commission from 30% to 20%, and she would still get a lot of well connected LinkedIn users interested in becoming an affiliate.

This post is perhaps the most important post I've ever written so far, out of over 400 posts.

Indeed, I submit that **the number one challenge for ALL LinkedIn users is to be able to create a product.**

I will write more about how you can go about creating such a product. I did it myself many times already.

If you have questions, feel free to write to me at [peter@powerknowledge.net](mailto:peter@powerknowledge.net)

### 3. LinkedIn is a Tool for Financial Freedom

Many people use LinkedIn for career purposes, and there's nothing wrong with that.

But the minority who use it for business purposes -- to continually build and refine, in a compounding fashion, their competitive advantages while multiplying marketing options and accelerating sales cycles -- those are the ones who get rich.

What do I mean by "continually building and refining one's competitive advantages"?

I mean you have to keep getting better and better at doing what matters most to your clients.

If you're an accountant, and you spend your time on LinkedIn Answers answering questions that have little to do with accounting, that's not good.

But suppose you do spend your time answering questions that are related to accounting, the next question is, "Would you be able to gather all your answers into an eBook and offer it to your existing clients? Would they appreciate that eBook?" If the answer is Yes, then your time spent on LinkedIn Answers is worth it because it "builds and refines your competitive advantage," which in this case is your accounting expertise.

Ultimately, LinkedIn can be a huge black hole into which a person's time will disappear. So we have to learn to use it strategically.

Multiplying connections without having a clear goal, is another example of not using LinkedIn strategically. If you don't have a clear product or service to sell, then you could have 10,000 direct connections and it still would not make a difference to your bank account.

Let's take a real example to see how important it is to have a product that you can sell through LinkedIn.

Imagine Person A, who has 500 connections but no product to sell. Then imagine Person B, who has only 50 connections, but has an eBook that he sells for \$20.

Person B is ahead of the game, since he could easily identify people in his LinkedIn network who have 500+ connections, and propose an affiliate deal with them: they can inform their connections of the availability of the eBook, and they get 30% of sales.

Not only will Person B make more money than Person A, he will also be invited by his readers to join their LinkedIn network.

In other words, LinkedIn can be a powerful tool for achieving financial freedom if it is used strategically.

I've seen many sites talking about how to use LinkedIn, but few of them mention any method or technique for making money with LinkedIn.

Ultimately, making money is not rocket science nor is it that complicated. You've got to have a product, and you've got to sell it to the people in your network.

## 4. The Biggest Problem of LinkedIn Users

About 600 people in my LinkedIn network have over 500 connections. That's great.

But assuming that most people eventually will have such a great number of connections, the real problem will be the following: How do I monetize my connections?

In fact, the problem can be more accurately formulated this way: What product do I offer to all my connections?

It doesn't even matter at what price you offer a product. For instance, if you offered an ebook priced at \$5, then with 500 connections, you'd be making \$2,500. And that's not even including the consulting gigs that might come from your readers, who are now (hopefully) convinced that you are the undisputed expert in your field.

However, if you do not have a product to sell to your connections, then having 10,000 connections will not help. Indeed,  $10,000 \times \$0 = \$0$ .

You could even have 100,000 connections, it still would not help you economically.

So why is it that LinkedIn users do not sell a product like an ebook capturing their precious knowhow and expertise? Why don't they just hire a ghostwriter to interview them and put down on paper what they actually know, so they can begin to sell their ebook (which can be 20 pages long or 500) to their connections on LinkedIn?

Mind conditioning.

People have been conditioned to think that you only earn money by working personally, that is, putting in the hours (whether you work from home or at the office).

We have never thought about the possibility of earning money WITHOUT working (that is, earning passive income through the selling of a document, whether it's an ebook, a DVD, etc.).

It's a bit like what Copernicus discovered, that the Earth revolves around the Sun, not the other way around. Similarly, we will all soon discover that our wealth is based on our knowledge in physical format, NOT on our personal services delivered to an employer.

This is not some fantasy of mine. Just look at the facts: authors like Anthony Robbins, Robert Allen, Robert Kiyosaki, Wayne Dyer, etc. became rich because they wrote books.

Personally, I don't know any employee who has become rich. In fact, the friends I have who are rich have created their own product or business.

So there you have it. The biggest problem of LinkedIn users: How to create a product that can be sold through their LinkedIn network.

Keep in mind that LinkedIn currently has 30 million users, and this number will keep increasing.

## 5. Promote Your Work, Not Yourself

Use LinkedIn to promote your work, not yourself. "Self-promotion" is a misleading concept. "Work promotion" is better.

In other words, the reason why people seek you out is that they are interested in your work, not in your person. Given this economic truth, it is surprising that more than 98% of LinkedIn users do NOT promote their work on LinkedIn.

For instance, if you read the profile of most LinkedIn users, you will notice the conspicuous absence of blogs or websites where people can download work samples of the person. Work samples include articles, blogs, websites, books, ebooks, white papers, etc.

What I'm saying is this: work precedes network. If you don't have something to show people (e.g. work samples), then networking will be much less effective than it could be.

Concretely speaking, you will introduce yourself to people (online or offline), and they will politely say, "Oh, nice to meet you!" And then, in the next minute, they will completely forget about you.

You had a unique opportunity to showcase your work to someone else, but you did not have work samples to show them.

Some people try to circumvent that absence of economic substance by highlighting the fact, in their email invitation to others, that they are connected to gazillions of people. Yes, that's nice, but it doesn't compensate for the fact that the person doesn't have any value to offer.

In fact, the more a person mentions his great number of connections, the more loudly he is saying that he, himself, does not offer any economic value.

## 6 It Pays to Know People

- \* A group of market research consultants came to me: they made \$40,000
- \* A Web development firm came to me: they made \$20,000
- \* A marketing student came to me: she made \$250
- \* Two marketing/information systems students came to me: they made \$3,000
- \* A graphic designer came to me: he made \$12,000
- \* A bookbinder came to me: he made \$3,000
- \* An IT consulting firm came to me: they made \$27,000
- \* A Web designer came to me: he made \$3,000
- \* A training firm came to me: they made \$100,000
- \* An IT professional came to me: she made \$40,000

The only person who's not making money is me!

I'm just kidding. In most of the cases above, I made a bit of money via the finder's fee of 10-30%. But my record, honestly, is quite insignificant, especially compared to the professional headhunters out there! And what about the real estate people? These folks make a huge amount of money!

My point is, it really pays to know people and build trust-based relationships.

Am I saying that by multiplying your connections on LinkedIn, you can make extra money too?

Absolutely!

Now I know that most of you do not have a product to sell. If you did, you would promote it on your LinkedIn profile the way I promote my products and companies on my LinkedIn profile.

But even if you do not currently have a product to sell, it is wise to start multiplying your connections on LinkedIn. I've begun over two years ago and today, I have over 800 connections in about 22 countries. (I plan to have a connection in every single one of the 192 countries listed in the United Nations!).

Most people join LinkedIn and still view themselves as employees. That's a mistake.

It's a mistake because if your self-concept is that of an employee, then your mind will NOT be open to business opportunities. I'm talking about opportunities that can generate passive income for you, or even turn you into a millionaire.

To change your mindset from "employee" to "entrepreneur", I recommend the two books by Robert Kiyosaki, Rich Dad Poor Dad and The Cashflow Quadrant.

## 7 Your Fortune Will Come Via The Internet

Great wealth is inevitable and is indeed your destiny, but only if you learn how to use the Internet strategically and with foresight.

For instance, if you believe that you will have a product of your own one day, then you should start right now to multiply connections via LinkedIn. 500 connections is a good number to aim for.

It's not that these 500 connections will become clients of yours and buy your product, although that is a good thing. More importantly, they might become resellers and distributors of your product in many countries.

It doesn't even matter how much your product sells for. For example, you could create an eBook selling for \$1.00 and you could sell it to thousands of people via the Internet.

Often, a lot of very smart professionals and managers think of a book as something that should be priced at \$20 or \$50. And they can't imagine themselves writing a book (or eBook) that would have such value.

But that's like people who don't know how to swim, and then go to a swimming pool and refuse to jump in because the water is too deep and, therefore, they will drown.

Yes, there's a part of the swimming pool that is deep, but there's ALSO a part that is shallow. So a person should enter the swimming pool from the shallow end, NOT the deep end.

Next, you start to learn how to float and how to swim. Eventually, you can go swim in the deep end of the pool.

Same thing with writing a book that captures your (valuable and hard-earned) knowledge. Try to write a book that's worth \$1.00. Then, sell it. And then try to write a second book (or perhaps a second, beefed up version of the first book). Then a third book, etc.

Bottom line: LinkedIn is not useful financially unless you have a product to sell to a critical mass of people. Sure, you can feel great that you have many connections, but money will only come to you if you have a product to sell.

And a real fortune can come to you in the next few years if you start to multiply your connections starting today, and start writing down on paper all the valuable knowledge in your head so you can sell it to the 18+ million users on LinkedIn (and this number keeps growing every day).

## 8 Do You Know What You Want? - Part 1

A Texas oil billionaire once revealed the secret of his success. He said you only have to ask yourself two questions:

1. What is it that you really want?
2. Are you willing to pay the price to get it?

He mentioned that most people fail to answer the first question.

Often, it's hard to decide what we want. This might be the main reason why people don't write down their goals.

However, the process of clarifying what we really want out of life can be greatly facilitated by doing the opposite. In other words, write on a piece of paper all the things you do NOT want in your life.

Then, on the other side, write the opposite of what you do not want. That will get you started in clarifying what it is that you DO want.

For example, here are things a person might NOT want in her life:

- \* A boring job
- \* Having to work 9 to 5 at the office
- \* Struggling to pay the bills every month
- \* An insensitive boss
- \* Stress

Next, she turns over the page and writes the exact opposite:

- \* An exciting job
- \* Working 9 to 5 for an employer who allows working from home
- \* No problem paying the bills every month
- \* A sensitive, supportive boss
- \* Stress-free lifestyle

This is the trick that turned Anthony Robbins' life around. One day, in the 80s, he decided that he'd had enough bad luck in his life, so while sitting on a beach, he began to write down all the things he wanted in his life. He went on and on and on and wrote profusely!

Now, what exactly is the psychological effect of such hectic writing about what you want?

The great and mysterious effect is that your beliefs begins to align with your desires. In other words, what's hard is not knowing what you want. In Tony's case, for example, it was quite easy for him to write out all the things he wanted.

It was easy because he had led a very difficult life, and his biography gave rise to all the desires within him. So it was not hard at all to let those desires come out. They were dying to come out!

What was hard, however, was for him to BELIEVE that he deserved what he desired. By the simple act of writing down in a notebook all the things he desired, he subconsciously told himself: "Hey, I want all these things and I sure as heck deserve them all, which is why I'm writing them all down as goals. I want all of it, and I deserve all of it."

So that's the first step toward success, wealth, fulfillment, or anything you want in life.

The second step, strangely enough, is not as difficult. In fact, if you do the first step properly, the second step -- paying the price -- is a piece of cake.

"Paying the price" is often associated with something negative, like "make a sacrifice" or "suffer pain" or "give up something you value."

That's not what is meant here. What is meant here is "giving up something of lower value so you can get something of higher value." It's not a sacrifice at all. In fact, it's a great deal!

For example, if in step 1, you decide that health is valuable to you and that you want all the benefits and joy and well-being and good feelings that come from being healthy, then "paying the price" is not hard.

Giving up potato chips is not hard, because now, in your mind, health is more important than potato chips. Giving up bad eating habits is not hard.

However, if step 1 is not done properly and you did not take the time to clearly describe, vividly, what your ideal life looks like and feels like, then step 2 will be hard.

For example, in doing step 1, a person might say: "I want a great, rewarding, fulfilling career"

Yet, he fails to get into the specific details and the vivid description of how it would FEEL to have such a career.

He then moves to step 2, and finds that it's hard to give up his current and comfortable daily routine. As a result, he is unwilling to "pay the price," hence he remains trapped in a job that is boring and unfulfilling.

Here's the success secret that you probably never heard of and that mysteriously merges the two steps (decide what you want and pay the price) into one single masterful stroke of genius.

This secret is contained in the statement "The Price Is Write."

"Writing" here refers not only to writing down one's goals or ideal life or dream on a piece of paper. It refers to writing all of that directly into the wiring of your very being, so that you FEEL already like

the ideal person you want to be.

To be continued...

## 9 Is Your Job Moving to Asia?

If you think your boss is putting too much pressure on you to be more productive at the office, just pick up a copy of the book *Three Billion New Capitalists*, and you might feel differently about stress at work.

Indeed, in his latest book, Clyde Prestowitz says that in today's economy where three billion new workers – mostly from India and China – have joined the global workforce, those who can do things no one else can do will prosper, but those without special skills will face long hours and low pay.

"No industry will be safe from competition. Services, research and development, and basic research, in which the West now leads the world, could all follow manufacturing to Asia," writes the founder and current President of the Economic Strategy Institute in Washington, D.C.

India and China are riding the crest of what Prestowitz calls "the third wave of globalization." The key elements of this new wave are the negation of time and distance and the rapid transfer of technology from advanced to developing countries.

The book, which Prestowitz subtitled "The great shift of wealth and power to the East," is a highly engaging and strategic overview of the massive changes that will affect every working person on the planet.

"It has long been assumed that as manufacturing jobs disappeared, the service industries would provide secure, high-paying jobs to compensate for the loss of manufacturing. That view, however, is pre-Internet and pre-third wave. It may not be sustainable in the world of 3 billion new capitalists all online."

The book is neatly divided into 12 chapters, the four most critical chapters, as far as ordinary working people are concerned, are *Icebergs Ahead*, *How the Capitalist Road Turned East*, *Made in China*, and *Serviced in India*.

So who are these three billion new capitalists?

According to Prestowitz, 1.3 billion are coming from China, another billion from India and another 700,000 from Russia, the countries of Central Asia and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Bloc. All of them, says the author, have abandoned communism or socialism and moved on to the capitalist road.

Prestowitz doesn't explicitly say so, but his thesis suggests that **we are living in a sort of global Darwinian economy, where only the fittest will survive and thrive.**

Indeed, not only are jobs being offshored, but three billion new workers – all smart and hungry for success – are coming to town to compete for work, thanks to the Internet and the global air delivery services of companies like FedEx.

Prestowitz says that time and distance have been eliminated for any type of work that can be done digitally or electronically, such as software development or call center services. In short, the three billion new players are here, possibly to stay.

Reuters' CEO Tom Glocer goes even further: "The amazing thing – and this is the dirty little secret about outsourcing that people need to talk about publicly a bit more – not only is the cost reduction amazing at four, five, and even six to one, but the quality and productivity are better too."

How did it all start? Prestowitz describes in two chapters aptly titled "Made in China" and "Serviced in India", the exciting tale of how the two nations rose to become major economic powers.

He says the transformation of China began slowly and cautiously, but eventually resulted in \$200 billion in foreign direct investment by the end of the century. In 2003 China passed the United States as the number one recipient of foreign direct investment, \$53 billion to \$40 billion.

Of all the dazzling statistics China has posted, the most impressive is that in 20 years it has lifted some 400 million of its 1.3 billion people out of grinding \$1-a-day poverty.

Citing cheap labour as the main reason why companies like Nike and Motorola moved into China in the 1980s, he writes that "Chinese labor is well disciplined and largely literate with the ability to learn skills quickly. A significant portion of the Chinese factory workforce is as skilled as United States production line workers. But while Americans earn \$15-\$30 per hour, in China they are paid \$0.25-\$1.00 per hour."

Prestowitz notes there are still 800 million poor people in the countryside just aching for a shot at a factory job in the city.

He ends the chapter by hinting that perhaps the solution to the loss of manufacturing lies in services. Then the next chapter, titled Serviced in India, starts with a quote that apparently reveals India's overall strategy: "India is beginning to do in services what China has been doing in manufacturing." (Azim Premji, Wipro chairman).

"India's service-providing capabilities are both world-class and extraordinarily broad, encompassing not only information technology but also biotech, a range of medical treatments that have given rise to medical tourism, combinations of technology, finance, and more," writes Prestowitz.

In engineering and science India now produces about 250,000 graduates, rising to 500,000 annually, who earn a starting salary of \$5,000-\$6,000 a year. These figures compare to 400,000 science and engineering graduates annually in the United States and to \$50,000 and up starting salaries.

Whereas a programmer's salary in the United States is typically around \$80,000, in India it is about \$11,000.

"This combination of skills, low cost, quality work, and instant communication means that few aspects of your life will remain untouched by the outsourcing of services to India," says Prestowitz.

"You may not be aware of it, but whether it is your yellow pages, the interactive websites of companies like Boeing or Morgan Stanley, or the report on the X rays you had yesterday, the skilled hands and brains of Indians are present."

Prestowitz reports that in 2000 Indian software exports were about \$6 billion. By the end of 2004, they were estimated to have hit \$16 billion. Deloitte forecast last year that within five years, the world's largest financial firms will have shifted \$356 billion and 2 million jobs offshore, mostly to India.

Numbers don't lie: India is fast becoming the newest Asian tiger and is on its path to riches.

According to Prestowitz, every working person is now in competition with his counterpart in another country. A software developer in North America is in competition with software developers in India. Call-center people in New York are in competition with call-center people in India. "It is a whole new world of international competition that we haven't ever seen before." It's almost as if work had now become a sport, but not just any sport: an Olympic sport. An Olympic economy, where the best from any one country will compete against the best in every other country.

Yet the sad fact is, most people are struggling just to survive information overload and to keep their job from being eliminated or outsourced. And it's getting worse. Prestowitz explains the loss of workers' bargaining power: "Some jobs are outsourced. That creates the threat of outsourcing, which means that the next time you come around for a salary review and a salary increase, you know that it's possible that your job could be outsourced, and therefore your demand for a raise might be mooted."

On a more hopeful note, Prestowitz insists that "we have got to be doing things that others can't do. We've got to be doing things much better, much more productively than other people do them."

Ultimately, Prestowitz's book serves as a much needed warning, a wake-up call to face the new realities of a truly globalized economy.

Given this new competitive landscape, the next time your boss asks if you can produce more with less, he might actually be giving you an opportunity to save your job from going to Asia.

## 10 Momentum is The Best Friend of Motivation

Here's an interesting idea most people might not have thought about: No human being, not even Ernest Hemingway or Victor Hugo, has ever written a book.

All authors, no matter how inspired they are or talented, started with ONE sentence. Indeed, writers write sentences. They don't write "books."

Over time (and probably a lot of black coffee and white nights), those sentences are made to work and stick together into paragraphs. Next, the paragraphs are made to work together to become chapters. Finally, the chapters are put together and, voila, the intellectually exhausted author now has a book ready for publication.

Of course, the struggle is not over since the book will probably be rejected (politely, one hopes) by dozens and hundreds of publishers before a crazy one decides to take the risk and publish it.

And it goes without saying that not all authors become billionaires like J.K. Rowling.

But my point is that a book can only be written one sentence at a time.

This is something that the late prolific writer Isaac Asimov has thoroughly understood and even mastered. In his lifetime, he wrote about 300 books (both fiction and non-fiction).

His secret? He used a simple electric typewriter (not a word processor or PC). This drove him to write and write and write, one sentence at a time, without being overly concerned about style or consistency or "the big picture." He would only edit his manuscript at the very end, after all his ideas and thoughts have been systematically laid out on paper.

In fact, regarding his literary technique, he mentioned that he wrote as simply and as clearly as he spoke. This is why his prose is so clear.

My point is that no matter what your job is or what profession you're in, the first step is to motivate oneself, to get started, to get going.

The next step is to create systematic momentum. This means producing the key outcome without thinking, and keep on producing that outcome. For a sales representative, it could mean asking for the sale. Again and again. For a public relations specialist, it could mean coming up with dozens of ideas to attract media attention. For a leader, it could mean producing dozens of ideas to excite his or her team and inspire them to greater productivity.

The secret is to keep on and not stop. Once you stop, it's over. The momentum is dead.

And remember: momentum is the best friend of motivation. Motivation gets you started, but it is momentum that keeps you going.

This little trick actually has a powerful theoretical base. It flows from the principle that performance is nothing but potential minus interference.

By suspending our judgment, which often acts as interference to creativity, we can produce MORE.

Other forms of interference could be our fears, doubts, feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, etc.

The key to overcome them is just to keep on producing, mindlessly if need be, what it is that one is supposed to produce. Once momentum is achieved, productivity will soar to surprising new heights.

# 11 Are You Winning or Losing in Your Career?

John McEnroe is famous for saying that "Winning or losing doesn't matter... until you lose."

It's the same in one's career: Nobody likes to lose. In fact, research in the field of psychology has shown that people are more afraid to lose than they are motivated to win.

However, **the fact that you are not losing doesn't mean you are winning.** It's like most sports: the fact that the opponent hasn't scored against you, doesn't mean you have scored against them.

It seems that most people today find themselves in a zone where they are neither losing nor winning. If they were in fact winning, they would be writing a book or giving seminars and workshops. They would teach others how to win. Their books would appear on the New York Times Best-Seller list.

Ultimately, whether you are currently winning or losing may matter less than whether you are moving in the direction of ultimate victory.

To answer that question, you first have to determine WHERE you are right now.

The following is a list of achievement levels that can give you an idea of where you are, strategically speaking, and what the next level might be. It's called the Pyramid of Professional Progress.

Please note that this list is for illustrative purposes only and is by no means exhaustive.

**Also keep in mind the distinction between "work" (what you do to pay the bills) and "Work" (your calling or the special work you were meant to do in this life).**

1. Employed in Work and helping others find their Work --> Winning big! Example: Oprah.
2. Employed in Work where one controls economic drivers (that is, one can increase income by increasing outcome) --> Winning more and more! Example: Donald Trump.
3. Employed in Work --> Winning! This Work is something you do based on your passion, your talent, your values and your desire to serve a particular kind of people to help them solve their problems. Example: Dr Phil.
4. Employed in work that falls within Work --> Not losing, and preparing to win. Example: You want to become an actress since that's your dream in life. And you're working as an administrative assistant in a film production company.
5. Unemployed but engaged in search for Work --> Not losing (if have sufficient savings) and preparing to win (coach required to speed up the job finding process)
6. Employed in work that falls outside of Work --> Not losing (but also not winning). This might be a dangerous situation. One could be addicted to the money-making aspect of a job, to the detriment of one's talent or passion. This addiction could last an entire lifetime.
7. Unemployed but packaging one's human capital and searching for work --> Losing, but preparing calmly to get OUT of losing
8. Unemployed and searching for (menial or manual) work --> Losing and wants a quick way out of

this losing situation.

g. Unemployed and not searching for work. Permanently losing. This is the most dangerous situation. Urgent action is required.

Level 6 is a dangerous level because people who reach that level are often well paid to do a job that is not really aligned with who they truly are. People here gain money but lose life -- not a good deal at all.

Sometimes, the more boring or "lifeless" a job is, the higher the pay. It's called "differential compensation": the higher salary doesn't reflect the value of your services, it's only there to prevent you from quitting the (boring and lifeless) job which nobody wants.

The sad thing at level 6 is that people have stopped their personal growth. The only thing growing is their bank account.

At levels 7 to 9, there is "negative pressure" to do something. People don't want the pain (lack of purchasing power, low social status, etc.) so they are naturally driven to move up the pyramid.

At levels 1 to 5, there is "positive pressure" to do something. People want the pleasure or the payoff, so they are motivated naturally to do something to move up the pyramid.

Level 6 is the only level where there is the great danger of losing one's life. Indeed, many people get so comfortable with their professional routine that they don't notice the passing of years until it's too late. One day, they wake up and realize they've spent the last 10 or 20 years at a job they hate or don't feel any passion for. The brutal awakening is often accompanied by anger, bitterness and depression.

However, it is never too late to gain awareness and change one's life. It is better to look ahead with foresight, than to look back with regret.

In the end, human beings are infinitely capable of change and self-improvement. All we need is a clear, systematic process for moving forward and making tangible progress. The Pyramid of Professional Progress above can be a guide for personal growth and continuous career advancement.

## 12 The Secret to Finding Motivation at Work

Many companies hire motivational speakers to come in and motivate their troops. But does it work? Does sitting in a room and listening to an enthused keynote speaker motivate a person to take charge of her career? And what is motivation exactly?

Dictionary.com defines motivation as "the psychological feature that arouses an organism to action toward a desired goal; the reason for the action; that which gives purpose and direction to behavior."

The key words seem to be "goal" and "reason" and "purpose."

However, is it realistic to expect employees to have goals? What if most people don't have career goals? For instance, think about your friends, relatives or coworkers: do you know their goals? Do they seem to be motivated by their job?

Here's a summary of an article in the March 2006 issue of Harvard Business Review on "Managing Middlecence." It may shed some factual light on this issue of motivation:

Mid-career employees – those between 35 and 54 – make up more than half the workforce. One in 4 has managerial or supervisory responsibility.

In June 2004, Concours Group conducted a survey with Harris Interactive of more than 7,700 U.S. Workers, and found that people in this age group...

- \* Work longer hours than their older and younger counterparts, with 30% saying they put in 50 or more hours per week.
- \* Only 43% are passionate about their jobs.
- \* 33% feel energized by their work.
- \* 36% say they feel they are in dead-end jobs.
- \* More than 40% report feelings of burnout.
- \* Mid-career employees are the least likely to say that their workplace is congenial and fun or that it offers ample opportunity to try new things.
- \* As a group, they have the lowest satisfaction rates with their immediate managers and the least confidence in top executives.

We can see that self-motivation is a significant problem. But how to solve that problem?

If having a clear goal seems to be the key to self-motivation, how does one go about defining such a goal?

Before getting into a discussion about goal setting, it may be useful to understand the critical distinction between "work" and "Work" (with a big "W").

"Work" is what you do because you believe that's what you were meant to do. Picasso found his

"Work", and so did Einstein, Mother Teresa, Oprah and many others.

On the other hand, "work" is what hundreds of millions of people are doing every day while furtively watching the clock and wishing it would move faster toward 5 PM.

The question to ask is, "Are you currently involved in doing "Work" -- which is based on your passion, talent and values, or are you just doing "work" in order to get a pay check and pay the bills?"

This kind of question is not superficial and, in fact, goes way beyond motivation at work. It probes deep into what makes a person tick. It's about what a person really wants out of life, and we all get only one chance in life (unless you believe in reincarnation).

Because this is such a complex subject, the overwhelming majority of motivational speakers and authors fail to address it properly.

Employers, for their part, focus more on external motivation like salary, benefits, scheduling flexibility, etc. Of course, there is also the dark kind of motivation such as the fear of losing one's job.

Ultimately, motivation is the business of every working person and he/she alone is responsible for maintaining the "inner fire." The employer can provide certain resources and some guidance, but it's up to each person to do the serious self-introspection required in order to find out what she is really passionate about, what her talent is, and then to write a detailed plan so as to realize her dream career.

Only then can true motivation emerge, and drive forward a career so that the person can achieve self-actualization, one day at a time.

In the end, Leonardo Da Vinci, arguably the greatest genius of all time, revealed the secret behind his gigantic self-motivation. One writer asked him what he considered to be his greatest achievement, and he replied: Leonardo Da Vinci.

Perhaps the Renaissance virtuoso was right. **Perhaps the goal of every great career is to enable us to become the best person we can be.**

## 13 Can You Have a Career if You Don't Care?

Did you notice that the first four letters of "career" is "care"? This fortuitous fact captures a truism that is central to career management.

Indeed, a career requires continuous and diligent care in order to grow and flourish. If a person doesn't care about his or her career, then it's possible that said career doesn't exist. Or if it does exist, it might be deteriorating rapidly and might require intensive remedial care.

The point is that your career is your own. Nobody can care about your career more than you do. The only limit to your career growth is your self-motivation and, specifically, your courage in stepping outside of your comfort zone -- on a regular basis.

But why leave one's comfort zone and daily routine, you may ask. After all, you got to where you are today by working hard.

Don't you deserve some comfort and slack? Don't you deserve some relaxing time? And where's that remote control, by the way?

Yes. Yes. And under the couch.

However, the world is no longer the same. Things are moving fast. Trends are furiously emerging that will radically change the competitive landscape. Everybody, without exception, will have to get better and better -- and fast.

But to keep improving, you have to care about your career.

What does "caring" mean exactly? How do you know if you care about your career?

In the professional development context, to "care" means to **consciously acquire real empowerment**. (Notice that the last four words can be captured by the acronym C.A.R.E.)

That is, **if you truly cared about your career, you would plan and act so as to continually increase your knowledge, which is the key to self-empowerment. You would also acquire new skills continually, so as to be able to contribute more value to your employer.**

In return, your employer will give you more opportunities to expand your career and acquire new skills that will increase your market value.

Brian Tracy, the famous motivational speaker and author, once wrote that "in America, you work eight hours a day to survive. Every extra hour per day that you spend sharpening your skills and increasing your knowledge, is a direct investment in yourself and your economic growth."

It's also important to note that caring here doesn't refer to a vague emotional connection to your

career, but hard, tangible, concrete actions leading to results.

For example, a good test to know how much you care about your career is to ask yourself, "What did I do last week to improve my career or increase my professional value?"

Don't worry if the answer is "nothing."

After all, we grew up in a relatively stabler economy where we assumed that the employer would provide us with career development resources. We also assumed, correctly or not, that the employer would let us know if we ever needed new skills or new work methods.

In short, for many people, professional development was initiated by the employer.

Today, companies are far too busy focusing on their profitability and survival in a global economy to care about the career health of every employee.

This means career development is mostly up to you.

The good news is that there is so much knowledge out there to empower you and help you develop your career. All it takes is a bit of caring and a lot of discipline. In the long run, your entire life will be better and happier, if you develop the daily habit of acquiring new knowledge and new skills that make you more valuable as a professional or manager.

## 14 Motivation Requires Critical Knowledge About a Subject

Motivation is the beginning of every great career as well as the inner life force that will sustain career momentum and growth.

The first thing to understand about motivation is that you've got to be in the right career. If you take a job that doesn't fit your interests – what Richard Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, calls your “fields of fascination,” then you won't likely be motivated at work.

Or if you are motivated, it will probably be because of external factors like salary, benefits, etc.

Although there's nothing wrong with a great pay and generous benefits, true motivation can only come from passion for one's work. This is why it's so important to carefully choose a job that will allow you to feel alive and use your natural talents.

At the beginning of a career, what is most important is the motivation to learn. The motivation to do something specific will only come later.

Motivation to learn comes from curiosity and the willingness to explore new ideas, topics and subjects.

Motivation obviously requires that a person be open-minded, but what is perhaps less known is that it requires also a certain intellectual discipline. That is, one must seek to know more and more about a certain topic, for the more one learns, the more one is motivated to know more about the subject.

The world renowned creativity guru, Dr Edward de Bono, wrote that the best way to become passionate about a particular subject is to acquire a critical “mass” of knowledge about it.

In practical terms, it means that motivation about a career or job won't come naturally. You might be “interested” in a job or profession, but you won't know if you can be motivated or passionate about it until you acquire a critical amount of knowledge about the field.

This requires reading books, going to seminars, talking to experts in the field and learning as much as possible about the particular topic or job or career.

To help readers find their true passion and talent, and develop a career based on those deeply personal characteristics, we're releasing FREE of charge for a limited time a special report titled “Ideal Career Framework: How to Design Your Ideal Career and Pursue It With Passion”. This special report will be offered free of charge to all readers who sign up for our newsletter before Dec 7, 2007. See below for details.

# 15 Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing a New Career

Changing careers is rarely easy, yet it is often something we do precipitously without carefully considering the consequences.

Regardless of your career transition strategy, it is good to keep in mind the following common mistakes.

1. Don't look for a job in another field without doing diligent research

Leaping before you look is a recipe for disaster. Remember that a career is a marathon, not a sprint. It's worth spending time in researching and analyzing the new profession or industry you are considering.
2. Don't look for hot fields unless you truly feel passionate about them

They say that love conquers all. This means choosing a field you are really passionate about, will allow you to more easily conquer the obstacles and tackle the challenges that will inevitably come from your career transition.
3. Don't go into a field because your friend is doing well in it

Get thorough and detailed information about the fields you're considering by networking, researching, interviewing people. Most importantly, look at your own skill set and interests. A great career for a friend or acquaintance might not be such a great career for you.
4. Don't stick to options you already know about

Stretch your comfort zone, explore what you haven't explored before. This is important since your talent may be hidden until you find yourself in an environment that allows or even drives your talent to emerge.
5. Don't let money be the deciding factor

Your life and professional happiness are worth infinitely more than a piece of colored paper. The ultimate goal of a true, fulfilling and rewarding career is to enable you to become your best self.
6. Don't try to make the switch alone

There's a reason why we all live on the same planet: we need one another. Seek help from friends and colleagues. Be sincere and explain your challenges bluntly.
7. Don't expect a career counselor to tell you which field to enter

Choosing a career is the one decision that is so important that it's critical to take full responsibility for it.
8. Don't expect the transition to happen overnight

Finding your true career is often a long, yet enjoyable, process. It's a marathon more than a sprint. What comes easily will go easily. Take your time. You are fully worth it.

## 16 Excellence is The Key to Career Security and Prosperity

If you're interested in earning more at work, the solution is quite simple: acquire more marketable, applicable and profitable skills.

In other words, it's not about getting more "education." Indeed, there's a huge difference between "higher education" (e.g. postsecondary education) and "hire education."

"Hire education" is the kind that will help you to get promoted or get a higher salary – preferably both.

In other words, any educational program that you enroll in should give you new marketable skills, that is, skills that will make you more appealing to employers.

Your newly acquired skills should also be applicable, that is, they must enable you to do a better job.

Finally, your new skills should be profitable to the employer. Ideally, your new skills should enable you to bring more customers to the company, retain more customers, create more new products, improve existing products, increase sales and revenues, etc.

The important thing is to clearly identify the critical skills that will increase your value in the eyes of potential employers, and then to focus religiously on developing or acquiring those specific skills.

A good metaphor to keep in mind as you plan your professional development efforts is to think of Olympian athletes. Every day for four years prior to the actual Olympic Games, they practice only the skills they need to perfect in order to win the Gold Medal.

Notice that they do NOT practice "multi-tasking." They don't spend time writing fancy resumes or cover letters. They don't network so much.

They just do, every day, what they must do in order to become the BEST in their field.

This quasi-religious focus on developing their specific Olympian talents and skills does require a great deal of courage.

The same courage is required today of any person who wants to have career security and prosperity.

In other words, career success will increasingly depend on one's absolute dedication to and relentless pursuit of excellence.

Sure, this Olympian metaphor might sound a bit extreme to some readers. Some people might ask, "Why can't I just have a regular job 9 to 5? Why do I have to try to become the best?"

In the old economy, just doing one's job might have been sufficient. However, in today's global

economy where millions of workers from India and China can participate by offering their services to any employer through the Internet, it is highly unwise to put one's head in the sand like the proverbial ostrich.

To put it bluntly, a person either strives to become the best at what he does, or he will soon face the risk of unemployment.

The good news is that as you focus on becoming excellent, you will enjoy your work more since you will be fully engaged in it -- emotionally and intellectually. You will also earn more money and gain greater respect from everyone. These rewards will build your self-esteem and drive you to higher levels of excellence, thus creating a virtuous cycle that will enrich your life beyond what you can imagine right now.

The trick is to realize that you deserve to have the best in life, and the sure way to obtain the best is to become the best.

## 17 Knowledge-Sharing is The New Way to Network

The adage "It's not what you know, it's who you know" is not 100% accurate, especially not in today's knowledge economy where a professional's value lies chiefly in his or her knowledge.

Linkedin, the popular networking site for professionals and managers, has in fact enabled people to share and show their knowledge through the Linkedin Answers service, which is free of charge.

Therefore, since a professional's knowledge will be increasingly visible to the whole wide world (to the extent that he is willing and able to share it), then what a person knows will likely become as important as -- if not more important than -- who he knows.

Indeed, when recruiting new talents, employers don't care so much -- unless it's a sales job -- about a person's number of connections as much as what the candidate knows and what professional capabilities flow from that knowledge.

In short, a connection can only open doors for you; you still have to tap dance, so to speak, in order to prove to the potential employer or client that you can do the job.

The critical importance of one's knowledge and professional capability thus changes the networking game from one of "making connections" to one of "sharing knowledge."

To be more precise, the networking game is no longer about the quantity of one's connections, but the quality of one's knowledge.

It's also about one's willingness and ability to share one's knowledge. As the saying goes, "knowledge shared is power multiplied." Sharing knowledge will empower everyone while encouraging others to share their knowledge in return. This principle of reciprocity never fails because it is part of human nature: the more we receive from others, the more we feel compelled -- if only for moral reasons -- to give back.

This is why participating on Linkedin Answers is so crucial. It's a virtuous cycle where the more one gives, the more one receives.

This sharing and learning can become quite addictive too! But it is a healthy and positive sort of addiction where participants are psychologically and socially motivated to share their valuable knowledge while gaining from the vast pool of wisdom consisting of the collective experience of thousands of other Linkedin users.

Linkedin even offers rewards for people who provide "best answers" (as determined by the person asking the question). Such knowledgeable people are recognized as "experts," although the term is just a recognition of the value and usefulness of their answers and does not really make them true experts in the traditional sense of the word.

The key idea here is that networking will focus more and more on knowledge and knowledge-sharing, not the (often mindless) accumulation of business cards in one's Rolodex or the multiplication of connections on LinkedIn.

The challenge for professionals then will be to identify what it is that they know best, and to share their knowledge as fast as possible, with as many people as possible, in order to position themselves as knowledgeable experts in their field who can be relied upon to provide guidance, counsel and solutions.

## 18 Master Three Critical Skills for Career Success

Jim Rohn, the best-selling author and motivational speaker, said this about the important issue of training: "Success is something you attract by the person you become. Work hard on your job and you will make a living. Work hard on yourself and you will make a FORTUNE."

He is correct for the simple reason that the best professionals get paid the best salaries. To earn more, you simply have to produce more of the outcome that you are paid to produce.

Alternatively, you could produce the same amount of results but in a shorter period of time. This way, you will have more time to do other things, which in turn, will enable you to acquire new knowledge and new skills.

The important thing is to clearly identify the three critical skills that you absolutely need to master in order to become one of the top performers in your field.

No matter what job you have or what profession you chose, it helps to think of yourself as a professional tennis player who has to master three basic shots: the serve, the forehand and the backhand.

Those are the three non-negotiable skills to master for any professional tennis player. If he's weak in one of those three fundamental strokes, he will be easily defeated in any tournament.

If you're a salesperson selling a product or a service to companies, then your three critical skills might be: researching the prospect, writing the proposal and delivering a passionate presentation to senior management at the client organization.

This doesn't mean that other skills, such as time management, proficiency with computer applications, etc. are unimportant. They are important, but in a support capacity. That is, they are unlikely to directly improve your job performance.

Your three critical skills will normally account for 80% of the value you create for your employer.

So it makes sense, economically, to focus most of your training efforts on those three critical drivers of performance.

After you've identified them, you can then search for people in your network who have mastered those skills, and you can begin to learn from them.

Human nature being what it is, those masters will feel flattered that you come to them for advice. It will be up to you to learn how they think, how they evaluate their own performance, what they pay attention to, how they practice, etc.

Reading books or attending seminars are also excellent ways to sharpen your three critical skills.

Using our example above, a salesperson could read books or attend seminars on proposal writing, market research and public speaking.

A third way to improve your skills is to hire a coach. A good coach will help you to develop self-awareness through the questions that he asks. He will, for instance, help you to take a clear look at your own performance in order to identify, very precisely, the elements that need more attention. As you pay more attention to those elements, you will suddenly experience a sharp increase in your ability to perceive things that you were not able to perceive before.

A public speaking coach, for example, could increase your ability to perceive how your body language communicates to the audience in a way that either reinforces or interferes with your verbal communication.

A good coach will also facilitate the process where you begin to take responsibility for your performance, as well as your continuous improvement in the three areas that impact your job performance the most.

However, training is only effective from a career standpoint if you successfully identify the three areas where you need to excel as a professional.

Therefore, it will be fairly important to initiate a frank discussion with your immediate supervisor and politely requesting his/her feedback.

Every boss only dreams about a direct report asking for feedback on how to improve job performance. Not only will you gain valuable feedback, but you will also have psychologically committed to continuous improvement. In doing so, you may have turned your job into an exciting competitive sport like tennis where diligent practice will make you better over time and can yield increasingly higher payoffs.

# 19 How to Design Your Personal Training Program

Would you like to earn more than you are currently earning?

There are a few options available: 1. Rob a bank 2. Marry a rich woman (or man) 3. Somehow get into the testament of a rich, old and terminally afflicted uncle 4. Bring a small, unnoticeable digital camera to the next office Christmas party and capture evidence, for blackmail purposes, of (drunk) coworkers engaging in shockingly inappropriate behavior 5. Train yourself to become more productive at work.

If, like most people, you are sane and have a minimal sense of morality, you probably would go for option #5. (I tried the other options but they don't work).

The key question then is, "How do you develop a personal training program that will help you acquire and refine skills that will lead to better performance and, ultimately, to increased earnings?"

That's a great question and I have absolutely no clue as to how it can be done.

But wait, I just remembered about a powerful framework that instructional designers are using to create effective training programs. It's called the A.D.D.I.E. Framework:

- \* Analysis of learner's needs
- \* Design of the training program or course
- \* Development of the course or seminar
- \* Implementation of the course or program
- \* Evaluation of training outcomes

As usual, I like to provide my unsolicited two cents, so I've added a "P" to the acronym so it becomes P.A.D.D.I.E. (great, now this acronym belongs to me):

- \* Performance analysis
- \* Analysis of performer's needs
- \* Design of personal training program
- \* Development
- \* Implementation
- \* Evaluation

How does this work?

First, you identify the one task you do at work that produces the key outcome for which you are paid. It can also be a set of interrelated tasks.

In general, 20% of the tasks you do every day contributes to 80% of the value you produce.

Next, you identify your current level of mastery for each key task. For example, if you're a public speaker and the best in your field scores a "10" and you score, in your own self-evaluation, a "5", then you know you have to improve to a "6" or a "7."

To do this, you design (on paper) a personal training program and develop it (with tangible tools and equipment and control charts) and finally implement it over the next few weeks.

To continue with our public speaker example, you might want to practice for 15 minutes every day using an MP3 recorder and reviewing your audio recordings for self-evaluation and improvement.

For example, early in his career, Anthony Robbins practiced his public speaking skills at home for two hours every day. And look where he is now!

Finally, you need to have a way of evaluating how effective your training program is. It's important here to be objective. For instance, you can ask clients or coworkers if, in their opinion, you have indeed become better at the major tasks involved in your work.

Or you can design performance indicators that will objectively tell you how your performance has increased, as a result of the training.

The key to success is to develop a personal training program that is systematic and based on a sound framework, such as the P.A.D.D.I.E. framework above. Once you succeed in systematizing your personal training, your rise in the corporate world is virtually guaranteed and great success will come as surely as night follows day.

## 20. 5 Systematic Steps to Acquire New Skills and Increase Your Value

Few people talk about lifetime employment anymore. In fact, lifetime employability is the new goal to aim for, where employers provide learning resources and leave it up to self-motivated employees to pick up the knowledge, skills and tools that will increase their employability -- that is, their capacity to contribute more to the company's success.

One elegant framework that can help you engage in effective learning and self-training is captured by the acronym F.I.R.S.T.:

- \* Focus on one skill to acquire, and take the required course or seminar to get it
- \* Implement your new skill in a real-world situation
- \* Reflect on the results you get
- \* Seek feedback from others (peers, boss, coworkers, clients)
- \* Transfer your newly acquired skill to your permanent set of skills to call upon (this can be done by consciously using that skill at every opportunity you get).

Repeat the above process continuously in order to gain new skills and increase your professional capabilities. By repeating this simple learning method consistently, you will increase your capacity to contribute to your employer's success and will inevitably boost your market value and bargaining power.

## 21 Secret for Achieving Excellence

If you took a piece of paper and folded it, its thickness would go from 0.1 mm to 0.2 mm.

If you repeated this process of folding 23 times, then the "thickness" of the resulting paper would exceed the height of the Empire State Building in New York!

Don't believe me? Do the math yourself. The ESB is 1260 feet high (remember that a foot is 12 inches, and an inch is 25.4 mm).

That is truly the secret of excellence in anything. You've got to identify the most important thing to practice, and then practice that very thing every day.

The thing that is compounding exponentially -- as in the case of the paper's thickness in the example above -- is your mind. To be more specific, your mind develops, at an exponential rate, distinctions that enable you to make sharper and sharper evaluations. Tony Robbins talks about those distinctions in his book *Awaken the Giant Within*.

This is why multitasking, which afflicts almost all white-collar jobs, is not a good thing. Using our paper-folding example, multitasking is like folding once or twice 20 or 30 sheets of paper every day. Your career cannot advance or make progress that way.

The only way your career or your business will grow EXPONENTIALLY is if you FOCUS on doing only one thing, and keep doing it EVERY DAY.

Yanik Silver, the highly successful (and awesomely innovative) Internet guru, advises people to do just one thing and make it a huge success before moving on to the next thing.

It's important to carefully choose the ONE THING that you practice daily. Don't try something too complicated, or try something too easy. The one thing you choose to do, should challenge you enough, yet be feasible.

The secret to striking a delicate balance between what is challenging and feasible, is revealed in the book *Flow - The Psychology of Optimal Experience*.

Basically, if you try something that is TOO challenging, you will be stressed. If you try something that is TOO easy, you will be bored (and that's when your mind stop growing; it stops creating the distinctions mentioned above).

Take my case, for example. If, two years ago, I had tried to write a book on "success secrets," it would have been extremely hard. I've never written a book before in my whole life.

Instead, I decided to start a blog called *Real-Time Success Secrets*. Writing a few paragraphs a day sounds more feasible, although it is challenging of course.

Today, there are 829 posts written, and I only need to package all that stuff into a book to sell on Lulu.com.

Same story with my LinkedIn User Manual. It has 449 posts, and could easily become a book of 449 pages.

The best part is not even the amount of work you can accomplish by focusing on doing only ONE THING. It's the ease and grace that comes from such focused practice.

For example, many of my posts today come from my recording my voice using an MP3 recorder as I walk outside (sometimes in a park) and enjoy the nice weather.

So blogging is definitely my thing. What is YOUR thing? What do you love to practice every day?

Unless you know the ONE THING that you like or love to practice EVERY DAY, you cannot possibly become the best in your field. Without becoming the best, it is not possible to earn the best income.

But beyond the money aspect, not striving to become the best at one thing will deprive you of happiness.

Indeed, it is happiness that brings about success. Not the other way around.

If you could find the ONE THING that you're happy doing EVERY DAY and that you love to practice EVERY DAY, your life will be transformed. I guarantee it.

The mistake most people make is to "do things" instead of "practicing one thing."

Of course, when I say "practice one thing," I mean focus all your efforts and mental energy on accomplishing one specific result. There may be many things that you do to support you in that goal. But you have to be crystal clear about the ONE result that you strive to achieve.

I will write more on this important topic.

## 22 The Secret to Boosting Your Productivity

Productivity is the key to greater earning power. But how does one increase one's productivity? Luckily, there are three simple steps you can take to significantly increase your productivity. These steps are captured by the acronym O.W.E., which stands for Outcome, Work and Evaluation.

### 1. Outcome orientation

The first thing to realize is that no matter what job you have, you are paid to produce a specific outcome. No one is paid for "hours spent at the office." In fact, in today's extremely competitive economy, workers will increasingly be paid not to show up, but to show results. Indeed, more and more companies allow employees to work from home, on the condition that they produce the results agreed upon.

The key, therefore, is to clearly define what is this outcome that you are responsible for producing. If you're a sales person, the answer is easy: sales! There are many metrics for measuring a salesperson's performance, such as number of contracts signed, number of new customers, number of repeat customers, number of units sold, etc.

If you're a graphic designer, the outcome can also be defined easily. It can be the number of marketing material produced, such as the number of brochures or business cards created per month or per week.

### 2. Work vs non-work activities

The second thing to realize is that there are only 8 working hours in a day, so you have to measure the actual amount of time that you spend on producing that outcome. A salesperson, for instance, might spend 30% of his time doing administrative work, 30% preparing for sales presentations, and 40% facing prospects in order to sell whatever it is he's selling. This would be a work/non-work ratio of 40%.

The trick is to increase this work/non-work ratio, because only then can the salesperson increase his productivity.

### 3. Evaluation of personal productivity

Last but not least, one has to carefully and regularly evaluate one's productivity. This should be done on a weekly basis, whether or not your boss requires you to do it. It's a personal initiative that will increase your capacity to produce more and, therefore, your bargaining power in future negotiations with the employer about compensation, working conditions or resources made available to you.

This can be done by simply comparing your current productivity with last week's productivity. Productivity is simply defined as the number of work outcomes per hour or per week.

The O.W.E. framework is useful for those who want to proactively take charge of their career by focusing, with laser precision, on their personal productivity. Not only will such a focus increase one's professional equity and market value, it will also make every working day more fun since one's mental faculties and resources can be engaged to continually increase the relevant productivity indicators.

## 23 Measure Your Productivity to Control Your Career

Productivity depends on the extent to which you master the key activity in your job. It's important, therefore, to know precisely your current level of mastery.

The following is a good framework to properly assess your current capability:

1. Novice: A person who is new to the field, profession or industry
2. Initiate: A person who has begun to acquire fundamental knowledge and skills.
3. Apprentice: A person who has begun to work with experienced practitioners.
4. Practitioner: A person who is capable of practicing independently on his or her own.
5. Expert: A person who is considered an expert by professional peers.
6. Master: A person who is capable of teaching and transferring his expertise and know-how.

It's important to know your current level because only then can you plan effectively and realistically to reach the next level.

By the way, notice that the above framework spells MEPAIN (in reverse order).

This convenient acronym is a reminder that to improve, one must continually get out of one's comfort zone. It's not necessary to seek pain per se, but it is necessary to always do a little more every day.

Specifically, you should do more of what your employer is paying you for. Indeed, there is a critical difference between doing more of what matters and doing more of what doesn't really matter.

How do you know what matters? Ask your boss. Or ask your client.

Don't assume that you know what is precisely the outcome for which you are being paid.

Different jobs will have different outcomes and will use different metrics to measure those outcomes.

If you're a freelance writer, then outcome can be measured by the number of words per article, or the number of articles you produce per week.

If you're a sales person, then the number of units sold can be a good metric, or the amount of sales revenues per week.

If you don't have a clear metric to measure quantitatively your performance and productivity, you will be at the mercy of the mood swings of your boss or the shifting winds of office politics.

However, if you do have clear metrics for tracking your performance, then you have control over your job and, ultimately, over the rate of progress of your career.

## 24 The Art of Strategic Networking

Most people agree that networking is necessary for career advancement. To further understand this important social activity, it may be useful to distinguish between three types of networking:

- \* Operational, where you network with people in the same organization for work purposes
- \* Personal, where you network for personal and professional development
- \* Strategic, where you network inside and outside the firm, in order to better understand and appreciate strategic issues, trends, environmental opportunities and threats, etc.

Compared to the other two, strategic networking seems to be the most valuable but also the most difficult. Indeed, it is reserved for leaders and executives. The professionals and managers who do engage in strategic networking are, of course, lavishly rewarded for their efforts given the strategic value of such networking.

However, one should proceed with caution when it comes to strategic networking because it involves dealing with high-level people.

For instance, in strategic networking, there is always a subtle element of power during social intercourse (or even in non-personal communications such as emails). Politics (or the perceived evolving power of players) plays an important role in such interactions.

I've noticed, for example, that relatively powerful people (CEOs, millionaires, editors, etc.) are highly sensitive to signals and gestures acknowledging their elevated status or confirming their eminence (for lack of a better word).

In short, powerful people are quite sensitive. White-glove treatment is always de rigueur.

A book I highly recommend to learn the art of the courtier so as to be more effective at strategic networking with high-powered people, is *The Art of Worldly Wisdom* by Baltasar Gracian.

If you wish to practice your networking skills, LinkedIn is a good place to start. In particular, I recommend the LinkedIn Answers section, where you can ask up to 10 questions per month and answer as many questions as you wish.

When asking a question, be sure to contribute a valuable idea or an interesting fact or a thought-provoking insight.

When answering a question, try to be as detailed, comprehensive and practical as possible.

In all communications and in one's LinkedIn profile, it is important to look at oneself and ask: "What is

it that is so special about me that other people, especially the people I want to network with, will WANT to meet me and get to know me?"

Unfortunately, most of the LinkedIn profiles seem to lack career focus. Few users take the time to craft a compelling professional identity, one that is memorable. Few people write down their career goal or mission, or anything that would show that the person seriously thought about the critical career question: "What do I want to contribute professionally?"

This question is the one Peter Drucker asked of people who came to him for career advice. It is a simple, yet poignant, frank and direct question.

A person can have 500 connections on LinkedIn, yet it won't help much if he doesn't know what he's trying to achieve in his career.

Clarifying one's career goal is not that difficult. At first, you start with a basic sentence like: "I would like to become a marketing professional."

Then, you refine it further: "To become a marketing communications professional working in the IT industry, and use my creativity, leadership and project management skills to ensure the long-term success of my clients."

Once it is clear to you and to everyone you know what your career is all about, it then becomes easier to network since you are operating from a solid foundation of self-honesty and professional clarity.

Having a clear professional identity will make strategic networking that much easier, and will help to advance one's career while building relationships that are beneficial to one's employer.

## 25 Creating a Unique Professional Identity

When it comes to career development, it's easy to jump into action mode without strategic premeditation or foresight. It's easy to forget to do the most important thing for career success: determining who you are.

If you don't know who you are, then others won't know either. And if they don't know you, they certainly won't remember you if or when they come across a career opportunity that fits your career priorities or goals.

Knowing who you are doesn't require complex psychoanalysis or, God forbid, the involvement of a psychotherapist. It's simply a matter of writing on a piece of paper: "As a serious professional, I specialize in \_\_\_\_\_."

This simple sentence will help you to focus all your career efforts in the right direction. Of course, coming up with such a strategic sentence won't be easy. The best way is to iterate then validate. In other words, you can go from "I specialize in direct marketing" to "I specialize in direct marketing for the IT consulting industry" and so on.

It's worth to think long and hard about this exercise, because the more precise and specific your area of specialization, the easier it will be for people to remember you.

If they remember you and the area you specialize in, they are more likely to forward to you ideas, information, resources, connections or career opportunities which fit your focus. This will enable you to grow your career faster.

You might say, "Well, I think my friends know what I specialize in. They've known me for a long time."

Maybe so. But it is wise to verify it though, by simply asking five of your friends to complete the sentence "(Your name) is a serious professional. He/she specializes in \_\_\_\_\_."

If the five answers are similar, then you are correct. If the five answers differ markedly, well, it may be time to call up your friends and update them on the status of your career.

Nevertheless, even if your five closest friends know what you specialize in, one's career is often advanced by what is called "weak ties": acquaintances that you are connected with, but with whom you don't have a deep or close relationship. Your connections on LinkedIn, for instance, could be called "weak ties."

Malcom Gladwell wrote a book titled *The Tipping Point*, where he describes the importance of "weak ties." The book is worth reading because it contains insights that are useful to professional networking.

In addition to asking your five closest friends to complete the sentence above so you can ascertain

whether you truly have a coherent professional identity, you could return the favor to them by completing the sentence "(Your friend's name): I think that as a serious professional, you specialize in \_\_\_\_\_."

The fact is that most people are not really sure what they specialize in. A quick review of dozens of LinkedIn profiles will show that most people have consciously or subconsciously omitted to clearly define their area of specialization.

Some will mention several areas of specialization, but that is not advisable nor does it inspire trust.

For instance, would you trust a surgeon who only does surgery all day long and wants to become the best in his field, or one who does surgery but also renovates houses and moonlights as a landscape artist?

Ultimately, trust is the name of the game in one's career, and trust can only be inspired when other people know for sure what your professional identity is and what specialization you are committed to.

## 26 Marketing Will Make You Successful and Rich

Marketing is perhaps the most important management concept in that it can bring enormous wealth to any professional. At the same time, it is also one of the least understood concepts.

By skillfully understanding what marketing is all about, you can add a few zeros to your bank account. Seriously.

But before we talk about marketing itself, let's take a look at what's going on in today's economy.

Companies in all industries and from all over the world are experiencing intense competition from cheaper labor, newer technologies, faster innovators and the ever-increasing demands of sophisticated consumers.

As a result, companies focus more than ever on customers and how to serve them better and cheaper. There are also trends about creating "unique customer experiences."

Peter Drucker was indeed correct (again) when he wrote that business is basically marketing and innovation.

What does all this have to do with you? After all, you have a job to do every day and you try to do it as well as possible.

Do you really have to care about the customer? Isn't that the job of the Marketing Department?

Yes, traditionally. Not anymore.

Today, every working person has a customer to serve. It may be your boss or other coworkers.

No matter who your customer is (a customer being defined as "the person who benefits from your work"), knowing more about marketing will help you to maximize his/her satisfaction so as to position yourself advantageously for career advancement.

But what is "marketing" exactly?

You might have heard of the joke, "Marketing is what you have to do when the product is crap."

There is some truth to that joke.

A more common misperception is that marketing is like selling, and that it's all about promotion.

In fact, marketing is neither about selling nor about trying to compensate for inferior products.

Marketing, essentially, is the process of "anticipating, identifying and profitably satisfying customer

needs.”

Those 7 words are fully worth committing to memory.

Basically, it means that marketing attempts to know about customers' emerging needs (through market research, for instance), define current customer needs, and then create products and services that will satisfy those needs while turning a profit for the company.

It's got to be win-win: customer needs must be fulfilled, and the company must turn a profit.

You might have heard of other marketing-related concepts such as the 4 P's (product, promotion, price, place) or Web marketing or selling. They are important tactical considerations, but not nearly as important as the relentless and sustained focus on customer needs.

Whether you're a professional or a manager or an entrepreneur, there is no doubt that you do have a customer. Ultimately, the customer is the one who makes sure that you earn a living.

The customer is also the person who can make you rich. Here's a simple metaphor to illustrate the critical connection between marketing and wealth: Imagine that your customer has a hole in his life. This hole represents a need or the lack of something.

The more you fill that need, the more the customer will fill your bank account. It's really that simple.

## 27. 5 Concepts to Package Yourself as a Complete Solution

In developing one's career, it helps to look at oneself as a product -- a high-quality, functional and affordable product. Since every product, no matter how good it is, requires proper marketing strategies and programs for successful commercialization, then it is advantageous to learn about basic marketing concepts and apply them to one's career.

Marketing consists of 5 key interrelated concepts: target market, product, pricing, promotion and place (or distribution).

### TARGET MARKET

First, you have to decide who you are serving. Who is the employer you wish to serve? A proper description should include details about the targeted industry, the size of the company, the products or services it offers, etc.

### PRODUCT

Next, you have to package your human capital (education, experience, skills, energy, motivation, etc.) into a solution that will be wanted by employers. If the description of your solution or product is sharp and precise, then it will be easier to promote it. A good example of a sharp definition is "a telecom project manager." A not so good definition would be "a marketing professional."

### PRICE

Price here refers to your salary requirements, but could also include resources and equipment that you need from an employer to do a good job. Obviously, a free agent requires from an employer fewer resources and equipment than an on-site, permanent employee.

### PROMOTION

Today, there are more opportunities than ever to promote oneself as a value-adding professional. LinkedIn is just one example of a socioprofessional networking site where one can connect with potentially 14 million other professionals and managers. The key is to communicate a clear description of who you are and what you are capable of doing.

### PLACE

Place refers to the ways in which you deliver value to employers and clients. In many professions, it is possible to work from home since an employee can send via Internet his work and can use communications technologies (cell phones, Blackberry, Skype, etc.) to be in constant touch with coworkers, collaborators and clients.

The above 5 marketing concepts, if understood and applied diligently to your career, can help you to

proactively and strategically manage your professional value. Specifically, it allows you to focus on an area that needs improvement, so that you become a complete solution that can be communicated clearly to employers.

## 28 How to Attract and Keep Talented Professionals

Few issues today are more important than how to attract and keep talented professionals. Here are a few tips and recommendations on how to support talented employees so as to gain their trust while earning their loyalty.

Be a friend, not a boss. This supportive role will foster communication, then cooperation, then collaboration, and ultimately commitment.

Enable talents to make decisions. Talents are most knowledgeable about the subject and have ultimate responsibility for executing a decision. It makes sense to let them make decisions as much as possible.

Foster creativity. Don't interfere with your talents. Remember that performance is simply potential minus interference. The less interference, the better the performance.

Give them what they want. Ask talents what they require from you, then give it to them fast. Keep in mind that there are many other employers who are just one click away.

Treat talents as customers. Like customers, talents can go anywhere where there's a better deal. Take their feedback and suggestions seriously.

In addition to the above recommendations, keep in mind that talents consistently cite three main needs:

1. Co-workers and bosses, with whom they can develop mutual respect and trust, learn from, discuss ideas with, and collaborate with.
2. Freedom from micromanagement. Most people don't enjoy being overly managed. Talents in particular hate bosses who constantly look over their shoulder and provide unsolicited advice. Talents want freedom to work, to make mistakes, to learn, to innovate and to joyfully pursue professional challenges.
3. Freedom from fear. Talents are repelled by organizations that exhibit fear. For motivational purposes, it may sometimes be productive to use the carrot, but it is rarely advisable to use the stick.

Other needs include freedom to pursue ideas and interests, and a corporate culture that values honesty, trust, respect, fairness, friendship and kindness.

## 29 Leadership is a Matter of Ambition, Training and Determination

Leadership is not rocket science, but it is "Rocky" science.

In other words, a true leader must embody the irrepressible desire to win. He must be willing to train, and train hard, so as to prepare to win. He is absolutely convinced that he will lead his troops to victory, but he is also perpetually willing to face his own weaknesses and self-doubts, in order to decisively overcome them.

This blunt, slightly savage definition of a true leader might shock a few people. Nonetheless, frank and direct leadership is what's needed in today's often confusing economy. People, especially followers, need to see a strong leader, one who is willing to confront all obstacles -- one by one -- and defeat them all.

Jack Welch, widely recognized as the greatest CEO of the 20th century, wrote an entire chapter in his book *Winning on the Issue of frankness and candor*. He advises managers to face reality, and be totally honest and candid in saying what has to be said, so as to correct performance immediately.

In the end, leadership ability is not just for corporate managers. It's the single greatest asset of all those who want a great career. Indeed, a person endowed with leadership ability will attract to himself or herself, a great number of collaborators and allies. He/she will then be able to progress faster.

One only has to ask oneself, "To what extent do I have a clear vision and great ambition? Do I have the "eye of the tiger"? Am I willing to work hard and train hard, like Rocky Balboa?" If the answer to these questions is a resounding "Yes!", then expect great success and all the financial rewards that come with it.

## 30 Leadership Ability Enables You to Go Far in Life

Did you notice that “leadership” is a highly popular topic these days?

Indeed, there are literally hundreds of books on leadership, each with its own definition of what constitutes a leader and its own recipe for “effective leadership.”

But what is leadership exactly?

Leadership can be summarized in three key words: “Visible Personal Example.”

Let's analyze each word.

**EXAMPLE:** Leadership is not about theory or plans or how you look on paper. It's not about titles or credentials or awards received last year. True leadership is about someone taking action and doing the right thing. It's about someone acting according to a higher standard and doing so consistently. We can all be leaders in our own way, if we have the courage to act and “walk the walk” -- not just “talk the talk.”

**PERSONAL:** Leadership is something we embrace as a person. It's who we are and who we have decided to become. It's not just a position or a certain something we do. Leadership flows from a person's life experience, their values, their convictions.

**VISIBLE:** Leadership is not arrogant, but it does assert itself by being visible. A true leader is not afraid of public perception or conventional thinking, because he understands that followers need to see their leaders in action. There's nothing more inspiring than a leader taking decisive action publicly.

From the above, we can see that leadership is not rocket science. It's a matter of 1. deciding to act and do the right thing, 2. personally embracing the beliefs and exemplary behavior of a leader, and 3. being present, visible and accessible in order to encourage and support team members.

You might be thinking, “Well, what's the point of becoming a leader? I'm just working here. I'm not being paid what the upper echelon managers are being paid. Why should I lead anyone? And what's wrong with just doing my job and get home in time for supper and spend time doing what I really care about?”

There's absolutely nothing wrong with that. If staying where you are is all you want in life.

The truth is, money follows responsibility. And responsibility follows leadership.

In other words, people who act like leaders (no matter what their official job title is) eventually receive more responsibilities, and soon they also receive more financial rewards and recognition.

In the end, leadership is just one decision you make. It's the decision to go as high as your courage

and imagination will take you.

It's like entering an elevator. Some people press the 3rd or 5th floor, while others press the 30th floor. How high and how far do you want to go?

The further in life you want to go, the more leadership ability you will need. The great news is that you can start practicing your leadership skills right here, right now. Just remember the three key words: Visible Personal Example.

## 31 How Blogging Can Benefit Your Career

Blogging is a powerful career weapon that is often overlooked because the very word itself sounds a little bit nerdy.

However, if we carefully examine the process of blogging, we can better understand what it's really all about and how it can help to accelerate one's career development.

First, it's important to understand the three key issues to consider when blogging:

1. What you know
2. What your career objective is
3. Who you are writing for

You have to know all three equally well.

For instance, if you only know what you know, but don't know about your career objective or who you're writing for, then that's not good.

Similarly, if you know your career goal but don't know what exactly you know, or who you're trying to inform, that's also not good.

### KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW

It's important to clearly define your area of expertise, and to stick to it. Specifics always outsell generalities.

For instance, rather than position yourself as a blogger on "marketing," consider a more narrow specialization like "direct marketing" or "email marketing."

### KNOW YOUR CAREER GOAL

If your objective is to become a VP of marketing, then don't write about operations or leadership on your career blog. It would not make sense and would in fact confuse potential employers.

### KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

It's also important to define who your audience is. Write specifically for them. Try to be useful by offering valuable information that can help them. Show them how they could use your information to improve their lives or their professional performance at work.

Once you've clearly defined the three parameters above, you can then create an account at Wordpress.com and start creating a career blog where you share your valuable knowledge with potential employers and clients.

Make sure you have a "subscribe" button on the front page so readers can subscribe and receive your latest updates by email.

Ultimately, career blogging is about being useful to people. It's not about self-promotion per se, although you will naturally become well-known and popular if you do a good job of sharing valuable information with readers.

As you become more and more useful to people, they will seek you out and ask for your advice. This could lead to lucrative contracts or exciting job opportunities.

But the greatest benefit of all is to know that you make a difference in other people's lives, no matter how small that difference. Just knowing that you have a list of subscribers who want to hear your expert opinion, will pleasantly boost your self-esteem while giving you the self-confidence to boldly move forward in your career.

Note: Peter Nguyen has been an obsessive blogger for the last three years. Two of his most popular blogs are <http://realtimesuccesssecrets.blogspot.com> and <http://linkedinusermanual.blogspot.com>.

## 32 Technologies to Boost Your Productivity

Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net>) is a powerful and FREE sound editing software you can use to maximize your productivity.

For instance, it can be used to record your ideas on a daily basis. You can also use it to record phone interviews with experts or career collaborators (just make sure you switch to the speaker phone).

Finally, you can use Audacity to rehearse speeches or presentations, so as to practice and ensure a high-quality delivery.

Another productivity-boosting tool is the dictation software TalkItTypeIt ([www.talkitypeit.com](http://www.talkitypeit.com)), retailing for about \$50. It basically types out everything you say! This is like buying your own secretary for \$50. Highly recommended for busy professionals and managers.

### 33. 3 Steps For Using Technology More Productively

Technology can be of great help in one's career, but it can also waste a lot of valuable time. The key to effective and strategic leverage of technologies is to have clear goals, an explicit procedure for using technologies, and regular reviews of technological performance.

Goal setting has been advocated since time immemorial by motivational authors of all stripes and colors, yet the fact remains that most people do not have written goals.

Without a written goal, all the best technologies in the world cannot help. A technology is like a turbo-engine under the hood: it can help you to get there fast, really fast. The only question is, where do you want to go exactly?

Take blogging, for instance. Blogging software, often offered free of charge (e.g. Blogger, Typepad, etc.), are absolutely useless if you don't have a clear goal about what you want to achieve with it.

Cell phones, Blackberries, MP3 players, as well as free-content websites such as Slideshare.net and Youtube, are amazing technologies, yet they are just tools.

A tool only becomes a competitive advantage in the hands of clear-eyed and goal-oriented individuals.

The most extreme, spectacular and global example is the 9/11 attack. A bunch of terrorists got together and figured out that a fuel-packed passenger airliner can actually be used as a deadly weapon to inflict massive damage and unleash terror on a planetary scale.

It is estimated that the terrorists involved used approximately \$200,000 to pull that stunt, which cost the U.S. over \$50 billion dollars in economic damages.

What is even more surprising is that they used technologies created by Americans (airplanes and Internet, through which they booked their flights).

If evil men can use their imaginative minds to leverage technology strategically, so can good men and women, to achieve productive ends.

But to do so requires that one invest much time into thinking about and answering three critical questions:

- \* What is the goal in using this technology?
- \* What is the method or procedure through which maximum benefits can be extracted from using this technology?
- \* How do we evaluate the performance and the return on using this particular technology?

Take cell phones, for example. Practically everybody in the Western world has one, often two. But do

we really know how to use cell phones?

More and more wireless providers offer unlimited airtime, but let's pause and think about this for a minute. Free airtime sounds good, however, there's a catch: your time is not free.

Your time is the most precious thing you have and therefore, your cell phone might be an unwitting source of much time wasted, if you don't have a clear agenda and clear goals.

As the saying goes, "Any fool can make a phone call, and every fool will answer it."

It is very easy, indeed, to just answer calls or make calls, and think that one is being productive.

Ultimately, when it comes to time management, we all have to decide to consciously believe in one of these two statements: "Every minute counts" or "Every minute doesn't count."

Rich and successful people have already made that decision.

Billionaire Donald Trump, for instance, is ruthless about managing his time. He actually requires of his subordinates that they give him daily reports via the phone in 30 seconds or less. He doesn't read any report, and doesn't even check his email.

Billionaire Mark Cuban, for his part, doesn't use a cell phone. He prefers to use a Blackberry because, he says, "it allows me to keep a track record of every conversation."

In the end, technologies will increasingly become a pervasive part of our lives, so unless we begin to learn how to use them strategically, we might find our personal productivity diminishing. In the long run, this may have a negative, even damaging, impact on our career prospects.

## 34 Everybody Will Be Naked

In the New Economy, nobody can hide anymore. Everybody's productivity will be in full view. In short, everybody will be "naked."

In other words, income will be solely determined by outcome -- that is, by what you actually produce.

To put it more bluntly, it will be useless to show up at the office. Rather than show up, you have to show results.

A new book by Cali Ressler and Jody Thomson drives this point home:  
[http://www.culturerx.com/downloads/ROWE\\_Overview.pdf](http://www.culturerx.com/downloads/ROWE_Overview.pdf)

This is a RADICAL change in how people normally view "work."

Indeed, in the past, all you had to do was compete for a job, get it, and then do whatever was on your job description. You didn't have to "manage yourself" since that was, essentially, the job of your boss.

Today, however, there are no bosses. You are your own boss, and you have to manage your own productivity, whether you're a receptionist or a VP of marketing.

All employees, in effect, have to learn to operate as "business units of one."

Ressler and Thomson, in their book, reveal an unconscious formula that most corporations seem to operate under:

Time + Physical Presence = Results

That equation might have been true in the previous era where "labor" did not know much, and where the central management paradigm was "command and control." Sort of like an army. Workers were soldiers who MUST execute the procedures as written by higher-ups.

Today, however, there are more and more knowledge workers who work with their brains, not their hands. And creativity is a funny thing: it follows its own schedule.

For instance, you can't tell a programmer or a marketing planner to be creative next Monday morning at 9:00 AM sharp. All an employer can do is create the right conditions for such talented professionals to be creative.

Beyond the time aspect, there is also the space aspect. Forcing workers to show up at the SAME place, every day, five days a week, is NOT a recipe for boosting creativity.

So what will replace the Time + Physical Presence = Results formula?

Mind X Passion X Talent X Values X Desire to serve = Business Outcome = Personal Income

I will write more about that.

## 35 Aligning Belief With Desire is The Key to Success

If there's one thing that stops a great number of people from realizing their dream career (or anything else worthwhile in life), it is lack of belief in themselves.

But to understand how this works, it's important to look at the "technical" details.

Let's take the example of a person who wants to become a millionaire. His DESIRE is to become a millionaire. However, whether he becomes a millionaire or not depends on his BELIEF. To be more specific, it depends on whether he believes himself to be a millionaire.

In other words, who he believes himself to be is the "stuff" with which he has to work in order to shape himself into a millionaire. If he doesn't have the "stuff", he simply cannot become a millionaire, in the same way that a sculptor, no matter how talented, cannot create a work of art without clay to work with.

In the example above, a man may DESIRE to become a millionaire, but if his BELIEF about himself is not aligned with this DESIRE, then it is simply impossible for him ever to become a millionaire.

This is not an unproven metaphysical technique or some fancy doctrine. It has been proven time and again by greatly successful people, such as IBM founder Thomas Watson.

He always advised his people to imagine the ideal person they wanted to become five years from now, and to start TODAY to think, speak, act and even get dressed like that ideal person.

This sounds easy enough, yet it is not. It requires that you "erase" your personal history and start to make radical changes in the way you think, act and behave. Only by changing the way you think, act and behave will your self-concept begin to align with your desire. You will then be able to become the person you want to be.

## 36 Will "Romantic" Careers Be The Norm in The Future?

Before the 12th century in Europe, love was not a romantic thing. People got married for socioeconomic reasons. Today, however, marriages are mostly based on love rather than other considerations (although, of course, there are gold diggers but they are in the minority).

A career is not that different from a marriage: people want the security and the stability without the feeling of bondage.

Although some people do succeed in finding work that fulfills their heart, challenges their mind and provides fair compensation, it seems that for the overwhelming majority of people, their job is mostly an "unhappy marriage" or an unfulfilling relationship. But why then would they stay if they're unhappy? Perhaps for the same reason a (usually female) spouse would, in the old days, stay in a loveless marriage: for stability and security.

Given the war for talent, greater job information accessibility, the rise of talent as a significant factor of production and people's growing awareness that work should be more than just "work," will we see the emergence of "romantic" careers -- that is, careers based on what one truly loves to do?

Will "romantic" careers replace purely pecuniary or utilitarian careers in the same way that love-based marriages and relationships have replaced, since the 12th century, utilitarian marriages based on securing socioeconomic advantage and security?

My feeling is that at first, only a few people will dare to dream of a career based on their passion and talent. As they dream about this seemingly ideal career, they will begin to reshape -- often unconsciously -- the way they view life, society and their own role in it as a unique, creative individual.

Over time, they will begin to notice things that they hadn't noticed before, and they will embark on the path of self-discovery and self-empowerment. Inevitably, they will find that there is a special place for them in this world, a place where their talent meets the needs of the world. Then there will be a decisive, joyful and exhilarating moment when they suddenly realize who they truly are -- spiritual beings who have come forth on this planet to have an amazing life experience.

This intense and liberating feeling, as ecstatic as it may sound, will feel quite familiar to them and it is not surprising: as children, we all felt the flowing through us of this natural, boundless joy in living, learning and laughing.

As more and more people begin to connect to one another through Facebook or LinkedIn or other social networking sites, they will support one another and engage collectively in a process that will transform the world of work as we know it. Capitalism will soon be reformed by what I call "talentism," that is, the rising awareness that we, as talented human beings capable of love and passion and growth, are more than just mere human resources. We are resourceful humans who can unleash our creative powers and change the world.

However, this kind of romantic career will only happen if we have the courage to choose a line of work where we can feel energy, passion and inspiration flow through us with ease and grace. When that happens, we will not only experience a more authentic career worth loving, but we will also relive a second childhood.

## 37 How Do You Feel About Your Career?

In June 2000, I felt incredibly "not good" about my job working as a successful account manager for a training firm. Even though my employer was voted as one of the 50 best managed private firms in Canada, and I was surrounded by wonderful coworkers and supported by the best boss I ever had, I intuitively felt, without being able to explain it, that I was not in my "right" place.

I say "not good" because I really did not feel bad at all. It was the best job I ever had, period. Yet, something was sorely missing. My guts told me through mysterious vibrations that cannot be described by words, that I was simply not where I wanted to be. Something deep inside of me wanted something "different" although at the time, I was supremely incapable of articulating what that "different" thing was.

So I handed in my resignation and realized shortly thereafter, with an appropriate sense of panic, that I had just committed what sane and rational people would refer to as "career suicide"!

To make a long story short, I embarked upon an exciting journey to find my true self. It took me 5 years to figure out what I truly wanted to become (a creative knowledge writer!), but I thoroughly enjoyed those 5 years of joyful exploration.

What I've learned is that one's inner guidance system (which is mostly emotional) cannot fail. This is why I ask the question, "How do you feel about your career?"

If you wish to probe your own feelings about your work, these words could be helpful in identifying your emotional states: worried, bored, hopeful, optimistic, overwhelmed, content, frustrated, discouraged, angry, enthusiastic, happy, eager, passionate, joyous, empowered.

I would be interested to know how you feel and why you feel as you do, and can offer some answers to your questions if you wish.

This "emotional exploration" exercise is helpful whether you share your findings with others (significant other, friends, relatives, coworkers, etc.) or not. It's just a way to know yourself better, especially at the emotional level where happiness is either present or not.

In our scientifically based society, we tend to think that objectivity is the best guide when it comes to evaluating the health of a career. Specifically, we tend to think that as long as one's career is moving forward (in terms of financial compensation or professional competency or managerial responsibilities), then everything is alright.

We might have forgotten that happiness -- including happiness at work -- is determined by how we feel inside, not by what surrounds us on the outside.

## **38 A Best-Seller is a Bet-Seller!**

Every best-seller, no matter how good the book or the author, is just a bet-seller.

In other words, the author of a non-fiction book is only trying to sell you a bet. He or she is trying to convince you that the ideas it contains will make you happy, healthy or wealthy. Some even promise all three in the same book.

Nevertheless, they don't guarantee success. So when you buy a book, you're basically betting \$30 to \$50 that the book will have a positive impact on your life.

However, this kind of "gambling" is quite unlike playing the roulette in Las Vegas where the odds are the same no matter who the gambler is.

In the case of a book, the odds of your life being significantly and positively improved by reading it -- in which case you would win the bet -- depend heavily on your prior knowledge, your experience, your self-discipline, your determination, your ability and agility in adopting the ideas and implementing them in your own life, etc.

In other words, the full value of the book can only be realized when you combine your personal qualities and abilities (character, determination, self-discipline, mental flexibility, etc.) with the author's ideas.

So the saying "knowledge is power" is not exactly accurate. It seems more reasonable to say that knowledge skillfully applied is power. The power to change and improve one's life or career.

Incidentally, this is why we highly recommend that you subscribe to CKN's monthly Newsletter. In addition to highlighting the major ideas contained in the articles uploaded during the past month, we also provide tips, tools and resources so you can act on the knowledge gained. Without focused action and consistent follow-up, even the best knowledge in the world cannot help one's career.

## 39 Welcome to The Olympic Economy!

A while ago, I was watching on TV the Olympics in Turin when the commentator shouted something that surprised me and that I'll never forget. An Olympic skier was speeding downhill when he suddenly skidded on a curve.

The commentator said: "Oh my God, he wasted so much time -- a whole second!"

I think the new increasingly connected global economy will be that intense. Every second will count. This is more or less the message that Thomas Friedman delivered in his book *The World is Flat - A Brief History of The 21st Century* (well, "brief" is a relative term because the book is actually 469 pages long!).

Friedman could have used another title for his book: "Welcome to The Olympic Economy. Let The Games Begin!"

The point is, we live in a truly global economy where any knowledge worker on the planet can compete directly against any other knowledge worker.

The remedy, Friedman says, is to constantly upgrade your skills and learn new ones.

The problem, of course, is that companies only train employees to become better at their job. The skills acquired may or may not be useful from a career standpoint. For example, employers will rarely teach employees how to network, negotiate, or anything that can increase the worker's career options, mobility or -- God forbid -- bargaining power.

It would be like a husband teaching his wife the art of seduction!

I fear that unless people wake up to the new reality of a global economy, they will not take the appropriate actions to equip themselves with the very best knowledge and skills in order to succeed in the new intensely competitive job marketplace.

We'll do our best to keep you up to date on the latest developments so you can prepare and perhaps brace yourself for the new career challenges ahead.

## 40 Finding One's Ideal Career is Tough but Possible

A Vice President who has 15 years of corporate experience asked a very blunt and courageous question on LinkedIn Answers, a free service offered by LinkedIn.com:

What should I be doing in my future?

Here's the answer I wrote:

The "ideal" career is one where you use your talent doing work you are passionate about, while being well paid and feeling that your work is aligned with your values.

"Ideal" here means "ID (identity) + Deal."

Identity comes from knowing what you are passionate about, what your unique talent is, and what your values are. These three elements must be packaged into a solution that responds to a need in the world. Only then can you create a win-win deal, so that as you perform a service, you can get paid fairly in return.

It's great that you're asking such an honest question. Many people prefer not to ask such a question, and bury themselves in their work without knowing exactly where they're going.

I'm actually teaching a workshop called "My Ideal Career". Let me know if you'd like a summary report of that workshop.

Good luck!

So far, I've provided over 1,000 answers to people on Yahoo! Answers and 250 answers to users of LinkedIn Answers. Most of my career answers -- like the one above -- seem to hit a chord with people.

In particular, people really like the framework that I give them so they can design an "ideal" career. This Ideal Career Framework (ICF), which describes the four fundamental elements of a great career (passion, talent, need and meaning), is simply the crystallization of nearly a decade of research and synthesis. During that time I kept busy by reading hundreds of books on psychology, philosophy, spirituality, management, business, capitalism, economics, futurism and technology. Translation: I didn't have much of a social life! :-)

However, it was worth it because the resulting framework can really help people to visualize what their ideal career would look like, and then to design an action plan in order to develop this fabulous career.

This sounds great, yet there's a catch: the ICF is not about finding a job or polishing one's resume or getting into fields where the salary is high. One's ideal career is not about money, status, prestige, or any external sources of motivation.

Your ideal career is really about who you truly are -- inside. Once you find out who you truly are, life becomes an adventure. Work becomes a joy and a blessing every day. You will sing when you take your shower in the morning, you will sing while commuting or driving to work, and you will sing at the office.

In fact, although your coworkers are glad that you are happy, they will ask you to stop singing because it disturbs their concentration. You will look at them with overflowing love and heartfelt compassion, and tell them: "I love my work and I love you guys! I'm here for you if you need me for anything!"

In the end, life is short. It should be sweet. It should be a dream come true. However, your dream won't come true by itself. It requires work. It requires belief. It requires focus.

To make it easier for you to find your ideal career, I've decided to release for free a special report on the Ideal Career Framework. Just ask for it by writing to me at [peter@careerknowledge.net](mailto:peter@careerknowledge.net). This report will open your eyes to the very real possibility that you can have an amazing career. Once you've gained this important awareness, your life will never be the same.

To your success!

Peter

## 41 Introduction

Dear (your lovely name here),

I'm so glad you're here. We need to talk. (Don't worry, you're not in trouble! And I sure hope I'm not!)

We need to talk about YOUR amazing career.

But first, do you care about your career? A career is basically what you do 8 hours a day, five days a week, for about 40 years. A career will also bring you more than a million dollars.

If you don't care about your career, then you just have a job. Nothing wrong with that. A job pays the bills and is the responsible thing to do.

But a career is something quite different. Did you notice that the first 4 letters of "career" is "care"?

Therefore, a career is something to care about, nurture and grow. Okay, enough Oprah talk.

My brother Joe and I are tough (yet sensitive) guys who created this Career Knowledge portal with a clear mission in mind: to empower you.

Ultimately, we want you to discover your unique talent, develop it, turn it into a high-powered career and make a lot of money!

(Next, we want you to invest some of your money into the Career Knowledge portal so we can scale up and beat Google. Just kidding. Just want to scare them a little.)

Bottom line: we are here for you. But are you there for your career? We sure hope so.

Your amazing career will bring you wealth, prestige, self-esteem – even a girlfriend! (Or all the shoes and jewelry you want, if you're a woman!).

If you're all pumped up, now is a good time to bookmark this site. Go ahead, do it. There you go, now you're ready to kick... posteriors.

Finally, congratulations for being on this site. You've come to the right place. Together, we'll work hard and play hard so you can build the amazing career you totally deserve.

To your success!

Peter

## **42 Welcome to PowerKnowledge.net!**

Knowledge is power. We all have this power within to dream and to desire a better life. And desire becomes destiny in our moment of decision.

Make the decision today to bookmark this site for this is the place where a never-ending stream of powerful and practical knowledge will flow into your mind, and as you act upon this knowledge, wealth -- in all of its forms -- will flow into your life.

An excellent way to get started is to browse through some of the site's most popular articles below. Come back as often as possible to read new articles added every day and benefit from the experience, knowledge, wisdom and insights being shared. Best of all, it's all FREE!

## 43 Secret For Achieving Excellence

By Peter Nguyen - Jul 4, 2008

If you took a piece of paper and folded it, its thickness would go from 0.1 mm to 0.2 mm.

If you repeated this process of folding 23 times, then the "thickness" of the resulting paper would exceed the height of the Empire State Building in New York!

Don't believe me? Do the math yourself. The ESB is 1260 feet high (remember that a foot is 12 inches, and an inch is 25.4 mm).

That is truly the secret of excellence in anything. You've got to identify the most important thing to practice, and then practice that very thing every day.

The thing that is compounding exponentially -- as in the case of the paper's thickness in the example above -- is your mind. To be more specific, your mind develops, at an exponential rate, distinctions that enable you to make sharper and sharper evaluations. Tony Robbins talks about those distinctions in his book *Awaken the Giant Within*.

This is why multitasking, which afflicts almost all white-collar jobs, is not a good thing. Using our paper-folding example, multitasking is like folding once or twice 20 or 30 sheets of paper every day. Your career cannot advance or make progress that way.

The only way your career or your business will grow **EXPONENTIALLY** is if you **FOCUS** on doing only one thing, and keep doing it **EVERY DAY**.

Yanik Silver, the highly successful (and awesomely innovative) Internet guru, advises people to do just one thing and make it a huge success before moving on to the next thing.

It's important to carefully choose the **ONE THING** that you practice daily. Don't try something too complicated, or try something too easy. The one thing you choose to do, should challenge you enough, yet be feasible.

The secret to striking a delicate balance between what is challenging and feasible, is revealed in the book *Flow - The Psychology of Optimal Experience*.

Basically, if you try something that is **TOO** challenging, you will be stressed. If you try something that is **TOO** easy, you will be bored (and that's when your mind stop growing; it stops creating the distinctions mentioned above).

Take my case, for example. If, two years ago, I had tried to write a book on "success secrets," it would have been extremely hard. I've never written a book before in my whole life.

Instead, I decided to start a blog called Real-Time Success Secrets. Writing a few paragraphs a day

sounds more feasible, although it is challenging of course.

Today, there are 829 posts written, and I only need to package all that stuff into a book to sell on Lulu.com.

Same story with my LinkedIn User Manual. It has 449 posts, and could easily become a book of 449 pages.

The best part is not even the amount of work you can accomplish by focusing on doing only ONE THING. It's the ease and grace that comes from such focused practice.

For example, many of my posts today come from my recording my voice using an MP3 recorder as I walk outside (sometimes in a park) and enjoy the nice weather.

So blogging is definitely my thing. What is YOUR thing? What do you love to practice every day?

Unless you know the ONE THING that you like or love to practice EVERY DAY, you cannot possibly become the best in your field. Without becoming the best, it is not possible to earn the best income.

But beyond the money aspect, not striving to become the best at one thing will deprive you of happiness.

Indeed, it is happiness that brings about success. Not the other way around.

If you could find the ONE THING that you're happy doing EVERY DAY and that you love to practice EVERY DAY, your life will be transformed. I guarantee it.

The mistake most people make is to "do things" instead of "practicing one thing."

Of course, when I say "practice one thing," I mean focus all your efforts and mental energy on accomplishing one specific result. There may be many things that you do to support you in that goal. But you have to be crystal clear about the ONE result that you strive to achieve.

## 44 What is Failure?

By Peter Nguyen - Jun 20, 2008

Someone asked this interesting question on LinkedIn Answers. I thought I'd share my answer with you.

Failure - An important factor to build success?

Failure is part of success, and certainly makes life more interesting. Indeed, most people will admit that they have learned more from failure than from success.

The concept of "failure" itself might be misleading, since it has a negative connotation and is something that most people try to avoid. This avoidance limits the richness of experience that life offers.

Men, for obvious cultural reasons, are more "afraid" of failure than women. The male ego has something to do with it, but it would be inaccurate to blame men for having this ego since it arises in a culture that overvalues performance -- often at the expense of authentic experience.

Women, for reasons that I have not yet fully understood, value experience more than men. They are willing to step outside the familiar path in order to experience life. However, I believe both experience and performance are possible and lead to a rich life.

I mean "performance" in the sense that we make progress in controlling ourselves and achieving self-mastery. Not performance in the sense of satisfying some external or societal standard, and winning medals or awards as a result.

For example, it is possible for a person to "fail" in his career or business, yet this apparent failure gives him a great opportunity to evolve by understanding more things about himself, his life and his ultimate purpose on Earth. Indeed, nothing starts a serious reflection and serious self-examination than failure.

Some people need to have a serious medical crisis before they sit down and think seriously about their lives. Others only require a certain non-threatening illness to halt the mindless momentum of their hectic career, and begin the process of self-examination and contemplative inquiry.

In most cases, it is quite useful to adopt the following attitude toward failure: "Oh, I now have the opportunity to explore another dimension of life and of myself! Great!"

Those who take advantage of such opportunities for meditation and for re-examining the meaning and purpose of their lives, often re-emerge into society with a powerful sense of alignment with who they truly are. It is as if they were born again, and were given a second chance at life. Many such people are destined to become teachers, for they have gone through the

experience and can speak about it with credibility.

But back to the concept of "failure." At the mere thought of possible failure, many people recoil and take the beaten and familiar path -- they seek security instead of experience and adventure. The ultimate success might be to realize that failure doesn't exist in reality, and is only a concept we have been conditioned to focus on in our society and culture. A second illusion is the fear of failure, and this fear often paralyzes people who otherwise might have expressed or exercised their natural talents.

Let's not forget that even Pablo Picasso, the great artist, feared how the world would react to his first cubist painting, *Les Femmes d'Alger*. He hid that painting in a closet for two years before finally showing it.

Indeed, every person is engaged on a personal path of evolution, and cannot fail. If he is moving forward on that path, he is then evolving. If not, then he needs time to reflect and absorb earlier lessons and experiences. In either cases, he is not failing at all. He is simply deciding, consciously or subconsciously, to evolve on his own timetable, without comparing himself to others at the material level.

It is useful to remember that life is a school and that the same lesson, in different yet fundamentally similar forms, will keep coming to us until we absorb and master the lesson. This is necessary for our own personal growth and evolution. Yet there is no "failure" at all. Life is a process of self-perfection, and we are already perfect on the spiritual plane. Our "higher self" is already perfect. It's just that in this physical life, we have the extraordinary opportunity to taste and experience this exquisite process of perfecting ourselves.

## 45 Find the Seed of Wealth Within You

By Peter Nguyen - Jun 9, 2008

People seeking financial wealth and freedom often -- and I mean, most of the time! -- think that wealth is something external that is "out there" and so, they venture forth into the world to seek "opportunities."

But the outer world is only a reflection of the inner world. If you feel wealthy inside, and are deeply grateful for the (amazing) wealth that you ALREADY possess, there will be more wealth in your life. Opportunities will come to you effortlessly, as if by magic.

Concretely, it's important to search within and find, within oneself, the "seed of wealth."

This seed could be your irrepressible passion for something (what Richard Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute*, calls your "field of fascination"). For instance, some are passionate about cars, others are passionate about jewelry, yet others are passionate about graphic design or interior design or, in my case, calligraphy (Western calligraphy).

Your seed of wealth could also be a talent that you have. Read Tom Rath's *Strengths Finder 2.0* book, to find your five top talents. Then, make them work together synergistically to create your "super-talent."

Also, your seed of wealth could be a type of client that you feel a really, really, really great connection to, and want to work with absolutely. I feel a strong connection to graphic designers because I like the way they think. They always try to make the world a more beautiful place. Being a calligrapher, I also understand some of their visual language.

I can't really say whether your seed of wealth is about your passion, your talent or your connection to a certain kind of people, but I DO know that whatever it is, this seed of wealth lies within you.

But it is hidden. You cannot easily find it. Sometimes, people find it by accident but then ignore it, dismissing it as just some seed. Of course, they don't understand that great things grow and flourish from a single seed! They don't understand that with the exception of the lottery, all wealth is first created in a very small way, but that it grows effortlessly and in a compounding fashion, like the compound interest on a savings bank account.

The tragedy is that most people go out in the world looking for wealth while completely ignoring their major source of wealth, which lies within.

By careful introspection, one can find this seed of wealth within, and begin the exciting process of cultivating this seed until one becomes extremely rich.

If you are currently working as an employee, you can be sure that a person, a long time ago, did find his or her seed of wealth. That's how your employing organization was born.

There's nothing wrong with being an employee while you are searching for your own seed of wealth, because you can learn from your employer how business is built, developed, refined. Everything that you learn as an employee, will be useful to you as an entrepreneur -- should you choose to become one later on.

Sometimes, it can be greatly beneficial to work for free for an entrepreneur that you believe will make it big. This way, you learn from the entrepreneur how to align with your true self -- this alignment is where incredible power is found and unleashed.

In fact, Robert Kiyosaki did precisely that. In his formative years, he worked in Hawaii as a volunteer for Anthony Robbins, and learned as much as he could from the famous personal development guru.

Once you've found your seed of wealth, the next step will be to "plant" it in a fertile environment where it can grow.

## 46 Success Comes From Systems!

By Peter Nguyen - May 22, 2008

I wrote previously that Wealth Comes From Systems but actually, success also comes from systems. Success in any of the following key areas of life:

- \* health
- \* career
- \* finances
- \* love relationships
- \* social life
- \* spirituality
- \* family

Remember, a system is simply something that works well automatically. The "automaticity" can be achieved through various means, like habits, social expectations, norms, etc.

Take health, for example. Studies have shown that if your friends are obese, chances are that you will be obese too. It's a system that "works well": your friends eat a lot, so you don't feel any guilt to eat a lot too.

Same with finances. If most of your friends are focused on financial freedom (e.g. they are starting their own businesses), then you are likely to launch your own business too. This is a proven fact: research has shown that if a person knows someone who is a successful entrepreneur, she is TWICE as likely to launch a business.

Why? Because she can see, in her entrepreneur friend, concrete evidence that it CAN be done, so she will willingly do it also.

If you hang around with employees who complain all the time about how bad or boring their job is, but have no intention to quit, you will be the same. You will all wallow in a sea of self-pity and not raise a finger to change the situation. This is why friends must be chosen carefully.

By the way, this is why Napoleon Hill, in his best-selling book Think and Grow Rich, recommends that people start a Mastermind Group where members, carefully chosen for their success orientation and attitude, will meet once a month and discuss their progress and success strategies. This "meeting" is a system in itself!

Even in one's love life, there IS a way to create a system that multiplies opportunities to meet members of the opposite sex. I have developed one such highly sophisticated system where I get to meet the most beautiful and gorgeous women you can imagine, but I'm not going to tell you because it's my trade secret. :-)

Just kidding, I will write about it soon.

My point is that in these 7 areas of life, a system is needed to help you to succeed. Sure, you can persevere and exert great personal effort, but hey, let's face it: we do have a brain, so we can use our brain to create systems that work for us, right?

The bottom line is that pursuing success is something to seriously think about, and here are some of the levels at which people think:

1. Technology or System
2. Strategy
3. Ability
4. Effort
5. Luck

As you go down the list, the system (yours or other people's) becomes much less effective and reliable.

For instance, if you want success in your finances and you buy lottery tickets every week, well, that's LUCK (the last level).

Better to stop dreaming about winning the lottery, and start working hard (EFFORT).

But even people who work hard, don't achieve financial nirvana. They have to "graduate" to the next level and build their abilities (business, marketing, sales, finance, etc.).

The next higher level is strategies, where you can devise your own or shadow (reverse engineer) the strategies of someone who is successful.

The last level is where you totally understand, at the global and local levels, how things and people feel, work and behave, so you're able to create systems that effortlessly create wealth for yourself even while you're sleeping. This is my level. ;-)

This is what I refer to as the level of the Lazy Millionaire.

For instance, billionaires Warren Buffet and Bill Gates have both reached this level. Buffet, by totally mastering the principles and levers behind the capitalist system. Gates, by totally mastering the software game and waging a war of "standards" to establish Windows as the "default" operating system in 90% of computers.

In the case of Bill Gates, he intuitively understood and recognized a second system in November 1995, when he woke up one day and suddenly decided to orient all of Microsoft toward the Internet. The following years were some of the most profitable for Microsoft. This testifies to his genius.

But as human beings operating WITHOUT a system, Buffet and Gates would not have achieved the level of success that they did. Buffet admitted this himself.

Or look at Oprah Winfrey. Where would she be without the broadcast system that introduces her into the homes of people in 150 countries?

Or look at Frank, the CEO of Melaleuca who created a radically new marketing system for the company in 1985 where employees could become Marketing Executives and share in the profits created (read more about that fascinating story on Wikipedia).

One last comment about the five levels of system effectiveness (luck, effort, ability, strategy, system). Imagine that they refer to the following activities and you will immediately understand the power of systems:

- \* flying by jet
- \* driving by car
- \* riding on a bike
- \* running
- \* walking

In other words, there's a kind of "system evolution" that people go through.

Babies learn to crawl, then walk, then run. As teens, they learn how to ride a bike, then how to drive a car (God helps anyone who's on their path!).

Finally, of course, a few people reach financial mastery level and have their own corporate jet. This is the level that I wish for all readers of our site and subscribers of our Power Knowledge Newsletter.

## 47 Be Natural and You Will Win Effortlessly

By Peter Nguyen - May 7, 2008

There's a subtle difference between "normal" and "natural", and fully understanding and appreciating the difference might illuminate discussions about success in life.

An animal that lives a natural life (e.g. a lion in Africa) is winning "naturally." There are no man-made norms, so the lion doesn't have to play according to social norms. It doesn't, for instance, have to "keep up with the Joneses." It spends all of its time being itself authentically -- that is, it lives life as a magnificent lion.

Oh, before I forget, studies have shown that people prefer to earn \$50,000 per year if their neighbors earn \$25,000, rather than earn \$100,000 while their neighbors earn the same amount. I guess this shows how norms influence people's thinking.

Back to the lion. It's a magnificent animal, as are all creatures on this planet. But man is a strange creature in that we create social norms and then try to surpass those norms in order to feel successful.

Most people try to become normal (study, graduate, get a job, buy a house, get married, etc.). Few people strive to be natural.

That is, few people strive to create a lifestyle that is more aligned with who they are and the life experience they seek on Earth. This is because it takes a certain kind of spiritual training to actually believe that you can create the ideal life for yourself.

In my case, I always did what felt natural to me, so I received four standing ovations before I reached the age of 18 (for winning two literary awards and being Valedictorian twice). But it was only in my 30s that I learned how to create an ideal career for myself -- one that felt natural and is aligned with my passion, talent, values and desire to contribute to the world.

To distinguish between "succeeding the normal way" and "succeeding the natural way," I think the following analogy might be useful: a person can run around really fast and pick the fruits hanging from others' trees, and after a while, he would normally be considered a "winner" since he has more fruits in his basket than other people (who may be slower or who may just enjoy being in nature).

A second person might, on the other hand, decide to tend to his own garden and patiently grow his own fruits and vegetables. After a while, he will have more "security" than the other person, and might even produce more food to share with others.

The key is to seek to be natural, not normal. There is, of course, nothing wrong with being normal, but that is only a platform from which one can jump higher to become totally aligned with one's true self.

In other words, strive to be normal so that you don't lose in society. But strive to be natural so that you win in life.

Society, through its institutions and structures and educational systems, is quite useful in helping a child to become "normal," that is, to fit in with existing ways of learning, working and socially interacting.

But normality is only the beginning. Only by striving to become natural, can one find happiness, health and wealth.

And to become truly natural, a person has to search for his or her true self.

The true self is like a huge oil field, and finding such a treasure within will allow a person to win effortlessly and without much resistance.

## 48 Outprogramming Your Past Self

By Peter Nguyen - Apr 28, 2008

The key to success lies in developing the capacity to mentally outprogram the past self that is no longer you.

Meditation is often very powerful in deprogramming oneself in order to become a new, better person.

That's because meditation, when done properly for 10-20 minutes per day, empties the mind of thoughts. You can actually count the number of thoughts you have per second (or TPS, for Thoughts Per Second).

As you reduce your TPS through practiced meditation, you'll be able to be FREE to create a new you, a new future, a new life.

I call it "deprogramming" and many authors refer to the same process, although they use different words. Anthony Robbins, in his book *Awaken the Giant Within*, for instance talks about one's life experiences, values, habitual questions and states. When you change these, you are on the path of self-transformation because they often act as hidden, yet powerful, levers and drivers of thoughts, speech and behavior.

Most people act in a certain way, or think in a certain way, because that is how they (subconsciously or consciously) programmed themselves to be.

But it is possible to deprogram oneself, or "change one's mind."

Frederick de Klerk did this, by saying yes whereas he was saying no before, and helped to end Apartheid in Africa. Gorbachev did something similar and helped to bring down the Berlin Wall.

Do you HAVE to change your mind or deprogram yourself?

It all depends on the extent to which you are currently living the life you WANT to live. If you're not getting what you want out of life, it may be a good time to examine your mental programming (your beliefs, values, identity, habitual questions, etc.).

If you ARE living the life of your dream, maybe you should write a best-seller and become insanely rich! :-)

My point is, personal transformation requires brutal honesty. And this is hard to achieve.

But once you've decided to change and create a better life for yourself, then examining critically the content of your mind (and indeed your mental "programming" from your parents, culture, education, media, etc.) in order to keep the good ideas, thoughts, and beliefs -- and rejecting the rest -- may be

the most important thing you do to ensure your wealth, success and happiness in this life.

## 49 Only Two Follies, Fears And Regrets

By Peter Nguyen - Apr 21, 2008

I think there are only two follies: fears about the future, and regrets about the past (whether these are regrets about what we did or did not do).

There is so much possibility in the present moment, and this present moment is so vast when one's consciousness is truly free of past and future.

The (spiritual) trick is to realize that this works like a vicious (or virtuous) cycle: the more one feels fear or regret, the less one is grounded in the present moment where true power lies. Therefore, the more likely one is to do things that will generate more regrets in the future.

By focusing, slowly at first, in the present moment and making decisions right here and right now, one can free oneself from past and future and "live happily ever after in the present moment."

Of course, this is easier said than done because we live in society where other people will constantly try to gain control of our minds through advertising, government propaganda, the news, even self-oriented parental influences and self-interested peer influences.

It would, in fact, be easier to "focus on the present moment" if one were to live alone on an island, protected from the attempts of other people to influence one's mind.

However, it is possible, through spiritual and psychological training, for one's mind to become impenetrable to others' influences and attempts at control.

Indeed, one can train oneself to become the spiritual equivalent of a Steven Seagal - that is, an 8th-Dan aikido master - who can gently subdue any incoming external disturbance and quiet it down into peaceful harmony.

Fears and regrets, in the end, are just disturbances that a spiritually trained person can, with relative ease, control by removing awareness from them.

# 50 Conquer Your Fear to Realize Your Dream

By Peter Nguyen - Apr 5, 2008

Many people talk about the fear of public speaking or the fear of failure as obstacles in the pursuit of success, but I think that ultimately, we fear only one thing: the judgment of other people.

This is in fact why people fear public speaking: the judgment of a live audience is instantaneous and direct.

It's why a teenage boy is afraid of asking a pretty girl out: he's afraid of rejection, that is, of being judged by the girl as being "not good enough" for her.

It's why people are afraid of selling: they run the risk of being rejected by potential clients, that is, of being judged as "not offering enough quality or value."

The funny thing is that every person is a blend of soul and ego, so the more we focus on our fears, the bigger the ego grows, and since the ego is the part of ourselves which feels the fear, this leads to a vicious cycle.

Often, it will take a while and certainly much self-training under the guidance of a mentor or coach in order to get out of this vicious cycle (where perceived fear leads to a focus on one's ego, which feels more fear and fuels its growth, and so on). But once a person has seen the truth, she is liberated permanently from this bondage to fear.

Hence, the saying "the truth shall set you free."

Since living in society necessarily means living within "judgmental distance" of many people, what we seek ultimately is freedom from other people's judgment. What we fail to realize, however, is that it is not so much other people judging us, but our THINKING that other people are judging us.

Once we fully understand this counterintuitive spiritual insight, we are then free to do anything in life with regards to our experience of it. We no longer fear anyone nor anything for we know that they all exist in our consciousness, which we totally control.

The proof of this is that when we sleep, all people and events and fears and doubts become "dead." They no longer exist. In other words, they only existed through the "grace" of our consciousness.

Your consciousness is like a flashlight: whatever it focuses on, becomes perceivable to your senses and becomes real to you.

The cosmic fact is that we are truly, in every moment, the creator of our own unique life experience.

All it takes, then, to have a magnificent life of limitless growth is a certain spiritual training of the mind.

All forms of spiritual training contain the following tenet: "Understanding leads to power."

If you truly understand that you have spiritual power over your physical life experience, nothing and no one can possibly stand in your way. In such an enlightened state of mind, making 50 million dollars takes about as much effort as making one million dollars.

Both achievements occur at different scales, but the mental trick, so to speak, is the same.

The specific amount of money being made is not nearly as important as the fact that you have understood something incredibly important in life: Imagination is the power of the spirit over the possibilities of things.

But you can't imagine anything if you proceed from a position where you are afraid of other people's judgment. This is why it is said that freedom is the basis for life. Without this freedom from others, one cannot imagine creatively or create new things. Indeed, the way to AVOID being judged by others is to do... ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. (Watching TV and going through the same routine every day at the office are equivalents of doing nothing new in life).

On the other hand, people who constantly try new ideas and do new things, will continually gain possession of their spirit and will have absolutely NO FEAR of anything or anyone. These are people who have achieved a "limitless" state of mind and they are powerful indeed.

This is why it is said that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Indeed, fear is the only enemy in life. Once you've mastered it, you can create heaven on Earth -- that is, you can create your own little heaven in your own life experience.

# 51 Creative Will Leads to Happiness and Prosperity

By Peter Nguyen - Apr 4, 2008

If human beings are endowed with "free will," then how come most people -- by their own admission -- do not achieve success or happiness in life? Why is it that only one person out of 20 will ever achieve financial independence? Here is the answer that most human beings intuitively know but subconsciously ignore: Free will leads to happiness, wealth and peace only if it is first transformed into creative will.

However, this conversion process is not easy. It takes a great deal of self-discipline, knowledge, determination and focus. That's a lot of work.

So rather than train ourselves to shape our free will into creative will, we much prefer to just turn on the TV set and let someone else direct (or, more accurately, misdirect) our free will.

We fail to understand that free will is a necessary ingredient of happiness and success, but not a sufficient one.

Take free speech, for example. It is a necessary condition for democracy, but it is not a sufficient condition to guarantee "power of the people by the people."

Similarly, free will is a necessary condition but not a sufficient one to guarantee "passion, power and prosperity of the person by the person."

Here's another surprising revelation: in the same way that free speech is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and in many other democratic nations, free will is a fundamental right guaranteed by the very structure of the universe. Indeed, nobody can force you to want anything that you do not want or can force you to experience something that you do not want to experience.

The discovery of one's free and sovereign will is perhaps the one event that is found in the biography of all great men and women throughout history.

The presence of this free will and one's power to shape it into a creative will, constitute the essential lesson to be learned from all authors of personal development books from David Schwartz to Napoleon Hill to Anthony Robbins.

These magnificent liberators of human potential are indeed saying: "All the wealth lies within you! Find it, unleash it and master it, and you will live like a god creating his own sublime Heaven on Earth!"

The ultimate lesson is: Without freedom of thought, one cannot have freedom of action. With freedom of thought, one can be, do and have anything.

Here's a concrete, irrefutable example of the power of free will converted into creative will: J.K. Rowling. She became a billionaire (as in \$1,000,000,000) by developing and shaping her free will into creative will, and the expression of that (artful and disciplined) creative will is the Harry Potter series.

But what does "creative will" mean exactly? And most importantly, where can you buy it?

Well, that's the challenge right there. You CANNOT buy it or acquire it from any external source.

Every person has a latent creative will inside, and this creative will must be encouraged to express itself.

Wayne Dyer famously said: "Don't die with your music still inside of you."

Another wise person wrote centuries ago: "The only tragedy is man unexpressed." (Of course, "man" is used here in the generic sense and includes women too).

In other words, the challenge for human beings is to encourage, enable and empower the expression of their creative will.

Some people might argue that it's difficult to develop this inner creativity because we live in a materialistic culture where people are driven to consume value rather than produce value.

But such thinking is almost an excuse because ultimately, every person is totally responsible for his/her own happiness, wealth and peace in life.

The good news is that being creative is actually a lot of fun. It only takes a slight shift in one's mindset.

Indeed, we only have to think of ourselves as "creators" rather than "consumers."

In the end, as we create more things or ideas or experiences every day, we inevitably realize that we are indeed creating our very lives -- one moment at a time. We realize, with a pleasant recognition of what we somehow always knew, that we are indeed the authors and creators of our own reality!

## 52 Are You King or Pawn?

By Peter Nguyen - Mar 15, 2008

A little known secret is that I have an army of over 1,000 stellar employees worldwide working for me.

An even lesser known secret is that YOU, too, have such an army of 1,000 amazing employees working for you.

Most people are not aware of this totally awesome and insane fact, and this is why they struggle in life. They don't understand that there are over 1,000 talented researchers and consultants working FOR them.

Another secret, perhaps more frightening, is that there are 1,000,000 people working AGAINST you. Every day, they plan and plot and conspire to make you FORGET about your goals and especially forget about your sovereign power over yourself, your life, your destiny.

Once again, most people are NOT aware of the 1,000,000+ people who are working every day to rob them of their focus and power.

In other words, 95% of people don't know WHO is working FOR them and WHO is working AGAINST THEM.

The strange thing is that a person who is working FOR me, could be working AGAINST you. And vice versa: someone who is working FOR you, could be working AGAINST me.

Okay, I think I've created enough suspense so let me explain what I mean before you go bonkers!

The 1,000 employees who work for me are authors. They write books (NOT newspapers or magazines).

They did research for YEARS and then spent at least one year putting down on paper the BEST of their research. In most cases, their books are so well written and organized that if given the choice between spending an evening TALKING to them or spending an evening READING their books, I would choose the latter (no offense to their personal charm and charisma, of course). I choose to read their thoughts because their books are likely to transfer their knowledge to me much more efficiently than if I were to have a conversation with them.

Here are some of my best "employees": Peter Drucker, Mack Hanan, Anthony Robbins, Robert Allen, Robert Kiyosaki, Tom Peters, Shoshana Zuboff, Edward de Bono, Adrian Slywotzky, James Martin, Tim Sanders, Baltasar Gracian, Richard Worzel, Richard Samson, Mihaly (author of Flow - the psychology of optimal experience), Robert Greene, Wayne Dyer, Ray Kurzweil, Steven Pinker, Brian Tracy, Tom Hopkins, David Schwartz, Michael Cunningham, Larry Smith, Don Tapscott, Jay Abraham, Rich Schefren, Abraham-Hicks, Marianne Williamson, Sun Tzu, George Friedman, etc.

These people are truly the BEST in their field. (Hey, I only "hire" the best!).

In my subjective, private universe, they come to me and kneel down while uttering, with deep respect and reverence: "Super Peter, my sovereign lord! I have diligently worked hard over the last few years to compress the best of my knowledge into a book that I hereby offer for consideration by your sacred consciousness. Please accept my humble offering which I hope can help you realize your dream of mastering the universe."

The bottom line is aptly summarized by a Spanish proverb: "After the game of life is over, both the king and the pawn return to the same box."

In other words, you can CHOOSE to be a king or a pawn in this life. What you choose to be matters a great deal to you, for your supreme choice will preemptively and programmatically DETERMINE the kind of life you will have.

Whether you choose to be a wealthy and powerful king, or a struggling and powerless pawn, is totally up to you. Nobody can make that choice for you.

Even if my closest friends or dearest relatives chose to be mere pawns, there is nothing I can do for them. I can only offer the opportunity to make a choice, and clarify for them the escalatory destiny that inevitably comes from such a choice. ("Escalatory" in the sense that once you make a step in one direction, it will get easier and easier to "slide" down that path. In other words, if you choose to be king, you will find it easier and easier to think, feel and act like a king. If you choose to be a powerless pawn, you will attract (by virtue of your supreme choice of who to be) more and more of the events, people and "coincidences" that will make it easier and easier to become MORE of a pawn).

Summary: Identity is Destiny.

In other words, identity (your mostly unconscious belief about whether you are a ruling king (or queen) or a submissive pawn) is more powerful than the force of gravity.

Your identity continually and relentlessly attracts to yourself all the elements (people, events, things, etc.) that will REINFORCE your chosen identity.

## 53 Become a Teacher And You Will Master Your Life

By Peter Nguyen - Mar 14, 2008

Dear Peter,

Here's my advice for you. Carry an MP3 recorder with you at all times, and record your best ideas and knowledge as they occur to you. Then, email the audio file to a \$6-an-hour transcription specialist in India so he/she can produce a PDF ebook for you.

Next, offer that ebook at \$20 to your 800+ connections on LinkedIn. Enable the first 50 buyers to get a BONUS: a 30-minute consulting session on the phone with you.

Notice that if 800 people buy your ebook at \$20, then you've made \$16,000. Through Lulu or Payloadz, that income is passive (that is, automated).

Since the generation of that income is automatic, you can spend most of your time every day just daydreaming or identifying the thoughts that are blocking you from imagining better and better things in life to experience. Indeed, you may not be aware of these thoughts, but they are present nevertheless in your conscious AND subconscious mind, and they preemptively stop you from thinking about the best things you can have and experience in life.

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The above fictitious letter which I wrote to myself, is a success secret I'd like to share with you.

Basically, the secret technique is about giving your best advice to yourself. As you write FOR yourself, you will realize that the information (the best information you have) is ALSO useful to other people.

I've been doing this for over two years with this blog. I write basically for myself, and as I focus relentlessly on "sharing" the best knowledge I have with myself, I naturally become useful to other people.

This is how I'm continually invited by people on LinkedIn: I constantly provide useful answers on LinkedIn Answers, and people write to me saying that they appreciate the knowledge and therefore would like to connect to me.

Developing and marketing one's knowledge is the EASIEST and FUNNEST way to financial freedom and true empowerment in life.

At this point, many people (and you are probably one of them) will say, "Well, Peter, I don't have much knowledge to share. What can I write about?"

First of all, let's backtrack. Let's not focus on the writing process per se. Let's take a look at how you view yourself.

Like most people, you've gone through the educational system (that's about 12 years of your life, at least) and so, you've been **CONDITIONED** to think that you know nothing, and that you're supposed to just sit there and "receive" the knowledge coming from a teacher.

So in your adult life, you have retained the same habit, except that the classroom has become your own living room (where the sofa, evidently, is much more comfortable than the wooden chairs in any classroom). Plus, you have the remote control so you feel a bit in control of what's coming to your mind.

But basically, you act like you're **STILL** a student whose mind is empty and who's waiting to be spoon fed bits and pieces of information.

The moment your entire life turns around is when you say, "Enough is enough! From now on, I will **USE** my knowledge and **TEACH** my knowledge! I will become a teacher and no longer a student!"

This is what happened to Eben Pagan, T. Harv Eker, Robert Kiyosaki and, of course, Anthony Robbins.

Indeed, the way to riches is to **TEACH**. When you teach, the most important person you are teaching is **YOURSELF**.

Teaching gives you a sort of self-confidence that is absolutely **UNMATCHED** by any other activity. It is this very self-confidence that allows you to think bold thoughts and pursue bold courses of action.

Of course, you can't switch from being a 100% student to a 100% teacher.

But you can change the mix, that is, become 95% student and 5% teacher. Then, 90% student and 10% teacher.

The worst case scenario, of course, is when a person is 0% student and 0% teacher!

This is the case with people who watch television or surf the Net (or Facebook) or shop around, without reading any non-fiction books. Magazines do not contain useful knowledge, although some business magazines contain ideas that can stimulate your thinking.

You cannot possibly be a student if you don't read books.

So without reading books or highly credible and informative blogs (like this one), you are 0% student and 0% teacher.

If this is your situation, then you know now the source of all your troubles in life.

Knowledge is indeed power, and if you're not a student who's gaining knowledge, then you go through life as a powerless person -- a victim to any circumstance coming his/her way.

By the way, this is why I created PowerKnowledge.net with my brother Joe: to empower people all

over the world by sharing the BEST knowledge that I've come across from reading over 800 books.  
And I continue to read about half a dozen books every week.

## 54 Do You Know What You Want? - Part 2

By Peter Nguyen - Mar 11, 2008

In the first part of this article (Do You Know What You Want? - Part 1), we explained that two things are required to succeed in life:

1. Find out what it is that you really, really, really want.
2. Be willing to pay the price in advance.

In this second part, let's explore further what "paying the price" means concretely.

There are several ways to "pay in advance," and money is only part of it.

For example, you can pay \$2,000 to get into a graphic design school if becoming a graphic designer is what you really want to be in life.

Or if you want to succeed in launching your own business, you might pay \$1,000 to hire the services of a business coach.

The following are non-monetary ways of ensuring that you commit to achieving your goal:

1. State your goal in a Word document and send it to all your friends and collaborators. You could also state your goal in your LinkedIn profile. This public commitment will make it harder for you to back out of your commitment. It really works as a psychological device. Without this public commitment, it would be all too easy to just change your mind when the going gets tough.
2. Agree in writing to a series of regularly scheduled activities that will bring you closer to your goal. For example, if your goal is to launch a business, then agree with two collaborators that for the next six months, you will meet once every two weeks, on a Monday evening, to discuss your individual progress in business and to solve problems together. Make sure there is a penalty if you miss a meeting, such as \$100. Once again, this mechanism ensures that you stay on track.
3. If you have a product or a service to sell, recruit a commission-only salesperson or agent. He/she will keep you on track. Be sure to provide a Reseller Kit, which is simply a document and demo samples which show to the salesperson the optimal sequence of steps leading to a sale.
4. Make an irreversible move, such as quitting your daytime job. This is a radical move so before you make it, be sure to carefully calculate your chances of success at launching a business. Although radical, this move is often very effective because by burning the bridges behind you, it focuses your mind sharply on your goal and thus you will achieve it faster.

# 55 Do You Know What You Want? - Part 1

By Peter Nguyen - Mar 6, 2008

A Texas oil billionaire once revealed the secret of his success. He said you only have to ask yourself two questions:

1. What is it that you really want?
2. Are you willing to pay the price to get it?

He mentioned that most people fail to answer the first question.

Often, it's hard to decide what we want. This might be the main reason why people don't write down their goals.

However, the process of clarifying what we really want out of life can be greatly facilitated by doing the opposite. In other words, write on a piece of paper all the things you do NOT want in your life.

Then, on the other side, write the opposite of what you do not want. That will get you started in clarifying what it is that you DO want.

For example, here are things a person might NOT want in her life:

- \* A boss
- \* Having to work 9 to 5
- \* Struggling to pay the bills every month
- \* An insensitive boyfriend
- \* Stress

Next, she turns over the page and writes the exact opposite:

- \* Be my own boss
- \* Work 1 to 5 PM every day
- \* No problem paying the bills every month
- \* A sensitive boyfriend
- \* Stress-free lifestyle

This is the trick that turned Anthony Robbins' life around. One day, in the 80s, he decided that he'd had enough bad luck in his life, so while sitting on a beach, he began to write down all the things he wanted in his life. He went on and on and on and wrote profusely!

Now, what exactly is the psychological effect of such hectic writing about what you want?

The great and mysterious effect is that your beliefs begins to align with your desires. In other words, what's hard is not knowing what you want. In Tony's case, for example, it was quite easy for him to

write out all the things he wanted.

It was easy because he had led a very difficult life, and his biography gave rise to all the desires within him. So it was not hard at all to let those desires come out. They were dying to come out!

What was hard, however, was for him to BELIEVE that he deserved what he desired. By the simple act of writing down in a notebook all the things he desired, he subconsciously told himself: "Hey, I want all these things and I sure as heck deserve them all, which is why I'm writing them all down as goals. I want all of it, and I deserve all of it."

So that's the first step toward success, wealth, fulfillment, or anything you want in life.

The second step, strangely enough, is not as difficult. In fact, if you do the first step properly, the second step -- paying the price -- is a piece of cake.

"Paying the price" is often associated with something negative, like "make a sacrifice" or "suffer pain" or "give up something you value."

That's not what is meant here. What is meant here is "giving up something of lower value so you can get something of higher value." It's not a sacrifice at all. In fact, it's a great deal!

For example, if in step 1, you decide that health is valuable to you and that you want all the benefits and joy and well-being and good feelings that come from being healthy, then "paying the price" is not hard.

Giving up potato chips is not hard, because now, in your mind, health is more important than potato chips. Giving up bad eating habits is not hard.

However, if step 1 is not done properly and you did not take the time to clearly describe, vividly, what your ideal life looks like and feels like, then step 2 will be hard.

For example, in doing step 1, a person might say: "I want financial freedom."

Yet, he fails to get into the specific details and the vivid description of how it would FEEL to have financial freedom.

He then moves to step 2, and finds that it's hard to give up job security. As a result, he is unwilling to "pay the price," hence he remains financially dependent on his job or boss or employer.

Here's the success secret that you probably never heard of and that mysteriously merges the two steps (decide what you want and pay the price) into one single masterful stroke of genius.

This secret is contained in the statement "The Price Is Write."

"Writing" here refers not only to writing down one's goals or ideal life or dream on a piece of paper. It refers to writing all of that directly into the wiring of your very being, so that you FEEL already like

the ideal person you want to be.

To be continued...

## 56 To Become Your Ideal Self, Deliver an Oscar Performance!

By Peter Nguyen - Mar 6, 2008

A few years ago, I met a young founder and CEO of a small company. He made a deep impression on me. He walked into my office and, flanked by two of his executives, he seemed to vibrate with unshakable self-confidence. There was a palpable, distinct and clear energy coming out from him, from his words, his gestures, his entire being.

Meeting him was a highly memorable and deeply instructional experience.

However, in the following years, I was never able to pinpoint exactly what I had learned from the experience. I knew I had learned something IMPORTANT, but what exactly? I couldn't tell.

I know that I saw his picture again in Montreal Magazine at McGill University's business library, and the magazine spent an entire article on him and his small company. He mentioned that one day, he would take his company public. He fascinated me so I photocopied the article.

Then, several years later, I discovered that indeed, his small company expanded so fast and he needed capital, so he did (as he said he would) take his company public. It is now listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

It was only recently that I finally realized why he made a deep impression on me, and what I had learned from him.

Even though he was running a small firm employing no more than half a dozen people and I was working for a publicly traded company at the time I met him, he seemed incredibly self-confident.

Actually, "self-confidence" is not the right word. He played a particular role very well -- the role of CEO of a large, publicly traded company. Yet, at the time, he was only president of a small firm.

In other words, he became an actor and ACTED OUT a certain role. The role of CEO of a large, publicly traded company. He did NOT play the role of president of a small firm. That was what surprised me and made me remember him.

I was expecting to meet the president of a small firm. Yet, I met the CEO of a large, publicly traded company. His "acting" was very convincing, worthy of an Oscar.

So that's the success secret I wanted to share with you today.

To become a millionaire, ACT like one right now, starting today. Think, feel, dress, talk, move, eat, etc. EXACTLY the way a millionaire would.

Of course, you can choose to be someone else and not a millionaire. A successful entrepreneur. A successful network marketing leader. A successful public speaker. A great wife. A great husband. A

great lover. A famous, prolific and brilliant intellectual (er, that would be me!). Etc.

No matter who you want to become, make sure you thoroughly research the role the way a serious actor would research the character he/she would play in a movie. Then, turn your life into a theatrical stage or movie set and start acting!

Keep acting until you BECOME the person you want to be. Be as convincing as possible. Have fun at it.

And before you know it, you will become the ideal person you have in mind. And you will find it difficult to remember a time when you were not the ideal person you now are.

## 57 How Specific Should Your Goals Be?

By Peter Nguyen - Jan 7, 2008

If goal-setting is critical to success, then how big should your goal be?

This question is worth examining because if your goal is not big enough, you will not be excited nor motivated to pursue it.

However, if your goal is too big, then you might disbelieve it. That is, a goal that is too big might cause you to doubt whether you can actually achieve it.

For instance, a person who begins to study and practice karate should not aim for the black belt. The desire to achieve that level of mastery will EASILY be negated by the doubt or disbelief that one can achieve it.

So the karate beginner should rather aim for the yellow belt, then the orange belt, then the pink belt. Wait, I think there's no pink belt! Anyways, you get my point.

Many people want financial freedom, and many even want to become millionaires.

Nothing wrong with that. It's good to THINK BIG.

However, I recommend this formula: "Think big, start small, improve fast."

By starting small, you can experience success more easily, which will increase your sense of self-confidence and build your momentum toward achieving progressively bigger goals.

The key is to balance CHALLENGE and SKILL.

In other words, look for or design challenges that you are skillful enough to tackle successfully.

If you take on a challenge that is too far above your skill level, you will be stressed.

Alternatively, if you take on a challenge that is too low for your skill level, you will be bored. Worse yet, you will not grow as a person.

This sounds like common sense and you might wonder why I'm even mentioning it. Yet, most people either set up a goal or challenge that is too far ABOVE their skill level. An entrepreneur, for instance, might set up a goal that is too big or too ambitious. This becomes a recipe for failure, which inevitably damages the person's self-esteem and self-confidence.

Employees, on the other hand, often have goals that are too unambitious (for their skill level) and therefore, they experience boredom -- which means no personal growth.

The key is to understand that success comes from succeeding. And to succeed continuously, one must:

1. Set goals that are big enough to excite and motivate you, but not so big that doubt or disbelief will enter your heart or creep into your subconscious.
2. Design tasks and challenges, in the pursuit of that goal, that are appropriately matched to your skill level. If the task or challenge is too hard, stress will be the result. If the task or challenge is too easy, boredom will be the result.

## 58 Your Personal Knowledge is Your Power

By Peter Nguyen - Jan 1, 2008

Your personal knowledge is your most valuable asset in life, so it's worth managing it carefully. Any amount of time, money or effort that you spend clarifying, developing, refining and sharing your knowledge is a wise investment.

But what is "personal knowledge" exactly?

It's the sum of everything that you know, either through life experiences, formal education or reading.

The key to converting knowledge into power is to clearly discern what it is that you know that is worth something to someone.

Personally, I've discovered that it is very difficult to determine what knowledge of mine is most valuable to people unless I share it with them and then ask: "So what do you think? Would you pay for that knowledge? How much?"

How much people will pay to receive your knowledge has less to do with the intrinsic nature of what you know, and more to do with their specific circumstances.

For example, knowledge can be compared to water, whose value depends on the circumstances: if you were a man walking across a desert, then water is of great value and you would pay a lot for it.

But if you were sitting beside a lake, and somebody passing by offered to sell you some water, then you wouldn't spend a dime on it.

So the value of your knowledge lies in the degree to which people need it and the extent to which they know what to do with it.

The funny thing is this: You cannot know how people will use your knowledge unless you first share it with them!

There are two good news. First, the Internet makes it easier than ever to share your knowledge.

Second, by sharing your knowledge, you actually increase it. For instance, every time a workshop participant asks questions, they will inevitably help the workshop leader to clarify his teachings and, in so doing, his teachings expand.

Another good reason for sharing your knowledge as fast as possible is that it helps you to separate your "descriptive" knowledge from your "procedural" knowledge.

Descriptive knowledge refers to "what is" whereas procedural knowledge refers to "how to do

something."

An encyclopedia, for instance, is full of descriptive knowledge. A grandmother's cake recipe, on the other hand, is procedural knowledge: it clearly describes the specific steps in order to produce something desirable.

The goal of a sound personal knowledge strategy is to continually develop your procedural knowledge, because that is the sort of knowledge that employers and clients are willing to pay for.

Once you develop the habit of seeking, understanding and mastering procedural knowledge, you will truly feel self-confident and be able to accomplish anything you desire. That is because, unlike most people, you will have fully grasped the meaning of the saying "knowledge is power."

## 59 Your Natural Talent Will Bring You Peace and Prosperity

By Peter Nguyen - May 10, 2008

I wrote in a previous article *Be Natural and You Will Win Effortlessly* that it's important to learn how to be natural, not just normal.

Being normal prevents you from losing in society, while being natural allows you to win in life.

The biggest difference between the two is that "normal" people compete while "natural" people create.

For instance, if you're a normal person who just graduated from university, then the normal thing to do is to compete for the best jobs offered by employers.

This is fine and dandy. After all, we have bills to pay and we also need money to buy nice things for ourselves.

But there comes a time in a person's evolution when normal is no longer good enough. We seek to become more in tune with ourselves, with who we truly are and who we want to become.

We truly are creators of our life experiences and thus, it is fair to say that we ultimately create the person we will become.

But this self-creation process must be based on an activity that feels "natural" to us.

I'm basically a writer, so I tend to leverage that talent as much as possible in order to build my career or business.

I don't feel quite as comfortable if I have to manage people or coordinate an event or deliver a workshop (although speaking in front of a group is something I enjoy more and more, as it provides me with feedback which fuels my writing career).

In other words, if you give me a blank sheet of paper, I can create prolifically using my imagination and literary skills.

But if you give me a project to manage, I would forget about it 30 minutes later. I would say something like, "What? What project? What are you talking about? By the way, would you have blank sheets of paper, I need to write something."

Other people are speakers, or healers, or analyzers, or leaders. They feel at ease when they speak, or heal others, or analyze complex issues, or lead a group of people toward the achievement of a common goal.

So our challenge is to find the one activity that feels natural to us.

The rewards for finding one's natural talent are many and quite exciting: you no longer feel that work is work anymore. It feels more like playing!

You feel like you're becoming a kid once more, and life becomes a game that you enjoy! You feel you're growing as a person while having as much fun as is legally allowed!

And you become incredibly productive at what you do.

Yet another benefit is that your rate of learning shoots through the roof, since you naturally focus on improving your performance all the time.

As a result, you naturally become the best in your field. Of course, the best get paid the best salary and attract the biggest clients.

Concretely speaking, if you're in a job that feel stressful to you, or where you feel pressured to perform, chances are that you are not in the right line of work.

Remember that normal people often feel pressure at work, while natural people feel what they call the "flow" -- a sense of well-being which comes from immersing oneself completely in the task at hand, and losing the notion of time passing.

Now if you're currently in a stressful job and you've held that job for five years, it doesn't mean that you've wasted five years of your life. Quite the contrary, you are in that job because you wanted to learn something. You wanted to experience something that would clarify your understanding of who you are and what you seek in life.

Ultimately, we all want to do something that is aligned with our natural self because only then can we find peace and prosperity and even be in a position to inspire others.

But first, we have to make sure we clearly understand the difference between "normal" and "natural."

It's likely that most of your friends and family are "normal" people. A few people will be "natural" people. They tend to be people who always do things their own way, like as if they didn't care what other people thought.

The key is to learn from such "natural" people. As you think and speak and act like they do, you will increase your chances of finding your own natural talent.

## 60 The End of Your Career

By Peter Nguyen - Apr 14, 2008

In a previous article *Your Ideal Career is About Your True Self*, we proposed a revolutionary doctrine according to which an ideal career must have four essential elements: a clear passion, a clear talent, a clear client and clear values.

In this article, we are making an equally bold statement: the end of your career is near.

In other words, your career -- as you know it -- is not sustainable and will be terminated soon.

But please don't panic. You're not losing much. Indeed, the concept of a "career" is so ill-defined, vague and ambiguous that it is no longer a good nor useful concept. So by abandoning the concept of a "career," you are only leaving behind much confusion.

Indeed, if you're going to spend 40+ years of your life doing something, you definitely deserve a better word to accurately capture the activity you engage in during the most productive hours of your week days.

I propose the following acronym to replace "career": C.L.E.A.N. It stands for Creative Lifetime Endeavor to Achieve Nirvana.

However, since "career" is such a familiar word in our culture, let's use "neo-career" to refer to a person's ideal career.

### CREATIVE

Your neo-career will be creative because human needs are infinitely expanding, and also because machines and computers will be taking care of repetitive tasks. Artificial intelligence and expert systems are already replacing many knowledge workers in many industries such as accounting, financial analysis and engineering.

### LIFETIME

Your neo-career will last your entire lifetime since it's something you love to do. In other words, you will not have to retire at age 65 nor would you want to retire. You enjoy your work too much.

### ENDEAVOR

Your neo-career is about work that you enjoy doing, so you would naturally engage in sincere and serious effort to continually become better at what you do.

### ACHIEVE

Your neo-career is a path of personal progress and self-improvement, and you decide what performance indicators to monitor. In other words, your neo-work is not about doing what you have to do, but what you want to do in order to feel that you are moving forward.

## NIRVANA

Finally, your neo-career is about seeking and striving for Nirvana, which is defined as "an ideal condition of rest, harmony, stability, or joy."

"CLEAN" is a good acronym to describe the ideal career because it hints at the idea of starting with a clean slate.

This doesn't mean you can't reuse the skills and competencies that you've acquired in a previous career. It simply means that you start designing an ideal career on a blank sheet of paper and are giving free reign to your imagination.

In a future article, we'll explain how you can design your ideal career by using the four axes representing your talent, your passion, your client and your values.

# 61 Your Ideal Career is About Your True Self

By Peter Nguyen - Mar 7, 2008

In this section, we'll be offering tools and resources to design and build your "ideal career" so it's worth to carefully define what it means exactly.

An ideal career is based on your passion, your talent, your client and your values as shown on the diagram below.

As you can see, your ideal career has more to do with you than it has to do with the world or the employer organization. In other words, 75% of the ideal career is about who you truly are: your passion, your talent and your values.

25% has to do with the service or solution that you provide to a client.

The traditional career was one where a professional worked hard (and played office politics skillfully) to climb up a hierarchical ladder at a big company. There is nothing wrong with that idea of a career, if that is the career you wish to build.

However, this section is more about your ideal career and less about being useful to an employer or getting paid a big salary or gaining professional prestige and executive status.

Although finding one's ideal career is the ultimate achievement because it's all about self-actualization, it is a long journey. It is NOT about finding a job or getting a headhunter to find a good job for you.

It is not about resumes or job interviews. It is not about networking. It is not about skills or education or professional certifications.

All those elements are required for effective career management, but the critical ingredient will always be -- you.

In other words, the search for an ideal career is actually the search for who you truly are, and the joy you were meant to experience in this life.

Find your true self is often understood to be a long and arduous process involving deep thoughts or exotic philosophies or even mind-altering substances.

It's actually much simpler. Finding your true self is about choosing, in every moment, to do what feels good to you.

It's about realizing that you always have the freedom to create the life experience that you want, and to confidently make the choices that will contribute to that desirable life experience.

In this section, we will share with you our research done over the last 7 years so you can discover, design and build your ideal career.

## 62 Finally, the Ultimate Wealth Secret!

By Peter Nguyen - Jun 20, 2008

I wrote in my Real-Time Success Secrets blog several posts on The Ultimate Wealth Secret, and challenged my subscribers to come up with one word to summarize that wealth secret.

Well, here it is. Are you ready? It's...

SELL.

Indeed, sales ability is a secret art that most people have not been taught at school or at home.

Not only that, but we have been conditioned to view "selling" negatively. This is perhaps due to several bad experiences with "pushy" salespeople.

Yet, when you understand the proper function of selling and master the art of selling, you will know why some people get richer while others do not.

It's because selling is a certain strategic mindset. The savvy and skillful sales star is always thinking strategically and speaking strategically. Since thinking and talking are activities that we do almost all the time, then this accounts for the fast rise to success of people who are skillful at selling.

In other words, people who are trapped in poverty (i.e. can't find a good job or can't succeed in business), usually do not think very strategically nor do they speak strategically. It doesn't occur to them, in a conversation, to help the other person figure out his or her precise need and to help that person fulfill that need.

For instance, you might think of the salesperson as a selfish person who is always "pushing" his products in order to get someone to buy something. But in fact, a professional salesperson acts according to "enlightened self-interest": he will ask skillful questions in order to find out what the other person really needs, and then will try to help that person fulfill that need through a product or service that he offers, or that another company offers.

In other words, the professional salesperson doesn't sell as much as he is buying. Buying what? Trust.

Trust is the holy platform upon which your fortune is built.

A great salesperson shows so much care, concern and compassion that everybody instantly trusts him -- and will buy whatever he's selling.

Everything I share with you here is only 0.0000001 % of this vast field of selling.

Yet, most people do NOT explore this field because they have negative perceptions and feelings about selling. These negative perceptions and

feelings KEEP THEM POOR.

Indeed, there are few activities that are more enjoyable and profitable than selling, because basically, it's just a conversation where, at the end, the other person hands over his money to you!

Some people are skillful conversationalists, so they can sell by simply talking. Most people, however, will succeed only if they complement their words with real, concrete actions. If you want to master the art of selling, read the book *The Trusted Advisor*, by David Maister. (I read it several times).

Jeffrey Gitomer is also a great author to read on the art of selling.

The bottom line is that selling is simply a skill -- not a talent. And the extent to which you master that skill, and turn it into an art, will determine your level of financial success.

This is so because (economic) power comes from your talent, and selling ability MULTIPLIES that power.

It is because employees lack selling ability that they are trapped and are forced to work for someone else. An employee may be the best in his field, yet if he cannot sell, he will not likely achieve financial freedom.

Let's take a mathematical look at this to fully understand how selling ability MULTIPLIES your economic power.

Imagine John and Jane, two professionals. John has a greater talent than Jane, so let's say his talent has a value of 9 whereas Jane's talent has a value of only 6.

However, Jane is better at selling than John and has a selling ability of 3 while John has a selling ability of 1.

So the score is:

John:  $9 \times 1 = 9$

Jane:  $6 \times 3 = 18$

Jane gets more opportunities or contracts because her selling ability multiplies the power of her talent. She is also more balanced than John in that she can both CREATE value and SELL that value. Hence, she is more likely to be able to launch her own business and achieve financial independence while John will be forever stuck in an office or cubicle (unless he learns how to sell).

## 63 The Ultimate Wealth-Creation Insight

By Peter Nguyen - Apr 29, 2008

If financial freedom is your goal, here's a POWERFUL insight to keep in mind.

In fact, this POWERFUL wealth-creation insight is SO VALUABLE that I don't know why I'm giving it away for free to you. ;-)

I'm just kidding. I appreciate your loyalty as readers, and I also appreciate the fact that you share this website with all your friends and acquaintances.

Here's the insight or, dare I say it?, the ultimate wealth-creation DOCTRINE:

To achieve financial FREEdom, focus on giving away valuable stuff for FREE to as many people as possible.

A corollary is that you should focus on ways of creating value that cost you NOTHING, that is, that are FREE to you.

Example: Whateverlife.com was launched by a 17-year-old named Ashley Qualls, and she became a millionaire as a result. She even hired her mom as manager, and her best friends as "employees."

The founders of Hotmail became millionaire, through being purchased by Microsoft after they had built a user base of 30 million people within 30 months. They offered FREE email accounts to users.

The founders of Youtube became millionaires by giving to millions of people, for FREE, the ability to view and share videos.

Same with the founders of Skype, Google, Yahoo!, etc.

So how does this happen exactly? I haven't thought through this in great detail, but here's my theory: offering something valuable for FREE, enables a company to automatically multiply marketing "options."

Think of an "option" as the contact details (name, email address or phone number, and mailing address also) of each person who receives the product or service for free.

These contact details, or even the momentary and repeated attention of people, are worth money to marketers who buy them from the free-product or free-service provider (such as Hotmail, Youtube, etc.).

Even an ordinary person can set up this kind of free service. For example, a resume writer can create a website called [Freeresumecritique.com](http://Freeresumecritique.com) and rapidly build a list of marketing options which he can then resell to another company.

I can't believe I'm giving away this valuable insight for free! So enjoy it and apply it asap to build your wealth!

## 64 Entrepreneurship is About Your Freedom to Create

By Peter Nguyen - Jan 1, 2008

"Entrepreneurship" is a big word that tends to either impress people or intimidate them. Depending on the attitude or the mood of a person on a given day, entrepreneurship can mean different things, such as "building a fortune" or "taking a lot of risk" or "creating a revolutionary product" and so forth.

The fact is, entrepreneurship is above all a choice. And the choice is very clear: choose freedom or choose non-freedom.

Obviously, everybody in their right mind would choose freedom. For instance, if a person -- any person -- were asked: "Would you choose a life where you could do anything Monday to Friday without having to answer to anyone (except the person you see in the mirror), or would you rather choose a life where you have to show up, five days a week, at a specific location and do what they tell you to do?"

The above two options are clearly stated and the right choice is rather obvious. Then why is it that the majority of people are working for somebody else? Why is it that the majority of mankind is forced, at least five days a week, to show up at the manufacturing plant or the office in order to work hard and enrich someone else?

The answer is a secret that nobody told you. It's a secret fully understood and thoroughly mastered by the elite for centuries, yet this secret is neither taught at any university nor explicitly explained in any book.

Here's the secret: Rich people choose JOY, poor people choose JOB.

Rich people choose to do what they "want" to do, not what they "have" to do or "should" do.

When you focus on doing what brings you joy, you naturally become a creator. When you focus on doing what you "have to do" or "should do," you naturally become a worker employed by someone else.

It is not this "someone else" who deprives you of your freedom; it is you who give up your freedom to seek joy and create!

Once you affirm your freedom and decide to seek joy, you will naturally become a creator of solutions. And you will own the solutions you create, so that you can sell them to thousands of people who will then reward you financially.

This is precisely how smart people become financially independent. They use the power of their mind and imagination to create new solutions that did not exist before.

People who give up their freedom and work for an employer do not achieve financial freedom,

because they never create anything new. They are hired to execute routines and procedures developed by the business owners.

People who achieve financial freedom have succeeded in shifting their mindset from being a mere "human resource" (which is how employers treat them) to becoming "resourceful humans" capable of continually creating new value all the time.

This new value, in the form of a product or service, belongs to the creators according to human laws governing countries where democracy and capitalism are protected. For instance, the laws concerning copyright, trademarks, patents, intellectual property, etc. protect the financial security of creators.

In short, financial freedom is for those who decide to create a product. It is not for those who seek a job.

The choice is very simple: create and you will become rich, work and you will stay poor.

Once you've created a product that you legally own, you can sell it to thousands of people and make lots of money while creating a lot of happiness. Even better news: these customers will help you to constantly improve your product!

The alternative is to get a job, which you can never own and where you cannot create any new product. Even if you do create a new product within a corporate setting, all rights and royalties will belong to the employer forever.

Some people make the mistake of choosing a job and then staying with it until they are 65 years old. They do not realize that an employee is not in a position to create new solutions, for there is little freedom in any workplace and without freedom, creation is not possible.

Ultimately, all humans have a major choice to make: either we decide to control our lives by exercising our freedom to create, or we decide -- often unconsciously -- to give up our freedom and be controlled by others five days a week.

## 65 Selling Ability is Key to Success

By Peter Nguyen - Jun 10, 2008

<http://www.markschnitzer.com/>

I came across the site above, so I thought I'd offer you my analysis of its marketing strategy. There are many important things to be learned here about business strategy, and if you are serious about achieving financial freedom, it's critical to understand basic strategy.

Strategy means "doing what you have to do to win." It's really that simple. I subscribe more to George Stalk's school of thought (he wrote the book Hardball) than Henry Mintzberg's approach, although I recognize that the latter may offer useful insights for large corporations.

In other words, when I'm hired as a strategy consultant by startups -- and I prefer startups that are aiming at high six- or seven-figure sales, I tell them what they need to know to WIN.

The most important thing to remember in business is that it's a risky environment, and that to DERISK that environment (thereby maximizing one's chances of success), one MUST be close to the client and give him EVERYTHING THAT IS IN OUR POWER TO GIVE HIM.

Do not hold back. I even recently hired "Mad Max," a VP whose sole concern is to push me to give AS MUCH VALUE AS POSSIBLE to my clients for FREE. I will write more about that uber-strategy later on.

So let's take a look at the site above, where they are trying to recruit networking marketing people.

First, they seem like nice people, and they are courageous. You have to be courageous to embark on any business. Most people are too scared to do that.

Their main mistake is that there is a lot of promise on the page, but not a lot of evidence. The key in recruiting is to show evidence of success -- proofs, testimonials, arguments, facts, case studies, demonstrations, diagrams, stats, etc.

In other words, don't sell to people. Serve them.

How? Give them USEFUL and CREDIBLE information so they can make up their own mind about the business opportunity. Treat them as intelligent adults. Don't use emotionally charged words. Speak in a calm, controlled, composed manner. This shows self-mastery.

In my life of work, many people do ask me my opinion about network marketing. I believe it's really about selling. "Network marketing" is an expression that conceals the real task, which is to sell.

I recommend Jeffrey Gitomer's books if you're interested in mastering the art of selling. He's the real deal. We're talking about corporate sales, the tough kind.

Whether you're looking for a job, a promotion, or a first client for your new business, you need to learn about selling. And selling is really serving. It's really that simple.

Another way to put it is that selling is a conversation with a win-win goal in mind.

So from that perspective, you can basically practice your selling skills every time you talk to another person. If you have nothing to sell, then practice by selling that person to herself. That is, encourage her to do something that is clearly in her interest.

Another great book I recommend is Dale Carnegie's "How to win friends and influence people." His idea of getting people to talk about themselves is not as innocent as it sounds, because the more people talk, the more they reveal their hot buttons. It becomes much easier to sell to them afterwards. In other words, it becomes easier to gently move them in a direction where BOTH parties will win.

# 66 Wealth Comes From Systems!

By Peter Nguyen - May 20, 2008

People often say "work smart, don't work hard."

That's true, but for people who are seriously seeking success and/or financial freedom, it's important to get a little bit more technical.

What does "working smart" really mean? If someone is not working "smart," does it mean he's stupid? If he is NOT stupid, how come someone advised him to "work smart"? Does that mean he could be smart, but he's working in a stupid way?

Hmm, this is all very confusing.

Here's an elegant acronym that will save the day and clarify things for us: S.Y.S.T.E.M.

It stands for "Save Your Self Time, Energy, Money."

So what is a "system"? Essentially, it's something complex that works automatically.

Think of your digestive system. The minute you put food in your mouth, chew it and swallow it, your digestive system gets to work immediately. It knows PRECISELY what to do in order to break down the nutrients from the ingested food and convert it into energy for your body.

On the other hand, a "job" is NOT something that works automatically. It requires your attention, 9 to 5, five days a week. In a way, a job is a broken system since it requires your attention to "repair" it constantly. (Notice that your stomach rarely requires your conscious attention. You could just eat something and take a nap on a beach, and your stomach (or your digestive system, at the higher level) will work flawlessly for you.

So if a "job" is a "broken system," why are university graduates so eager to get one after graduation?

Simple answer: They need the money. To buy stuff. To spend happily. To sustain a decent social life. And, of course, to buy gifts for the girlfriend!

Once a person embarks on that path, where he/she gets used to the idea that a job is something that is needed, and that everybody's got to have one, then such a person is getting further and further from financial freedom.

Why? Because wealth comes from systems, and as we discussed earlier, a job is a "broken" system.

In short, WORK DOES NOT WORK. (Hey, this sounds really catchy, maybe I should write a book with that catchy title!).

Larry King (CNN): So, Peter, you recently came out with this provocative book titled "Work does not work!" That's a pretty controversial statement and, some critics have argued, a little irresponsible. Can you explain your theory?

Peter: Well, thanks for having me. What I mean is, have you ever known an employee who worked for a salary and got rich? It's impossible. His salary is part of a company's expenses, and so it must remain fixed. Meanwhile, the company's revenues are increasing. The growing difference between the two is called the "profit rate." That is why the rich get richer and the poor (or the salaried folks) get poorer.

Larry King: So "work does not work" because..?

Peter: Because it does not enrich workers.

Larry King: But workers are not taking risks. The business owners are the ones taking risks. So it's normal that they reap greater rewards.

Peter: It's true that business owners are taking risks with their financial capital, which they use to invest in buying equipment, assets and capital in order to create value and generate a satisfactory return on their invested financial capital. BUT... employees are the ones who are investing their human capital. Human capital -- especially talent -- is becoming more and more important than financial capital.

Larry King: Okay, I get what you're saying, but what choice do employees have? The employment system is structured in a way that gives power to business owners or shareholders because legally, they own the means of production without which value cannot be created.

Peter: Employees, especially the talented and experienced ones, can create systems that replace the employer, and so they can set up a business by themselves.

Larry King: What do you mean by "system"?

Peter: Well, as I wrote a few paragraphs earlier, a system is something that works automatically. Youtube is an example, so is Ning, the Internet company that allows people to create their own social networks online. AsSense, by Google, is another example.

Larry King: Ok, we'll take a commercial break and then we'll continue this interview with Peter Nguyen, best-selling author of *Work Does Not Work*, a highly controversial book that is sparking heated debate and discussions in boardrooms and classrooms throughout the nation.

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I hope that flight of fancy was as good for you as it was for me! :-)

I will write more about wealth creation systems.

## 67 Your Odds of Becoming a Millionaire

By Peter Nguyen - Mar 8, 2008

Who wants to be a millionaire? Well, the answer is pretty much "everybody"!

The real question seems to be, "Who will become a millionaire?"

Let's check the facts. According to studies conducted by Newsweek magazine, a small business owner has a 1 in a 1,000 chance of becoming a millionaire. This compares to 1 in 10,000,000 for people who buy lottery tickets, and 1 in 1,000,000 for people who inherit money from a deceased parent.

Here's some good news: as a small business owner, you can actually take steps in order to proactively increase the odds of your becoming a millionaire.

Of course, becoming wealthy is rarely the goal of truly passionate entrepreneurs. More often than not, they want to make a difference in people's lives while focusing on an activity that they are passionate about.

However, as one novelist cleverly put it, "money is the sixth sense that allows a better use of the other five."

I would add that mind is the 7th sense that allows a better use of the sixth sense (money). Indeed, the mind can turn money (yours or other people's) into capital -- that is, money working for you.

The key to success in business is to learn to manage your mind.

In other words, if your mind is ordered and you use appropriate tools to maintain correct strategic thinking, your small business will inevitably flourish.

This is indeed what makes business so powerful and also strangely beautiful: the fact that it is completely predictable.

The main job of a small business owner, therefore, is to continually strive to predict, explain and control what he is thinking. To the extent that he succeeds, his business will run like a well-oiled machine.

However, to get to a point where your mind can think systematically and strategically about your business, you will need to train yourself.

Business, in a way, is not that different from any well-known martial art like karate or aikido. There are a few basic principles, but once you thoroughly understand these principles, it's all about practiced execution.

In this section, we will provide you with knowledge, tools and resources so you can train yourself in order to become a business "black belt", so to speak. You will learn to effectively plan and manage your small business, whether it's a professional services firm, a retail outlet or an Internet business.

You will also be able to ask questions and we will offer answers in future articles.