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Great Job!

A great guide for graduates, new hires, or
anyone wanting to succeed at work

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<i>—Unknown</i>	
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Introduction

*“Luck is what happens when preparation
meets opportunity.”*

—Seneca

Congratulations! You are about to begin an exciting journey of discovery that will change your life forever. From this day forward, you may never look at work the same way again. You may never have to worry about trying to find a job, earning a living, or having job security. You may never have to worry about losing your job, being passed over for a promotion, or feeling bored at work. You may never be unemployed or have to worry about getting fired for poor performance. Does all of this sound too good to be true? Okay, maybe it is expecting a little too much in the beginning; however, everything I’ve said is possible if you apply what you are about to discover on the pages of this little book. By taking the time to think about your future, you are exercising power over your own life. This is true whether you are just graduating and thinking about work, or maybe you already have a job but want more success and greater rewards for your efforts. Whatever the case, this is the beginning of a major milestone that signifies a new level of maturity, independence, and acceptance of the responsibility for your own life.

Now, don’t get me wrong! I’m not saying that you will never again experience problems at work because you might—many people do. Sometimes bad things can happen to good, hard working people through no fault of their own such as layoffs due to a downturn in business and companies going out of business. These things can happen to anybody and most of the time it is nothing personal. What I am suggesting is that if

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you have made the effort to build a good reputation as a great employee, you will be better prepared for any misfortune that comes your way. Your network of supporters, and the goodwill you have established as a great employee, will help support you when you need it the most, but only if you have worked hard and earned it.

Working is a lifelong quest for success that can lead you to the heights of self-fulfillment and prosperity if it is done successfully—or to the depths of frustration and poverty if it is not. The good news is that your success or failure is totally up to you, and it will be based upon your own efforts to master certain necessary skills.

This book is an introduction to the various strategies and philosophies that will guide you through your transition to success and help ensure you achieve the greatest results for your hard-earned efforts.

As daunting as it is exciting, destiny moves you to your future one step at a time with each step providing the lessons that will prepare you for the next. These lessons come with the responsibility to learn them and then to apply this knowledge to the best of your ability.

Everything you need for each stage of your life will come to you, not necessarily when you want it but more often when you need it, as long as you are ready and looking for it at the right time, in the right place, and with the right attitude.

Much of this information is common sense that may eventually be revealed to you over your working lifetime. Unfortunately, for many people it may take years to realize the truth of these values—and some people never do really get it. But by learning and applying these techniques now, you are giving yourself a huge advantage and the opportunity to implement these strategies before most people realize how important it is to their success.

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So good luck and good reading! Just remember that the race isn't always to the swift but more often to the one who knows the best shortcuts.

Section 1 – Getting Ready

*“He who knows others is wise. He who knows
himself is enlightened.”*

—Lao Tzu

CHAPTER 1

A Win–Win Philosophy

“A successful life is nothing more than a lot of successful days put together.”

—Earl Nightingale

What does a successful life mean to you? Is it wealth, respect, and independence or a little more basic like a few bucks in your pocket, a nice pimped-out ride, or your own cool place to live? The reality is that your definition of success will depend upon your hopes, dreams, and expectations. However, one obvious and extremely critical factor for your success is that you must accept, and even embrace, the need to earn a good living. You do this by learning the necessary skills, focusing on what’s truly important and developing your natural abilities. Having a good job and knowing how to do it well is an essential step required for you to get what you want and need out of life.

By now you must realize how important your work will be to your future and your quality of life. Virtually all of the material possessions you want in life, from cool cars to hot clothes, will come from your ability to work hard, work smart, and earn a good wage. But always keep in mind that when the novelty of a new car has worn off and the clothes are just washed-out rags, the most important asset you will get from a “good day’s work” is a positive sense of your own self-esteem and self-worth. This is true, lasting value and will have the greatest, long-term impact on your quality of life.

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The benefits you can expect to receive from working are usually in direct proportion to how good you are at doing your job; you control your rewards through your actions. Excellent work will get you excellent rewards, average work will get you average rewards, and below-average work will get you below-average rewards and maybe even eventually fired.

It isn't that difficult or complicated to be successful at work; it only requires that you have the right attitude so that you can do your best work every day while continually looking for ways to improve yourself. By doing this, you will become more and more valuable to your employer. It really is that easy.

The challenge for most new employees starting out is learning how to acquire the skills necessary to add greater value without taking years of trial and error to get experience. This guide will help you gain the knowledge and confidence to guarantee your success, realize your hopes, and reach your dreams. It will help prepare you mentally and emotionally by providing a better understanding of how to be successful in doing what you will be doing the rest of your life...well, most of it anyway. I'm referring to that little four-letter word known as WORK.

If the word "work" fills you with anxiety and dread, take heart because you are not alone; many people share your contempt for what could be their best chance for a great life. Sadly, many people are conditioned to hate work—to avoid it if at all possible—they will never fully realize their own potential and financial worth because of their negative attitudes. But, if you have taken the time to prepare for this lifelong journey, you might see that work has its own rewards and can even awaken your passions. You will begin to understand that working doesn't have to be a life sentence but can be a life fulfilled, giving golden opportunities for huge success and great happiness. The advantages you will gain from spending a little

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extra time and effort in learning to do your job to the best of your ability will pay huge personal and financial dividends in the long run.

Unfortunately, you will no doubt encounter many negative, misguided people throughout your career who will say that this kind of philosophy benefits the employer more than the employee. This is a severely limiting idea that many people have, and it is usually based upon their own poor self-worth, ignorance, or maybe even their selfish desires to keep you from becoming more successful than they consider themselves to be. Regrettably, this is an all too common attitude that will ultimately affect their future and will eventually hold them back from ever reaching their full potential.

By embracing the strategies presented in this book, you will have an opportunity to avoid becoming one of those people. As you begin to understand the employee-employer relationship, you will begin to realize the advantages of this association and avoid getting caught in the self-defeating quicksand that so many people find themselves trapped in today. If you really stop to think about it, you will see that this just makes sense, and you will also recognize that even if it is true that the employer benefits, who really cares as long as both parties profit in the long run.

Experience shows that our own individual success is tied directly to the success of our employers and our co-workers. If the company doesn't make money, then we can't make money; therefore, we must all work together to share success and to minimize failure.

With that being said, I want to clarify that no matter what company you are working for or what job you are doing, you are always working for yourself first, and everything you do to benefit your employer will ultimately benefit you even more. The real philosophy is to give and, subsequently, get from your

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employer as much as you possibly can. Give your best and in return you can acquire training, new skills, experience, promotions, raises, references, contacts and, if possible, additional education. The idea is to build a career and personal résumé by treating your employer as your customer. You must build a reputation as a great employee by following all of the rules and by treating everyone you encounter with respect. By doing these things, you will have a great life, a rewarding work experience and achieve great personal success. This is called a win-win philosophy.

The longer you work, the more you will realize that this is what your whole life has been leading up to. If you are like most people, you will spend more time working than any other single activity—except maybe sleeping—so learn to do it well and reap the countless personal and financial rewards you deserve.

“Human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.”

—William James

A Win–Win Philosophy—Summary /Tips

- The key to success at work is to live up to your employer’s expectations, as well as your own.
- Work can be a great experience if you choose it to be.
- If you give a little, you get a little. If you give a lot, you get a lot. That’s just a fact of life.
- Remember, it is still all about you and your future.

CHAPTER 2

What Is Work Anyway?

*“Find a job you love, and you will never work
a day in your life.”*

—A very smart fortune cookie

The variety of jobs available today is almost as numerous and diverse as are the people who do them. With all this diversity, it isn't difficult to see why one person might think of a job as a grueling rat race, and someone else might find that same job to be fun and rewarding. It is enough to make you ask, “What is work, really?”

When a pro-athlete goes to work, is it actually considered work? Some people would say, “No, it's just a game; how can that be considered work?” However, since it is how they earn a living, it is technically work, and the amazing part is how hard an athlete will labor at it. To most of us, the conditioning, dedication, and sacrifices are incredible...as well as inspiring.

Here's a little secret! That much effort on any job could make you a huge success and a star player at any business where you choose to work. This statement brings up another interesting question: If you enjoy your job, can it actually be considered work? The answer, of course, is yes; however, you really need to know that feeling good about your job is more of a reflection on your own outlook as a person and how you feel about yourself, rather than about what job you are actually doing. It is about what motivates you, and there are many positive motivating factors related to work. For some people it

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is the thrill of excelling at a difficult job or the satisfaction of living up to their own expectations. For others it could be learning something new and challenging or helping other people. Some people find it is the pride of accomplishment or finding creative ways to do their job better that keeps their work interesting and fun. Yes, I said, “fun.”

Okay, I know what you are saying to yourself, “How can anyone use the words ‘work’ and ‘fun’ in the same sentence?” It goes back to the word “work” having a bad reputation in the minds of many people due to misguided attitudes and peer pressure. There are untold numbers of people who are unhappy because they accepted a job or occupation by accident and aren’t really willing or able to make the best of it. Because they failed to plan or make well-informed decisions regarding their own future, they ended up simply drifting into jobs. Now these people feel like victims of their circumstances, stuck in a rut and dreading every minute of it. Many people work long and hard at what they perceive to be dead-end jobs, and at the end of the day, they go home tired, broke, and discouraged. They live their lives from paycheck to paycheck, hoping and praying to win the lottery or an extreme makeover that will magically change their lives for the better. Unfortunately, hope isn’t the answer; action is! All of us have choices to make every day, and through our choices, we have the power to decide whether or not to take action and change our circumstances. In our hearts we all know that life rewards action, and most of the time it is up to us to start moving in a positive direction. It is said that if we want positive things in our lives, then we must think positive thoughts and take positive actions. The sad thing is that many people lull themselves into apathy and indifference, feeling that their situation is hopeless, or that the simple act of making better choices and acting on them is just too easy to be the

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answer to their problems. And so, they do nothing, ignoring the only real solution that could change their life.

You have the power and the ability to make good informed choices to support your own goals, and you can use it or lose it. Make no mistake that through your own actions, you are making good and bad choices every day. Some examples include getting to work early versus rushing in just in time or being late, volunteering for overtime to earn extra money versus leaving work to spend money on a beer with friends, asking for additional training versus complaining about not getting a raise, volunteering to help get work done versus standing around talking to co-workers, and taking the time to write out your goals versus drifting through life. See a trend here?

Your choices make your habits, and your life is controlled by those habits—the habits of success or the habits of failure. Simply put, good habits equal good results; bad habits equal bad results. It's up to you to make the right choices and gain control of your own life and open the doors of possibilities.

Virtually every job has opportunities if you just keep your eyes open and look for them. Every business—large and small—from restaurants, grocery stores, and car washes to hardware stores, offices and factories all have managers, supervisors, buyers, bookkeepers, customer service reps, etc. All good jobs require great people, and all you need to get one of these good jobs is to choose what you want, have the right attitude, and apply the right strategies.

In conducting performance reviews and providing career counseling, I have had the opportunity to talk with many struggling employees. One thing that continues to amaze and distress me is how many intelligent and responsible people haven't answered that one question so critical to their success: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" It is a fundamental question that many people in their late thirties and

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forties still haven't answered. They have no goals, plans, or direction, suffering endless day-to-day frustration and dissatisfaction with their jobs. They wonder why life hasn't turned out the way they thought it would. It doesn't take a genius or a psychic to figure it out. Unless we take control of our lives, we are at the mercy of whatever happens to us. If you don't decide where you are going with your life, then you can't really complain about where you end up.

The one thing to consider about working that could make all of the difference to your success is whether you are going to have a job or a career. Most people mistakenly believe that you must have a college degree or a high position in a big company to have a career, but the only real difference between a career and a job is how you perceive it. Successful people have careers—not just jobs—and they distinguish themselves by taking responsibility for their own performance, realizing that everything they do at work is a reflection on their success and their careers. They view each day as an opportunity to move their careers forward and to stand out as a top performer. Maybe the job you have right now isn't the dream job you see for your career, but also consider that maybe you haven't seen all of the opportunities that exist at your current job. Every job you do can be a steppingstone that prepares you in some way for the next step along your career path.

A career-minded person isn't necessarily any better, smarter, or even more educated than anyone else; they have just made a choice to be successful and developed a healthier attitude toward work, creating a better viewpoint for what they do for a living.

- They typically take pride in the job and work hard to make the company and their co-workers successful.
- They see themselves as part of a team and feel ownership for the company and their job.

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- They like going to work and find ways to make their jobs exciting.
- They are customer focused, have great attitudes, and enjoy the challenge.
- Their workdays go by fast, and they usually make more money.
- They focus on the work, not on the clock, and won't leave until the work is done.
- They spend time training and preparing themselves for the next opportunity and usually get promoted.

Job-minded people for the most part aren't bad workers, but usually fall more into the average category and represent a large majority of the population working today. Unfortunately, many are unhappy with their circumstances but don't know how, or are just unwilling, to change their situation for the better.

- They typically dread Mondays and dislike going to work.
- They live for the weekend and feel bored with their jobs.
- They feel unmotivated and don't try to improve themselves or the company.
- Many care more about their own short-term comfort than about the company's long-term health or success, made obvious by their starting work late, working slowly, taking long breaks, standing around, etc.
- They work just hard enough to get by and don't like to volunteer.
- Their workday drags, and they usually quit by the clock, unless they are told to stay and finish the job.
- They tend to view overtime, not as an opportunity to help a customer or the company and earn extra money, but as an imposition not worth any extra effort to earn the extra pay.

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In the long run, of these two groups, which do you think deserves to be more successful? Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that you can't look forward to your vacation time or be glad it's the weekend; we all enjoy and value our time off. The fact is you are working to live, not living to work! Your job doesn't have to be the most important aspect of your life for you to be successful, but it should be balanced and given the consideration and focus appropriate to meet your own expectations for success.

To get started on your own career, spend a little time thinking about the attributes of a career-minded person and how they might apply to your life. Then create a plan to advance yourself by taking advantage of the opportunities available at your current job.

Use what you do for a living to support your ideal vision for yourself and build on it as a step in your career path. If you don't have a job yet, think about what you like to do and what you are good at doing, and then find ways to apply the results to help you find your niche in life. For instance, if you are good at math and numbers, try working in a bank where bookkeeping and accounting skills are utilized. If you like working with your hands, doing puzzles, or building things, try working in the building trades to become a contractor, engineer, or architect. If you are good with people, you might try working at a restaurant, in retailing, or in customer service, aspiring to advance to a supervisory or managerial position. If you like kids, try daycare and then maybe teaching. If you like helping people, try working at a hospital or nursing home and then get into nursing. The point is to decide what direction you want to go, find a job that suits you and your inherent interests, and then continue to build on that interest as a career. The fact that you are reading this book says you want more control of your work-life and that you are willing to invest the necessary time and effort to be

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successful. One additional benefit to having control of your work-life is usually more control of your personal and financial life as well.

We must all work, so why not make the best of it and enjoy the rewards that come from doing it well. The word “pro” is an abbreviation for the word professional which means to be an expert, specialist, or proficient in an area. I propose that it could also be an acronym for pride, responsibility, and ownership. Be a pro at work, applying the same commitment and dedication that a pro-athlete does, and you can achieve a similar, professional “star status” in your own chosen field. Take pride in what you do, responsibility for your own actions, and ownership for the results.

*“If you refuse to accept anything but the best out of life
you very often get it.”*

—Sumerset Maugham

What Is Work Anyway?—Summary/Tips

- Work can be fun...it really is okay to like your job.
- The secret to success in life and at work is in your passion. To find your passion, you need only look to yourself.
- It isn't what job you do that matters, it is how you do the job that counts.
- No matter how old you are, decide what you want to be when you grow up, and then make a career out of it.
- You don't have to throw a perfect spiral the length of a football field or make a three point shot nine out of ten times to be a pro. Just be a pro at whatever it is you do.

A gift that parents or relatives can buy for graduating high school seniors and young people starting their first jobs. Offers insightful strategies and tips for success in the working world with advice on everything from attendance to work ethics.

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