

Secret #7

Business Integration

“Tug on anything at all and you’ll find it connected to everything else in the universe.”

—John Muir

“If you improve one area of your life, indirectly you improve all areas.”

—Ehab Atalla

This entire book so far has been on business, and I want to clarify an important point: if you focus your entire life on business and growing wealthy, you will lead an unfulfilling life. You cannot expect to be happy if all you do is work. Business activities must fit into a larger strategy of leading a fulfilled, engaged, and meaningful life. Making money is certainly part of this strategy, but not the entire focus of it.

We are forced to deal with money every day. It consumes a significant percentage of our thoughts and time, causing us to place a large amount of importance on it. ***Life, however, is not only about making money.*** If you only perform activities that directly make you money, you will regret many things in life. There may be age appropriate experiences and activities you will miss out on that keep you balanced and happy—traveling, sports, hobbies, dating, getting married, etc. ***You will also miss out on activities that indirectly cultivate your creativity in business.***

Business Integration

Some of my greatest money-making ideas came to me while I was on vacation, spending time with my family, and taking classes at a university. None of these activities directly make me money, but they restore my energy and give me new perspectives in business. It is through these activities that I recharge my motivation, gain clarity on how to grow my businesses, and become aware of new opportunities.

If all you do is focus on business-related activities, you will experience negative leverage. You will become worn out and begin loathing the process of starting and growing a business. Remember how I discussed the importance of getting in the right mood for problem solving? ***If you overwork yourself, you will not be in a creative mood.*** Without this creativity, every step you take in business will be a struggle, and you will likely give up.

Realize that there are activities that you need to engage in that are not directly related to business. The reasoning behind this is that we are not robots—we cannot work indefinitely without balancing our lives outside of work.

Family Comes First

The most important things in life can't be bought. Money cannot buy the unconditional love I receive from my beautiful wife and mother. It can't replace the loving memories I have of them, nor the energy and purpose I receive from being with them. Both of these women understand me and care for me like no one else on earth. Therefore, I must cherish them now.

With my mom, I make sure she takes care of her health. I regularly spend quality time with her by taking her out to eat and walking with her on the beach. I make sure that she is always cheerful. I find that when she is happy, I am

The Secrets of Business

happy. Her happiness fuels me with energy and joy and makes me more productive in business.

Money cannot replace your family: your grandparents, children, brothers, sisters, and relatives. **Take it from me—I would give anything to see my father again.** He left my mother and me so quickly and suddenly. It made me realize how fragile life is and how important family is to our sense of being. The love we experience through family cannot be found anywhere else. We should cherish our family members while they are alive. You never know when your family members will be gone forever.

All of the world's religions and cultures convey the importance of honoring our mother and father. In doing so, there is a huge reward that we receive—love and positive energy. This love and positive energy carries over into all areas of our lives. If our family lives are whole and complete, we will carry this positive energy into our business and careers. If our family lives are not whole and complete, we will carry negative energy in our business and careers. Honoring our parents and loving all of our family, then, is an indirect way to creating wealth.

How are you supposed to make money if your family life is a wreck? Although there are people who neglect their family that become successful, I would argue that they are not happy and fulfilled inside. Or perhaps the work environment has become their second family. In either case, anyone who neglects family eventually experiences regret. Money will not compensate your feeling of emptiness if you forget to spend quality time with your family.

True joy in life comes from sharing your wealth with your family. If you have money and are not sharing it with anyone, what's the point? **To be wealthy and only satisfy your needs is a recipe for disaster.** Money at this point will become your enemy because you are using it for selfish ends—superficial experiences that don't

lead to connecting with others. You will be wealthy on paper, but poor in spirit.

I believe making a family is so important. Even if you don't have kids or never get married, hanging around a group of people you love and who love you is critical for your well-being and development as a human. If your sole purpose is to become wealthy without this family love, you will be missing out on many fruitful experiences in life.

Treasure the Moment

You can't buy your way to being young again. Once your youth is gone—it's gone. Unless scientists develop a time machine in the near future, money is not a replacement for enjoying your age. So when you are young, enjoy your body.

Engage in activities that allow you to take advantage of your youth. At what other point in your life will you enjoy flirting, playing sports, dancing, etc. as much as you will when you are young?

If your youth has passed, then take full advantage of the moment right now. **Money will not buy back wasted years.** Each and every day is a chance for us to start fresh. Are you taking advantage of this fresh start? Is chasing money or a lack of money making you unhappy and preventing you from feeling renewed?

When you enjoy the moment, when you take full advantage of each and every day, you are indirectly contributing to your wealth. Wealth cannot be gained if you are not happy with yourself and if you don't accept your life circumstances. If you are too busy fantasizing about the future or regretting the past, then you are wasting your time. You are wasting your energy. This is an indirect way to prevent wealth in your life, and sadly, many people live their lives lacking presence. Presence is not something you can buy—it's something that you must develop within. Developing presence is a small thing that

can make the biggest difference. Every day, ask yourself, “Am I fully present? Am I aware of my actions and habits?” This idea connects back to what you learned about leverage. ***Are you leveraging every moment, both directly and indirectly, to acquire wealth?***

Money Cannot Replace Your Health

More money can allow you to get better treatment when you are sick, but it cannot replace the feeling of vitality you have when you are healthy. I am not a health freak or exercise guru, but every day, I make myself walk for an hour, regardless of what obligations I have or new businesses I am in. How am I supposed to enjoy my wealth if I am sick and die early? You should ask yourself the same question. What’s the point of becoming wealthy if you don’t live to enjoy it? We, therefore, must maintain our health on a daily basis. With so much information out there on the benefits of exercise and eating healthy, why shouldn’t we commit ourselves to being healthy every day? How else are we supposed to feel energized and enjoy the money we are making?

Staying healthy is critical to creating wealth. It’s obvious—the better your health, the more energy you have to focus on your business and career.

You Need Hobbies

Hobbies are a great way to cultivate your wealth, even if they have nothing to do with making money directly. If you live without hobbies, then you are not engaging in activities that are refreshing your creativity. ***Hobbies are like maintenance for your brain.*** They keep you feeling alive and creative. They are a way to make money indirectly because they refresh your money-making machine (your brain).

Business Integration

Just as you put oil in a car to keep the engine lubricated and running smoothly, you too must lubricate your mind so it continues working hard for you. A great way to do this is through hobbies. Hobbies, by definition, are activities we engage in that bring us joy and fulfillment. By cultivating more joy and fulfillment in our lives through hobbies, we are creating fertile soil for creative ideas to grow.

Whatever your hobby is, do not compromise it just because you are now in business. Keep it as part of your daily or weekly routine.

Just because you are an entrepreneur does not mean you need to quit your hobbies. If you like to play basketball on the weekends with your friends, by all means, go ahead and do that. This activity, believe it or not, will enhance all areas of your life.

I personally love to travel. Traveling is my hobby, and although it is expensive, I find that it adds tremendous value to my career in business. I go on vacations at least twice a year for two to three weeks at a time. This gives me new perspectives and is an educational experience; I get to explore how business is performed elsewhere. I observe everything from the food, currency, culture, and local businesses to expand my awareness of the global economy. And, I have a fun time doing it.

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, traveling gives me great ideas for business. I often come back home from a vacation, which I've taken for complete enjoyment, with another business idea or a way to improve my existing business. I believe it's because my mind is relaxed and I get to connect everything I know with a new experience. These connections cultivate my creativity and reinvigorate me to work even harder on my businesses when I come back home.

The Secrets of Business

I have been married for twelve years. I believe that the foundation of our success as a couple is that we share many hobbies and habits. My wife and I both love to read and travel. If you do not share the same hobbies and habits with your spouse, I believe your marriage is destined for a divorce. For example, suppose you like to watch movies and your spouse doesn't. Or suppose you like soft, classical music and your spouse likes loud dance music. Or suppose you are very clean and your spouse is very messy. It's only a matter of time before disagreements will occur. These differences seem so insignificant, but they can cause enormous tension in your relationship.

Another one of my personal hobbies is trading stocks across the global economy. It first started out as an educational experience, and I soon fell in love with the entire process of actively trading. This hobby happens to be a direct way for me to grow my wealth. It's a refreshing activity that spurs my creativity and grows my wealth at the same time. Is it critical that your hobbies are directly connected to making money? No. I happened to stumble upon an activity that I love and that makes me money. I am killing two birds with one stone and taking full advantage of the power hobbies give me. In this way, ***I am leveraging hobbies, both directly and indirectly, to create wealth.***

What Career(s) Are You Pursuing?

When you focus on a career, you are engaging in activities that you enjoy—you are not just working for money. What do you do on a daily basis that makes your life fulfilling? There are, for example, many people who find it fulfilling to teach; they go through college, graduate school, and postgraduate school so they can inspire the younger generation. They don't teach just for the money—they teach

Business Integration

because they love it. They are doing what they want to do, and are making money while doing it.

Why are we making money? To enjoy ourselves. Money should be thought of as a tool to enjoy things in life—not as a goal in itself. Part of the reason why I got my MBA and want to get my doctorate degree is because I enjoy teaching. For years I have taught young adults about business, and I see myself teaching at a university level in the future. In general, people who get their Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) want to teach academically.

And beyond academia, one of my biggest aspirations is to become a congressman. I believe that with my knowledge, skills, and love for America, I can help this country and the people.

In addition, taking my DBA classes will help me create more wealth. I will not get paid for being in the classroom, but the knowledge I learn and the contacts I make will be used to improve my businesses. So getting my DBA advances me in my career and will indirectly help me create more wealth.

That's the power that a career has. It keeps you constantly learning and improving.

General Knowledge

To associate with successful people, you have to be informed. You need to articulate yourself in an interesting way by knowing what's going on in the world. Many people assume that education ends in school, and that no outside reading or learning is required. This is not only far from the truth, but it limits your understanding of the world. ***The truth is that you need to acquire general knowledge every day.***

From my own experience, I have found that 75%-90% of any high-end business meeting is not about business. You talk about different things, such as economic events, sports, and trends in society. This makes the environment friendly, cooling any tensions that are related to the business deal. It opens up our hearts and minds to each other and we are able to establish rapport, or a friendly connection. Once this happens, then the subject of business is put on the table, and the negotiation typically happens very quickly (within the last 10 to 20 minutes of the meeting).

This is especially critical in international business, where establishing rapport and trust takes longer. For example, rushing a meeting and getting straight to business is perceived as rude in the Middle East and Asia.

General knowledge not only helps in communicating with successful people and conducting fruitful business meetings, but it helps you navigate through civil law. For example, what are you supposed to do if someone hits you? What are you supposed to do if you and your neighbor get into an argument about a tree in your back yard encroaching on his land? What are you supposed to do if you get a speeding ticket or if someone hits you with a car?

It is in Giving that We Receive

“It is in giving that we receive,” is a quote from St. Francis. He, and many other religious and spiritual teachers around the world, proclaim this message. Is it true? What do we actually receive from giving and how can it indirectly help us create wealth?

Business Integration

*I have tried this spiritual teaching for myself and found that it works—and it works well. Whatever we put out into the world comes back to us. It is as if reality echoes our intentions and our actions so we experience what we give. Not only that... the act of giving gives us something immediately—joy and inner peace. There is something magical about giving, about turning your attention away from yourself and toward helping others. As you may recall from previous chapters, **I was able to work 24/7 at one point to provide for my mother.** There is immense power in this. It is an indirect way to acquire wealth because it causes you to look outward rather than inward.*

When you make a lot of money, a great way to experience a return on your money is by giving to charities. Not only do you get a tax deduction (or a return on your money in terms of a decrease in taxes) but you will receive good karma from it. It will directly and indirectly add more money to your pocket.

Test giving for yourself and see what type of results you experience. There is a reason why all the great religions teach us to give.

Learn How Random Things Work

Do you know how a refrigerator works? Do you know how a car works? Do you know how an air conditioner works? It's common for us to take these marvelous inventions for granted, and most people don't know how any of these devices actually work. Believe it or not, **knowing how things work is a great way to stimulate your imagination and connect seemingly different things together.** It will train your brain to work more effectively.

The Secrets of Business

Do you know how everyday items are made? One of my favorite shows on TV is “How It’s Made” (which can be viewed on the Science Channel). In this show, they show you step by step how regular household devices are manufactured. You can see how everything from skateboards to hot sauce is made.

Appearance

When you meet someone for the first time, that person comes to many conclusions about who you are, how much you have, and whether you’re worth talking to—all within the first ten seconds. This is especially true in business settings. That’s why you always see sales people wearing nice clothes and watches, and driving nice cars. They have to gain the trust of customers, and having a nice appearance is a way to establish that trust from the beginning. Their nice appearance conveys professionalism—that they care about doing business with the customer.

To be successful, you must enhance your appearance. As you begin making more and more money, it’s worth investing in nice clothes, a nice car, a nice place to live, nice watch, etc. I am not saying go broke doing so (remember, saving money is critical to growing wealth), but realize that adding to your image as you become financially successful is important if you want to associate and do business with people at a higher level. How do people know whether or not you’re successful? Well, they don’t look into your bank account to see how much money you have. They judge your success based on what you own and what they see.

As a society, we play the “appearance game.” The person who appears wealthy is considered powerful and attractive.

The problem is that people measure success by how much money you have, which means that you have to like money. However, this doesn't mean your focus is on making money. Your focus should be on developing money-making skill sets and adding value to society. When you perform these activities, money will come automatically.

It's important to realize that money comes from success. This idea may go against many people's beliefs that money is the root of all evil. The problem with thinking this way is that it will never make you rich. You must learn to accept that people judge others by how much money they have. That's just the way it is—it's the game we humans have been playing for thousands of years. Given this game, you have to love money and understand that it comes from success—it comes for a good reason.

If You're Lazy in One Thing, You're Lazy in Everything

Life is extreme—if you are lazy in one area of your life, then you are lazy in other areas. For example, if you are lazy about your health, chances are you are lazy about your business, your relationships, your bills, your family commitments, etc. ***That's because our brains cannot separate our behaviors from one activity to the next.*** We either are powerful, energized human beings or we are not. This is a profound insight because it illustrates how connected all of our activities are to our state of being.

*A word to the wise—to be successful, you need to continue to put in many hours of work. **The second you stop getting better and resort to being lazy, you are jeopardizing the wealth you have created.** That's why you see so many professional athletes and pop stars go broke after they made their millions. What happened? They got lazy and stopped doing what they did to become*

successful in the first place. They gave up on being a high achiever and got lost in unfruitful activities. If you look at some of the most successful people, they put in a ridiculous amount of work to be where they are today, and they continue to work just as hard to keep achieving and excelling (including me).

Take Your First Step

After reading this book, I hope you extinguish all of your limiting beliefs and develop massive self-confidence in yourself. Why would you second guess and doubt yourself in business when you have so much going for you? If I was able to do it—if I was able to overcome language, poverty, and cultural barriers, then you are definitely able to do it too.

*There is no reason why you can't be running multiple businesses and be pursuing your life's passion. There is no reason not to travel the journey to wealth. **So pack your bags with the secrets you got from this book and take your first step.***

As I move forward in my business career, I remind myself how easy business is, and I encourage you to think the same way. I choose to see business in this light, regardless of the truth. Consider this: if a foreigner came to this country without being able to speak English and was able to successfully run over 34 businesses, do you really think business is that hard?

Many people have a wrong perspective of business that prevents them from ever getting in. They believe business is hard. If you believe this, then business will be hard for you. If you believe business is easy, then it will be easy for you.

Business Integration

As you move forward with your career, realize that it is only through having a new vision and seeing the world differently that you can actualize your business goals.