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Special Thanks to "MJ" – a truly inspirational "I-ntreprenuer"

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Intreprenuer (*intrupru'nur*, n.) One who organises an Internet Venture and assumes the risks for it ; risk-taking businessperson : someone who sets up and finances new Internet enterprises to make a profit

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The banner features a blue background with a globe on the right and a faint circuit-like pattern on the left. The text "the 'must have' secrets of an internet entrepreneur" is at the top left, and "Intreprenuers Notebook" is in the center in a stylized font.

`www.intreprenuersnotebook.com`

How would you like to "look over the shoulder" of someone who's been setting up Internet ventures for the last five years?

Perhaps you'd like to peak into my confidential ideas notebook . . . eavesdrop on my online marketing tactics . . . learn the motivational & success strategies that have allowed me to be successfull online.

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Introduction

This is a truly inspirational story.

The story of **MJ** : a man who was determined to make it as an entrepreneur . . . the trials, the tribulations, the setbacks . . . and finally - the glory!

The first time I read it I was captivated - there were so many similarities with my own life (we're even the same age!) that I was amazed.

But **this is more than just a story**, as you will see.

It highlights important lessons for succeeding online - and it will open up new ways of thinking. The first time I read it, I had difficulty sleeping that night - my mind was just buzzing with the new possibilities.

Note: Although MJ has "bared his soul", he is a private man. Therefore we have protected his identity by calling him MJ.

How to use this

At suitable points in the story, we've interjected to highlight something important : a key success trait or maybe a way of thinking.

At other points, we've highlighted key tools & resources you can use to 'accelerate' your journey to becoming an Intreprenneur.

MJ's Story

I graduated from a major University with 2 business degrees. College was a trip -- I made me sick because all the teachers and professionals "groomed" you for corporate America. The common saying, "when you work for corporate America, they will want this, that, etc."

I was so tired of hearing it. I knew I never wanted to work for anyone. Upon graduating, all my peers were bragging about the great "safe secure jobs" they were hired for. "I work for Motorola", "I work for Northwestern Insurance" blah blah ... everyone interviewed like crazy. I didn't. I left college jobless with the goal of starting a business. This was in 1992. I was 22.

The next 5 years was a mess. I lived at home in Chicago with mommy for most of it. I struggled from venture to venture with no real success. I tried all sorts of things, and while trying all of these things, I worked "odd jobs" to pay bills and to pay student loans.

Amway, Vitamin MLM's, various other MLM's, Car Audio. Direct Marketing, Jewelry, etc. **All business attempts and all failures.**

The jobs I held to pay bills while pursuing my business dream: Pizza-delivery boy, Flower-delivery boy, Dispatcher, Day Laborer in the ghetto of Chicago, Bus-Boy at Chinese Restaurant. . . all while I was a multi-degreed, educated person who graduated in the top 10% of his class.

At 26 years old I was at the end of my rope.

Desperation. Frustration.

To make matters worse, my girlfriend of 5 years gave up on me. She said I "had no resolve". She worked for Enterprise Rent-A-Car and had a "safe secure job"-- we'd argue because she worked 55 hour weeks for peanuts ... \$28K/yr maybe. She'd fight back and say "you don't have a job, you make no money, and none of your businesses are working".

I told her that an Entrepreneur's income generation is different than someone that worked at a job. Income generation for a person working was LINEAR . Entrepreneur income generation is EXPONENTIAL. Basically, very very slow to begin, then as time progresses, explosive.

Ever see a straight ascending line juxtaposed with an exponential line? The exponential line eventually catches up and ultimately, blows by the linear line.

Key point: As an Intreprenuer, you will find yourself doing a lot of initial "groundwork" before you earn any real money. However, (if you're doing everything right) everything will eventually fall into place - and your profits should "explode".

I tried explaining this but to no avail to anyone.

My own mother: "Why don't you get a job?" To this day, when we speak I tease her by yelling "GET A JOB BABY!"

My mom would periodically say "The grocery store is hiring a deli manager, why don't you go down there and check it out"

NEVER. I'd rather die than manage a bunch of meat cutters. Is that my life purpose? To top it off, I wouldn't even get the job probably because I lacked "retail experience". Gee thanks for nothing.

This 'frustration' continued when I did reach the end of my rope and was often suicidal ... the worst is seeing all your old college friends all buying their new Acura Integra's and new Mustang GT's (they had "safe" secure jobs) and all I had to show was a rusty Buick ghetto car with a bad transmission.

I also lived at home. Pretty sad for a 26 year old college grad. To make matters worse I couldn't stand living in Chicago. I truly felt that my environment was holding me back ... my friends, my family, and the climate that existed in Chicago (I was seasonal depressed; not seeing the sun made me LAZY)

In 1996 while working in the hell-rotted Chicago summer in the ghetto, my eyes were opened and a light went on.

I then would make a decision that would change my life forever . . .

As I moved thru my mid 20's, from odd-job to odd-job, from business failure to business failure, one thing stayed consistent: I was always learning. I was always reading books.

Even though I was failing, the failures increased my skill level and competency in many areas. A book which really helped me: My "bible" which would get me through the hard times was Tony Robbins "AWAKEN THE GIANT WITHIN". The book always seems to help me as I would return to many highlighted portions which I made prior.

Many distinctions which helped me endure: **"Your focus is your reality"** and **"if you want to keep on getting what you're getting, keep on doing what you're doing."**

Key point: A successful Entrepreneur is always learning - the education never stops.

Everything that you read, everything that you see and hear - every tiny morsel - is stored away in your subconscious. And when enough information is collated - Viola! A profitable idea pops up.

Tony's book inspired me to keep a journal to air out my frustrations.

I dug out my journal tonight; it's been about 2 years since I made an entry. It's also been 2 years since I really re-read it -- it amazes me some of the things I wrote; the frustrations and the angst I felt. I pulled out 2 excerpts which I will share here -- you will see how down I was.

July 30th, 1995

*What's wrong? What can't I be happy? I have no money. I owe tons. My business is nickeling and diming me. I am so unhappy with myself. I've seem to lost control. I have no motivation anymore. Lazy. Don't want to work. Lazy. I hate myself. My mind seems so negative and destructive. I hate life right now. I hope something changes soon. I must change. What's happening. Why does nothing go right? What can't I be happy? Why can't I even make a piddly thousand dollars a month? Why? Loser. Loser. Loser. Loser. Loser. F**king Loser.*

Sept 8th, 1995

*I am almost 25 years old, have two business degrees, and what am I doing? Sitting at a f*cking flea market trying to sell ugly f*cking pictures. Another stupid venture of mine that don't make a dime.*

This spiral of negativity and business failures continued, while I continued to read a variety of different books. Many times I was reading to stay sane and to combat the negativity my failures were creating.

In 1996 I learned HTML programming and thought it would be a "cool" thing to create a website. I had a business idea. I researched the idea and discovered two companies already on the internet doing something similar. I was not sure if the venture would be smart to entertain considering it was being done already.

I remember vividly asking my girlfriend (a new one) at the time **"what do you think i should do?"** -- she said, **"f*ck, competitors are everywhere -- do it, and do a better job"**. (She was a blunt chick that swore a lot). So I did. I created a simple HTML website based on my idea.

For the next 6 or 8 months or so I continued to work odd jobs while I continually perfected and improved my website. The website wasn't making much money; maybe \$150 a month or so. I was still miserable.

Chicago, and everything about it, was killing me. My girlfriend was starting to be annoyed with me -- I was constantly negative and angry at the world. I was only happy when the sun was shining and in Chicago, it doesn't show to often.

Finally fed up, my girlfriend at the time - who to this day I consider one of the person's who put me on the right track - said, **"f*ck, if you're so damn unhappy here, get the hell out. No one's keeping you in Chicago and you're a free person with free choice"**

Then it hit me. I was free. **I can pursue my dreams ANYWHERE.**

I thought to myself, if I could live ANYWHERE in the USA, where would I live? The sun makes me happy and motivated, so it would need to be sunny.

Two months later, I picked up what little I had, towed my rusty Buick on a hitch, and took residence in a tiny studio apartment in Central Phoenix AZ. . . a place that is sunny 330 out of 365 days a year.

They say "where you are in life is a product of your decisions". **At this exact moment, as you sit in your chair reading this, in your house or in your apartment, in your city, in your state of mind, in your financial state -- ALL OF IT -- is a product of your decisions.**

ONE decision can forever shape and change your destiny. From a simple decision to ordering steak instead of fish, or from wanting to drag race a foolish teen in his Honda -- **YOUR LIFE AT THIS VERY MOMENT IS A PRODUCT OF YOUR CHOICES AND DECISIONS.**

If you are unhappy, MAKE BETTER DECISIONS.

Key Point : This is very, very important.

I have seen friends and family make huge messes of their lives, blaming others, claiming they are unlucky - but you can really trace it all back to a few poor quality decisions.

You have free will. At any point you can make a decision and go off in a different direction. This is a powerful tool that we, as humans, possess.

To make better quality decisions, you must:

- Have all the relevant information - do your research - poor decisions are often the result of being poorly informed.
- Make decisions free of stress (if you are suffering from stress or anxiety, [click here](#) for a superb tool that will help you be more calm, centred & focused)

The awakening I had was that I could pursue my dreams ANYWHERE in the country. For 26 years, I never realized that I could pick up and leave my hometown of Chicago. The decision enabled me to aggressively pursue my goals: I left the baggage of peers, ex-girlfriends, business failures, and family who didn't believe in me and started fresh.

It would be the decision that would forever change my life.

It also would put me further into debt as moving cross-country isn't a cheap endeavor

However, I was solar powered - with 330 days of sun to back me up, nothing was going to stop me from getting what I wanted

Key Point: Do you think MJ is gonna fail to reach his goals? Hell, no!

He's now a laser guided missile, locked on to it's target. He's removed what was a major negative factor for him personally - the Chicago climate - and he's now so focused he's gonna burn a hole in the sidewalk!

I arrived in Phoenix with \$900, a rusty Buick 'ghetto car' with no 3rd gear, a website business that was making about \$150/mo and a whole new outlook. I transformed my studio apartment into a "nerve center" - the entire place was an office. I had no bedroom set; just a mattress which was partially laid in the kitchen. There were always crumbs on my mattress - which tends to happen when you put a mattress on the kitchen floor!

The next several weeks I sent out dozens of resumes to Phoenix corporations. Yes, I was biting the bullet and thought getting a respectable JOB would be the best way to start. I still had my goals; but I was tired of washing dishes and delivering pizzas.

I also continued to improve and market my website as the weeks went by.

Dozens of resumes and months later, I had NO interviews. I was getting pissed and a bit insulted. I know I am marketable. I know I would be an asset to a company. No calls. No interviews. Rent was coming due. My \$900 was dwindling fast and I was tired of eating Ramen Pride noodles (bulk, cardboard noodles you can buy for like 15 cents a meal). I had to do something.

I increased my marketing activities on my website by learning search engine optimization and by sending out small, targeted email campaigns. I frequented the downtown Phoenix library and continued to read about programming languages; mainly at the time HTML and Javascript.

Then one day it happened: I got a call from a company in New York who said they loved our website service and was wondering if "we" could design a website for them. I obliged with a price of \$400. They thought the price was a steal and 24 hours later, the company in NY had a website which I designed for them.

I was ecstatic. In 24 hours, I had 95% of the rent payment (rent was only \$475). Then ironically, not 24 hours later, I received another call from a company in Wichita Kansas asking for the same thing... a website. I designed theirs for \$600 and it took me 2 days to complete. I had another rent payment! I also was able to save some money!

This was turning point #1. I said to myself, "f*ck these companies; if they don't want to give me a job, ill make my own jobs". I continued to market my website and started to become a "known player" in my marketplace. I continued to pour my efforts into my website service's success, its improvement, and its notoriety.

Subsequently, I would continue to design website for companies who also were in my marketplace as this (Currently) was paying the bills.

My first 3 or 4 months in Phoenix I was able to make it on my own for the first time in my life; no odd-ball jobs. No flower boy. No bus boy. No pizza delivery. I was purely self employed for the first time in my life.

I did realize however, that most of my income was being generated from website design, not my website (my website was a business service) - I did not want to have my income "tied" to a laboring activity (which was website design.) Little did I know, years later, Robert Kiyosaki* would pen this activity an "S-QUADRANT" activity - I knew I didn't want to be there, even though it was paying the bills.

*Robert Kiyosaki - co-author of "Rich Dad, Poor Dad: What the Rich Teach Their Kids About Money - That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not!"

In the winter I had a friend visit from Chicago. I showed him my business concept and he was amazed at all the HITS I was receiving. Inquiries to use my service would come EVERY MINUTE. (We'd see the inquiries by email -- my email box would have 450 emails, we'd talk for 10 minutes, click the refresh button, and then I'd have 483 emails.)

He was amazed and gave me the idea that would put me toward TURNING POINT #2. He said, "Dude, you gotta turn those emails into \$\$ somehow".

He was right, but how? He left me with this question and I was intent on figuring it out. A few days later, I believe I found the solution and I was ready to move with it. The problem was, moving to this type of "revenue model" was dangerous and it would kill my revenue generation, at least in the short term.

I remember the day I switched and the days prior. I told my friend at the time, "I'm going to be living on tuna for the next 2 months as this revenue model will take time to work, if it does even work".

The first month I generated \$473

(I know this because it is logged in my journal! Luckily I had website design jobs to pay the bills!)

2nd month: \$694

3rd month \$970

4th month: \$1832

5th month: \$2314

6th month: \$3733

It was working. Revenue generation was increasing. As my site continued to grow, I continued to educate myself on programming. I was constantly improving the website.

95% of the improvements came from customers -- their suggestions. Within days, sometimes hours, we would implement customer suggestions. My business's success was much predicated on LISTENING to what customers are asking for, and implementing it.

Key Point : MJ's business was DEMAND driven. He listened to customers and gave them what they wanted - rather than trying to sell them something he thought they wanted.

I continued for many months on this principle: Listening to customers, improving my skills from programming to search engine optimization. I worked LONG AND HARD ... 40 hours was a vacation week -- typical work weeks were 60 hours long.

The beauty of it was this: I didn't feel like I was working. I enjoyed most of it. There is a gratification of seeing your work being used and benefited from. Hundreds, thousands, were benefiting from my service as I was really, truly filling a need.

That was when I discovered the error of my past business failings, including my ventures in MLM. Are you truly filling an need with this business, and if so, are you doing it the best? Every business I ventured into was predicated on **"how can I make money?"** theory.

Sadly, I see much of this mentality - "how can I make money" , "what business will make me money?".

WRONG WRONG WRONG. It starts with **NEEDS**. Solve problems. Fill needs. Make things easier for people. Streamline systems better than your competitors. With this foundation, success is only steps away.

In 2000, my business telephone starting ringing with a different type of call. Technology companies started to call to see if I was interested in "selling my business". In 2000, all you heard about was "Dot-Com Millionaires" and how they became instant millionaires by selling their tech companies. Mark Cuban became an instant billionaire by selling "Broadcast.com"

Was I interested in selling my company? HELL YEA!!!!

After it was all said and done I was offered by 3 different companies, 3 different offers. At the time, my business was generating \$17 000/mo in revenue -- I was clearing about \$6000 monthly.

Offer 1: \$250,000

Offer 2: \$550,000

Offer 3: \$1.2 million

I took offer 3 and became a millionaire. The company which bought me out also had a good chance of going IPO as well and the stock options they gave me could be worth millions. I couldn't believe it, but I did it! NO MORE RAMEN PRIDE AND TUNA!

Then came the DOT-COM BUST. I continued to work on the side (from a consultancy standpoint) for the company that purchased my business.

I watched them bury the business into the ground.

I watched them piss money out the window like it was water. I watched them struggle and make business decisions like they were fixated in semi-dry concrete. I couldn't believe my eyes as I watched "these people" (Silicon Valley folks that had \$12 million in venture funding) destroy my creation.

It seemed they only cared about "REVENUE REVENUE REVENUE" - how can we make more money? I was familiar with this mindset and how it doesn't really improve business systems. I kept telling them, "No! How do we ADD VALUE to our customers so they will be willing to pay more"

A few months later, this company was 2 months from bankruptcy. They had opted to "shut-down" my business (even though it was still generating decent revenues and net income). They could not liquidate the company because buyers dried up -- stocks were in the TANK and no tech companies were BUYING - they were ALL LIQUIDATING.

I wasn't willing to watch my creation be sent to the toilet. In addition, thousands of customer's would be left standing and upset. I proposed to "repurchase" my company back from the Silicon Valley vultures. I negotiated a "bargain-basement" offer - a "fire-sale" price - and it was accepted.

Now I had my company back and a fire to "show them people".

The next 18 months or so I was revitalized to take my service(s) to the next level. In conjunction, I created other services to further multiply my income growth. I also was motivated to show the clowns in Silicon Valley "THIS IS HOW ITS DONE".

I continued to become a book monger. I was always reading. Received a doctorate from Toilet University. Continued to improve my website; integrate new technologies and listen to customers.

Here I am today with several websites and one current project ongoing. The goal is to sell one, or all of the properties once valuations which the \$5million range.

My business growth has been explosive, to say the least. My biggest month \$\$\$ wise (NET, not gross) has been \$132,000. \$132K in one month! I think that is more than most NFL football and/or hockey players make. The last 6 months I've socked-away, on average, over \$100K/month. My goal set last year was to make more than 100K in one month. That was done. Now, it is \$200K net, in one month. Let me tell you, the tax consequences on making this kind of \$\$ is sickening; so much, that Las Vegas is calling.

Now, when you generate this kind of income, its very easy to become a millionaire and a multi-millionaire. I become a multi -millionaire in late June of this year. I am 33. I celebrated with my girlfriend by having a cigar and a Corona; heavy on the lime.

I also would have gotten there QUICKER if I DID NOT sell my business back in 2000. However, in hindsight, when you are eating Cardboard Noodles and someone throws a \$1.2

million offer in your face, not many people would say "no"!

So how did I do it?

- 1) Fill needs. Solve problems. And if its being done? DO IT BETTER than anyone else.
- 2) Never stop learning and educating yourself.
- 3) Throw away "how can I make money?" mindset. It will lead you no where.
- 4) On the internet, build "systems" that generate cash.

An example: Websitepulse.com

This is a monitoring service. It is a system that makes money. Do the math: 11,000 accounts served with the average account costing \$50/mo -- this is \$605,000 PER MONTH. This is an internet business system where the "business" is the system itself. No products. No shipping. No headaches. Just a "system" that fills a need and does it well. I speculate this website is generating nets in the \$450,000 range, per month. How quickly would you become a millionaire earning \$450K/mo??? Or, would you rather save \$200/month from your \$45K/year salary? Folks, this is apples to oranges and the playing field is NOT levelled by those who traverse the E-Quadrant. You must get on the playing field where home runs can be hit. It ain't happening at Motorola or at Firestone Tires as a sales rep.

5) Systems are easier to administrate, vs product based sites. Systems have no product and/or shipping headaches. No returns and exchanges.

6) B2B is better then C2B - consumers are fickle with their money - most companies are not, if they suspect a positive ROI.

7) Your goals can be better achieved in an environment that promotes your success (away from negative influences, people, etc.) In my case, not seeing the sun was killing me as well as some peers who had "safe secure jobs" and couldn't understand why I was delivering pizzas. I got into an environment that fostered my goals and allowed me to focus.

8) Systems can be created by anyone. Partners. Hired-out. In-house. However, it is always best to have control over your systems and this typically involves a creator that is a partner, or yourself. I lost control over the system once the company was sold.

9) Imitation is NOT flattery: My business system has been copied 6 times by 6 different companies; 1 fraudulently. Lawyers are expensive. Protect what you have. (This is why I never disclose my business systems and the industries we operate)

10) Focus. Focus. Focus. Another failing of mine in my early years was failure to focus on one thing. I was moving from one opportunity to the next with no focus. It wasn't until I was confronted with not paying rent and "ramen pride" withdrawal until my focus was sharpened. Do one thing the best and stick with it - make adjustments as you go.

11) You must do something you enjoy. I failed MLM because I hated the concept it represented and I knew, deep down, that I truly was still working for someone and making someone else rich. I hated the concept and the thought of "recruiting". Sure, some products were great but when it all came down to it, I WORKED FOR SOMEONE. The company that facilitates the MLM system was TOP DOG and was leveraging my efforts. I felt a part of a cattle call of people who lacked innovation and resolve to be creative on their own. "Turn-Key" for me meant "we will think for you".

I think its sad that 95% of the MLMers don't see this. I always say, "you don't want to JOIN an MLM, you want to create the MLM". Again, "The Food Chain Theory"- you want to be at the top of it; not the middle or the bottom. Franchisee or Franchisor? You can become a billionaire franchising a successful business concept; possibly a millionaire by being the franchisee. As for MLM, yes, you can be successful in an MLM but the odds are decisively against you --- when its all said and done, you are still working for someone else, and at the mercy of an organization and their rules. I've tried 4 and failed all 4 because I instinctively knew this. If you create an MLM, provide the MLM system and support, then you truly are an entrepreneur of vision of innovation and most importantly, TOP DOG.

12) Don't listen to those who have less. "you should do this, you should do that"-- oh yea? What's your net worth? These experts can only lead you to their level of success. There are always people who MUST BE RIGHT - let it be. Let them be right. You be rich. I'd rather be wrong and rich, than poor and right.

13) There is no get rich quick. I worked heavy hours for years - the difference was, I enjoyed it and felt I was growing and improving myself.

14) DO NOT ask me for the address of any my business websites. You won't get them. You also won't get the specific details (operations, revenue models, etc.) At some point, you have to "create"and think on your own. Please refer to #9.

15) Wear sunscreen in the Phoenix summer while cleaning your pool or you will get burned, no matter how "olive toned" you are.

16) No matter how fast or rare your car is, some punk will always try to race you in his BMW or Honda and think he will win. You're dreaming.

CONTINUATION of MY STORY

As I wrote previously, my "story" is still ongoing. I still have goals which are far from finished. My current goal was to sell my company once valuations reached the \$5 million range. Short term, to NET more than \$200K in one month.

Well if anyone keeps a watch on the markets you will notice that merger and acquisition activity has picked up in the last 6 months. With this, my company (once again) has been entertaining acquisition offers.

On Friday, I received an offer for my company for \$2.5 million.

Sadly, I didn't accept the offer but I will continue to discuss/negotiate terms with the potential buyer.

After I rejected the offer and told the buyer I would counter, I took some time to reflect 6 years ago I was eating tuna out of a can - today I am rejecting more than \$2 million dollars because it is "too risky" for me (that's what I told the buyer).

I believe they call this a quantum leap?

MJ

Questions

What is the physical process you go through to test your idea. I know you make an educated guess as to whether you can make a go of it. Then when you've got your plan together you build a site. What then do you do to test your idea with your site?

Testing, although important, is overrated. I prefer the word "research" vs "testing".

Sometimes the research is pretty simple: Is there a market it? Is it simplifying something? Is it providing a benefit? Is the revenue model you are using viable to the end user enough to warrant their pocketbooks being opened?

Sometimes, you just gotta do it. The MARKET will determine ultimately if your site works, or doesn't. Once launched, you make continual adjustments based on user feedback; even the "YOUR SITE SUCKS!" comments are valid and important!!

My current project ... I asked several people in the industry their thoughts ... their gripes ... what they "wish there was"... what they "hate"... etc pretty simple research. I also did a routine search on the web to determine the market viability - namely, are people searching for this stuff?

If you choose a market that has a need, but the need is too small, you are destined for trouble. The key about niche's is that it needs to be small enough to avoid the big companies, yet, small enough to generate big \$\$ for a small company.

However, I am not following my own advice; my current project (and another one in the back of my mind) goes against this thinking -- the major players are backed by some pretty big companies who are publicly owned.

I figure my prior experience will carry me through allowing me to make some "noise"... when a small player starts making "noise" in a large market space, the telephone starts ringing with acquisition offers which are basically "get out of our market space" buyouts.

If you cause "noise" in a large market space and the big-guys see it, you become an acquisition target. . . .

Remember, if you sell your business (ebusiness or brick-and-mortar) for \$10 million to "joe public internet company" you keep AT LEAST \$8 million.

I believe this to be the fastest train out of the rat race.

How realistic you think it is to run a B2B system with a Ramen Pride budget?

It depends on how bad you want it. As stated above, I worked very hard. I honed my skill set with each failure and each success.

In my beginning years, I learned "customer service" was key. I was known to return emails within MINUTES. My customers soon knew that we stood by our services.

Have you ever sent an email to a company and get it returned 2 days later? My employees are trained to return emails within MINUTES, at worse, HOURS.

I learned customer service. Sales. Programming. You have to learn how to become a "jack-of-all-trades" until you can build momentum. The hardest part in my field is

TECHNOLOGICAL -- you already have that skill set. The other skill sets are easier to obtain; sales, customer service, design fundamentals, etc.

When I started I lived meekly. I didn't drive around in a BMW and live in a luxury, 2 bedroom apartment. I sacrificed. I struggled. Many times I got angry as I watched others "steal" my ideas and try to claim them their own. Don't get me wrong; it was a wild and trying ride and as I write, that ride continues.

The name of the game is momentum. Find a need and fill it. Build your system. Yes, you may have to play CTO, Graphic Artist, Customer Service Rep, CEO and CFO ALL AT THE SAME TIME. Once you start to build momentum, you can start hiring people to relieve you of these specific tasks.

As for ideas, my god. I can't sleep at night sometimes because there are so many opportunities for these "systems"- many of which are new and/or can be done better.

My current project which I am working on is in a heavily saturated market. However, I believe I can do IT BETTER. My competitors will be fully-funded Silicon Valley companies, some well established.

Can I compete with them? You bet. Why? Because I OWN the business 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I can conform to customer needs in hours. The competitor in Silicon Valley company has employees that go home at 5:30 and forget about business. I never forget.

In addition, the pricing methodology some of these companies are employing are definitely applied with the theory to maximize revenue. I will be approaching from the standpoint of maximizing VALUE. The value will allow me earn (steal) their existing customers. In addition, because my overhead is so low, I can further increase the value proposition to client end users.

Can you do it? Sure you can. Question is, how bad are you willing to sacrifice? I lost many weekends of "fun" in exchange for a new user interface, or an enhanced customer feature.

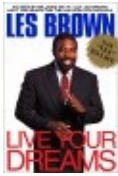
An interesting note: My manager who runs the day-to-day operations of my business tells me that most of our customer's think we are "some giant corporation" with dozens of employees.

There is nothing wrong with appearing like a large "venture funded" corporation (it scares competitors) but you always want to deal with people in a very attentive, non-corporate manner.

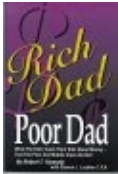
Could you recommend some good books and other references for someone starting out?



[Awaken the Giant Within](#) by Anthony Robbins



[Live Your Dreams](#) by Les Brown



[Rich Dad, Poor Dad: What the Rich Teach Their Kids About Money- That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not!](#) by Robert T. Kiyosaki, Sharon L. Lechter

How do you find a need? Do you recommend finding a need in business processes, or needs of consumers? As to business processes, how could we find a way to observe the needs?

You've got to listen and watch your environment. How many times have you said "boy I wish there was an easier way too [blank]". Also, you own actions and mental thoughts expose needs, or processes which could be simplified. You have to learn to recognize when this happens; my mind is so trained to watch this now I am overrun with ideas. (Not just Internet, but brick-and-mortar too!)

What is the mental or physical process that you go through to truly determine whether an idea is a winner or not? Are you testing your ideas first and if so how?

It is just something I recognize throughout the rigors of daily life. Some ideas are being done partially, or not at all. Or, not well accessed.

Let me give you an example of the latest "idea" I had -- this is just 1 of MANY that come to me weekly.

I am looking to build a custom home sometime in 2004 -- I just started to research custom home builders (which are a different breed than regular "tract" home builders) -- in my quest, I found myself saying "Boy, I wish there was a website that listed all the custom home builders with past customer ratings". Specifically, a site that "rated" them simply by past customers. A custom home is a big decision and I am sure consumers would like a depot to conduct research.

Of course this is just an idea. Things get more complex as you would need to attach a revenue model to the site, research markets, etc. Point is: I found myself saying "I wish there was blah blah" and viola, there is a business idea.

As for determining the value of the idea, more research would be required -- how many people are searching for this info? How big is the marketplace? Are custom home builders willing to be rated?

Most of my education was acquired via books, newsletters - a lot of reading. My formal education: BS Marketing and BS Finance -- getting both degrees did broaden my knowledge - I feel however the value in college was the development of interpersonal relationships, time management, discipline, etc.

I found the part you wrote about how you come about your ideas very inspirational - I don't consider myself to be great at coming up with ideas - but now I can see a path to coming up with at least one each day

My "idea" spotting sometimes is a curse. There is so much opportunity out there -- some opportunities are better than others but they do exist and I've had to learn to focus -- lack of focus (too much opportunity) can also be detrimental.

Another example I found recently - and my god - it is so simple:

I was at the mall in a Bath and Bodyworks store and my girlfriend started messing around with this wire thingy - it looked like a spider with tiny little balls at the end of the legs ... this "thingy" apparently is a **scalp massager** that you place on your head and move it back and forth - I laughed until she tried it on me - my god - it was heaven.

So I ask the girl how much for the scalp massager and she said \$25. The thing probably took 90 cents to make and was grossly overpriced. Nonetheless, I wanted one and didn't care what it cost. The store clerk told me they were all sold out. **Sold out!!!** So, I said I wanted to buy the "store model". She said she can't sell it.

Anyways, I left without the scalp massager and thought to myself -- the inventor of that thing is a genius and now he is probably very wealthy -- all for good reason -- his invention will give relaxation pleasure to millions -- hence -- he will be paid millions.

The ultra-wealth equation always seems to come back to the same principle -- help millions, make millions.

MJ

PS: Anyone have one of these scalp massagers?

Editors note : About Ideas

Ideas are the lifeblood of any business ... and just one good idea could be worth millions to you.

But what if you have problems coming up with ideas?

The thing with ideas is that **they come when you least expect it** - and only when all that incessant "mind chatter" has died down. In the middle of the night, or in the shower. Maybe it's while you're out walking the dog.

I'm going to share with you a technique that played a major part in changing my life - as well as allowing those ideas to come bigger and better and easier than before, it had tremendous side effects such as increased confidence, better well being, less stress.

And unbelievably, all it takes is relaxing and listening to a CD for half hour a day... but boy does it work!

It's called **Holosync** - for more information (and a free trial) [click here](#)

Further reading, tools & resources



The Intrepreneurs Notebook :

Let me take you by the hand and turn you into a "**cash on demand**" Intrepreneur. I'll tell you everything you need to know about Internet Marketing, Hot opportunities and programming yourself for success - [completely free - click here](#)

Creating Wealth from Ideas: [Click Here](#)

A step-by-step manual *revealing all the secrets* of how ordinary people are making fortunes with Ideas - and how you can too.

Home Biz Ideas Goldmine 1035 : [Click Here](#)

1035 Home Business Ideas to get you thinking about profitable opportunities!

The 30 Day Blueprint for Success : [Click Here](#)

A massive 4 volume set : Dozens of top Internet Entrepreneurs reveal the methods and strategies they use to build online fortunes.

EzOutliner Software: [Click Here](#)

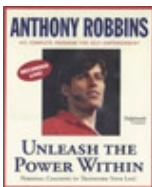
Outline & organise your ideas with this software

Unleash the Magic in Goals: [Click Here](#)

The reality is ... most people would like to achieve more, do more, be more, and make more of their lives but they fail to make any progress. 97% of the population are leading lives of quiet desperation with their dreams and passion for life slowly fading away with each passing day!

Don't let this be you ... join me in becoming one of the top 3% of people who are living their lives with a specific design and plan!

Unleash The Giant Within by Anthony Robbins : [Click Here](#)



"There is a powerful, driving force inside every human being that, once unleashed, can make any vision, dream or desire a reality."
- Tony Robbins

The power was given to you at the moment you were born. Its source is unlimited. And when you seize it, you'll have everything you need to create a life filled with more passion, excitement, confidence and joy than you've ever dreamed. Isn't it time to *Unleash the Power Within* ; and claim your extraordinary potential?

The Power of Purpose by Les Brown : [Click Here](#)



Les Brown's exceptional new program, The Power of Purpose, will not only help you answer that question, it will also lead you step-by-step toward making each and every one of your dreams come true.

Many of the world's greatest leaders were called failures, until they discovered their life purpose. When you choose an occupation that is truly compatible with your preferences, abilities, and unique personality, you will at last begin to understand the meaning of true happiness and personal success.

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