

CHAPTER 3

Yes You Can: Turn Deficits into Opportunities

Success isn't just about the Benjamins

A YOUNG GUY from Texas moves to California and goes to a big “everything under one roof” store looking for a job.

The manager asks, “Do you have any sales experience?”

The kid says, “Yeah, I was a salesman back home in Texas.”

The boss liked the kid’s attitude so he gave him the job. “You can start 8am tomorrow morning,” he said, “I’ll come down after we close and see how you did.”

His first day on the job was rough but he got through it. After the store was locked up, the boss pulled his new employee aside. “How many sales did you make today?”

The kid says, "One."

The boss says, "Just one? Son, that's not good enough. Our sales people average 20 or 30 sales a day. How much was the sale for?"

The kid replies, "\$102,647.00."

The boss, shocked, says, "\$102,647.00? What the heck did you sell?"

The kid says, "First I sold him a small fish hook. Then I sold him a medium fish hook. Then I sold him a larger fish hook. Then I sold him a new fishing rod. Then I asked him where he was going fishing and he said down at the coast, so I told him he was gonna need a boat, so we went down to the boat department and I sold him that 20-foot Bassmaster. Then he said he didn't think his Honda Civic would pull it, so I took him down to the automotive department and sold him a 4X4 pickup."

In shock, the boss says, "A guy came in here to buy a fish hook and you sold him a boat and truck?"

So the kid replies, "No, he came in here to buy a box of tampons for his wife and I said, 'Well, your weekend's shot, you might as well go fishing.'"

YOU NEVER KNOW what opportunity you'll be presented with; how will you respond when you're face to face with it?

As an American, seventy-five percent of the world's population already considers you wealthy. You may be a cashier at the mall, a

sanitation worker, or a security guard. But ask the citizens of Africa, Columbia, Peru, Thailand, or any number of other countries if they would consider you wealthy and they'd answer, "yes." Three out of four people in the world would consider a person making \$8.00 an hour wealthy. The majority of Americans are already better off than most of the world's population. It's like running the 100 yard dash and you get to start at the 75 yard line. You don't have to go far. Isn't America great?

Most Americans believe that becoming successful means you have earned a fortune and you'll never need to worry about money again. There's an old saying, "Fortune smiles on he who waits." Let me tell you: Don't believe it! Fortune smiles on the person who is *success oriented*. Fortune smiles on those who make fortune happen. Fortune will smile on you if you reach out and grab opportunity. But don't just grab and hang on, shake it, tear it apart and improve on it. If you are eager and ready to dedicate your time and life to becoming successful, then do it. Take a chance and grab that opportunity. Don't wait and don't hesitate. Don't make excuses. The difference between successful and unsuccessful people isn't about money, where you went to college, or who your Daddy knows. It's about what you do with the opportunities that are present in your life and how you position yourself to make new ones.

Live Joyfully and Have Fun

The joy of living comes from finding joy in doing whatever it is you do, rather than going through life with your eyes half closed, and, at the end of your lifetime, having regrets at never fulfilling your dreams.

I have met too many 40, 50, and 60 year old people who look back

on their lives and wish they had taken more chances, explored more opportunities, and reached for more goals. They tell me they simply didn't think they had the time, money, skills, knowledge, or initiative to make changes in their lives. They say they were scared to chase their dreams. And here they are 30 years later, wondering why life isn't more fulfilling. It's really rather sad and something I hope you never deal with.

Here's how I approach life and make it fun.

Each day I give myself a test: find something and look at it a different way. I try to think of the world as one big defect and my goal each day is to figure out how to fix or improve one thing. Why does the water bucket always spill when I carry it across the backyard and how can I fix it? Why do we board planes from the rear forward when it would make more sense to board from the outside seats into the aisle? How can we fix music education in America and expose thousands of children and teenagers to the arts while shoring up the fortunes of local orchestras? Why can't I search the Internet for the information I want and not get 10,000 search results that don't matter to me?

After a while this becomes a game that is quite fun. If you want to try this in action, go sit in your car with a video camera and tape everything you'd change about your car. Hate the buttons on the radio? Videotape it and describe how you would change the design. Don't like the way the steering wheel tilts? Videotape it and describe how you'd fix it. Don't care for the way the seat belt holder squeaks against the leather seats? You guessed it: videotape it and describe how you'd fix it. Go ahead, look around the car and tell the camera what is wrong. You're bound to find something you don't like. When you're done, watch the video and look at all the items you found. You may be surprised with the number of "defects" you came up with. Now picture doing this every day. Just find one item that you think you can improve

upon. Perhaps something will even jump out at you that will form the basis of a patent or a product or an entire business.

This exercise will help you develop problem solving skills and increase your creativity. It will help you gain insight into how things work. Best of all, it will expose you to new ways of thinking, for as everyone else lives with the status quo, you'll begin thinking outside the box, continuously seeking new ways to accomplish things. You can't help but become more entrepreneurial in your thinking when you view things as being defective and needing your special skills to fix them.

Now I don't expect you to take every defect and create a business around it, but there may just be one or two that could lead you to success. What is it that you know that seems painfully obvious to you, but that others ignore? Perhaps there is a business there. I recently started a company that documents home inventory because I found a better way of doing something that I knew most people didn't want to take the time to do.

Here's a tip: if you determine that one of the defects you found can form a business, you'll probably enjoy building that business because the seed – the core idea – came from you.

With so many defects in the world, I believe that every day has the potential for success and achievement. I am constantly open to new ideas and opportunities. Fortune continues to smile on me because I am still hard at work on every aspect of my life, seeking opportunities wherever they may hide. My life is filled with work, but I make it fun. My career is work, but I enjoy it because I know every challenge I undertake leads to my definition of success; which in turn makes it fun. My love life is work, but she and I make it fun. When we have to deal with things like maintaining the house or figuring out how to get some alone time together, we view it as a great opportunity instead of an obstacle. My children are work, but the gleam in my sons' eyes when I

walk into the room makes it fun.

You too can have a life filled with fun. Think of it this way: if you have a dream and a goal and you are heading toward that goal, even the most treacherous and cataclysmic roadblocks can be fun if you focus on overcoming them and learning from them. Then you can look back on those roadblocks knowing that each one you tackled and managed to overcome put you one inch closer to your goal.

In the months immediately following my graduation from college, I decided to write a magazine article (a short-term goal) about how the Amish community of Wayne County, Ohio uses retired harness horses. I pitched the idea and received a freelance contract from *HoofBeats* magazine. Then I bought a couple dozen rolls of film, a notepad, and put a full tank of gas in my car. I found a contact in the Amish community who not only bought retired horses, but bred and raised them as well. I was ready to go out and take a swing at becoming a photojournalist. I had just one problem, one hurdle that seemed impossible to overcome. You see, the Amish religious beliefs prevent them from engaging in “graven images.” They don’t have mirrors and they certainly don’t have photographs. To believe for a minute that a 21-year-old college kid, wearing a Ted Nugent t-shirt and jeans and driving a black Honda Prelude with tinted windows and chrome wheels was going to come into their community and photograph them was preposterous. What an insurmountable challenge this posed! But let me share something with you. I knew I had to gain the trust of my subjects. I met with community leaders, attended church services, shared my writings with families, and built that trust. I was honest with them and they sensed my sincerity. I explained how they would not have to see the photographs I would take, and that I’d only use pictures that were important to the story and portrayed their community and its standards in a positive light. I ended up with hundreds of great

pictures, the magazine ran a multi-page story, and my work won the top Photojournalism Award from the American Horse Council in 1986. Had I let a roadblock get in my way of my goal, I wouldn't have won that award and I wouldn't have made longtime friends in the Amish community whom I still visit when I travel through central Ohio.

I hope you are beginning to see a pattern here of how I define success. For me, it isn't just about money. Money is simply the by-product of being successful. Success is what I accomplish in my career, my life, and with my family. It's about learning new things. It's about having an idea and doing something with it. It's about whom I meet along the way and how I maintain those relationships.

As I mentioned in the last chapter, there are no excuses for lack of success: not education, money, handicaps or any other barrier you can think of. I have approached success throughout my life by understanding that if I want something bad enough, I can get it. I earned my first money when I was nine years old and I started out with little formal education and no capital funds. I simply had a fierce desire to obtain something I wanted, probably a toy that is long gone, but I wanted it and I got it. I opened for business at 1046 East Beau Street and by the end of my first and last day in business I had grossed \$12.50. My lemonade stand was the vehicle that helped me reach that early goal. Success!

Like most young people I held a variety of jobs growing up: stock boy, busboy, maintenance worker, lawn cutter, paperboy. Little do any of us realize but all these jobs teach us about running our own businesses. We learn people skills, customer relations, knowledge of finance, sales tactics, marketing, operations and more. We learn commitment and living up to our responsibilities. Combined, these skills set the stage for future success.

“But Bill,” you say, “That’s a rinky-dink lemonade stand, not a real business.” I argue it is. When you think of running your own business, the day-to-day operations are just like that little lemonade stand, only bigger. My *cost of goods* (lemonade, cups, and water) was about \$1.50. My *ad budget* was 40 cents (two sheets of poster board and a marker). My *labor costs* were nil because I was the sole proprietor. I *priced* my *product* at 25 cents a cup which meant at the end of the day, I had operated my business at an 80% *profit* margin. My *customers* were my neighbors and those passing by who had a thirst to quench and I just happened to be selling the best tasting lemonade on that block. All the basic elements of running a business were present in that little lemonade stand.

A business is as basic as five elements that flow from one to another: *PRODUCT*, *COST*, *PRICING*, *SALES*, and *PROFIT*. Together they may seem like a lot to comprehend, but taken individually, it is easy to understand how to create your business. The *PRODUCT* is what you sell. The *COST* is what you pay to be able to provide it to a customer. *PRICING* is your cost plus your desired profit which leads you to the total price of your product. *SALES* is the act of getting customers to buy your product. *PROFIT* is what you take home at the end of the day. Put together, they form the basis of what every entrepreneur must know about running a successful business.

Have a Simple Business Model

I enjoyed working for Bruce Todd at his advertising agency, but I knew I would never be president of his firm and would never enjoy the definition of success that I had in my mind if I worked for someone else. It was not an easy decision for me to make when I quit at age 24 from what was a great job to strike out on my own. Like most people, I

had a rent payment, car payment, insurance, mounting credit card debt and other monthly bills. What made the decision even more difficult was that with no money, no steady income and no accounts receivable, I was going to start my own ad agency in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 300 miles from where all my current clients were located.

I was barely able to afford the two-hundred twenty-five dollars a month office rent, credit card payment from buying desks, drafting tables and all the other necessities, plus my personal debts.

In December 1989 I hung a shingle on the door of Townsend Advertising Corporation and began looking for clients. My *product* was advertising. My *cost* of conducting business was office space, computers, and other overhead that I estimated was going to cost me \$30 per hour. I also wanted to earn \$30 an hour, figuring if I could bill clients 1500 hours of my time each year, I could take home a \$45,000 salary. Thus, my *pricing* was \$60 an hour (my costs + salary) plus a built in profit of \$40 an hour for a total of \$100 an hour.

Townsend Advertising Corporation's business model looked as simple as this:

	<u>Revenues</u>	<u>Costs</u>	<u>Profit/Hour</u>
Overhead	\$30	(\$30)	\$0
Salary	\$30	(\$30)	\$0
<u>Profit/Hr.</u>	<u>\$40</u>	<u>(\$0)</u>	<u>\$40</u>
Total	\$100	(\$60)	\$40

At the end of the first year, through carefully watching my spending, overhead came in under the \$30 per hour rate and I billed 1540 hours so my company's financials looked like this:

	<u>Revenues</u>	<u>Costs</u>	<u>Profit</u>
Overhead	\$46,200	(\$28,211)	\$17,989
Salary	\$46,200	(\$45,000)	\$1,200
<hr/> Profit/Hr.	<hr/> \$61,600	<hr/> \$0	<hr/> \$61,600
Total	\$154,000	(\$73,211)	\$80,789

By watching my costs, I was able to net an additional \$17,989 in profit (estimated overhead billed at \$30 an hour minus actual overhead of \$28,211) and by beating my goal of 1500 billable hours, I was able to realize additional salary (\$1,200) and profit levels (\$61,600) which carried over into my second year of operations.

To be honest, I was flying by the seat of my pants. I didn't know if my overhead/salary/profit formula would work or not, but I drew a line in the sand and made that my business model. It may seem simplistic, but for someone just getting started in business, simple is better. There's an old adage of "KISS" which stands for "*Keep It Simple, Stupid*" and it really makes sense. The more simplistic your business model, the easier it is to reach your goals.

Write Down Your Goals and Read Them Often

How did I lower my costs? When I started the advertising agency I had a list of five clients that I desperately wanted to represent. That's a pretty easy goal, don't you think? I wrote this list on a piece of paper the same size as a dollar bill and I kept in my wallet next to any cash I had. Each time I'd reach in to pull out a few dollars I'd see it. It became a constant reminder of my goal. It also had the unintended effect of making me question why I was going to blow \$20 on some silly

expenditure that I really didn't need. I looked at that piece of paper so many times that it eventually became so ratty I had to replace it. I replaced it three times over the next four years, but my firm eventually represented all five of the targeted companies, plus 31 more.

So how did I go about getting clients? Just prior to opening the agency, I devised a strategy to create a bimonthly newsletter about advertising and mail it to a list of 200 prospects. Since I loved reading about what works in advertising, I figured others would too. My newsletter was a marketing piece for the firm and researching the newsletter's content kept me current on advertising trends, consumer studies, effective design, and other pieces of information critical to the success of my company. In a way, I took what was normally considered homework – researching the industry – and turned it into something fun that I could share with prospects and clients.

Within each newsletter I would purposefully misspell a word. I held a monthly contest where the first five recipients to locate a typographic error would win a subscription to *Success* magazine. Every two months I spent \$256 on printing and mailing a newsletter and purchasing five subscriptions to *Success*. Why would I do this? Imagine the ease of getting to speak with one of my prospects when a month later I'd call and say, "Jill, it's Bill Townsend at Townsend Advertising Corp. I was calling to make sure your subscription to *Success* magazine had reached you." This is a much better way to begin a conversation with a prospect than simply calling to see if you can do business with them. I had dozens of prospects each year that helped me open their own door by responding to my contest. (By the way, did you catch the misspelled word in the last paragraph?)

To be honest, the success of the newsletter surprised me. I believe it

was well received because it wasn't a sales pitch about my firm, but instead focused on informing the reader about a topic that was of interest to them. Prospects want to know what you can do for them, what you can offer to make them more successful or profitable, or perhaps just how you can simplify their job. My company's name, address, and phone number were on it so the reader wouldn't forget who was smart enough to share this information with them.

After the first newsletter was mailed I had three calls, and after three phone discussions I had my first appointment. Two days later I was driving to Cleveland to meet the president of a small manufacturing company. I drove four hours to the client's offices and met with my prospect for a little over an hour. I spent 15 minutes talking about my company and 55 minutes asking about his. After all, I needed to learn as much about his business and its challenges in order to know what to pitch him. After the meeting I drove four hours home, for a total of 8 hours of driving in a single day. My reason for not staying over was quite simple: I couldn't afford a hotel room. I wrote a 22-page marketing proposal and submitted it a few days later. I didn't get the business. It turned out the prospect appreciated my take on his business but felt my company wasn't large enough to support his goals. Well, this obstacle was unacceptable to me. I sent him an 11 x 17 inch flier with pictures of the 8 people on my staff:

President: me

Creative Director: me

Art Director: me

Copywriter: me

Media Planner: me

Media Buyer: me

Account Supervisor: me

Receptionist: me

It didn't change his mind and he awarded his business to another firm. But an interesting thing happened about four months later, when I received a call from another company looking for a firm to create a series of brochures. The president of the company I pitched in Cleveland had referred me to them. He was so impressed with my creative response to his rejection that he had enthusiastically referred me to several of his business acquaintances, telling them I was "a real go-getter." Over the next five years I created seven different brochures for this new client, who spent over \$100,000 with my company. All this was possible because of my attempt to overcome an obstacle that was in my path to success.

My advertising agency grew to represent 36 clients in all areas of industry with an emphasis on law, technology, and healthcare. In my first year of business I made a profit. I was living high on the hog. Not financially, but emotionally. You see, my first vision of success was to create a profitable company, which I did. My second vision of success was to do great work, which I did. My third vision of success was to take home a paycheck to pay my personal bills, which I did.

Through hard and industrious work, I found myself succeeding where others said I'd fail. I attribute this to one thing: keeping focused on my definition of success. I looked for business everywhere. I'd meet people at the gas station and give them my card. I'd attend Chamber of Commerce meetings in order to network with other business owners. I

sent direct mail out to every company I wanted to work for, even companies like Alcoa, Aristech Chemical, Bethlehem Steel, and Heinz, which in reality had no use for a small ad agency like mine (although I did get a noteworthy direct marketing project from Aristech in my third year of business in which we mailed pine tree seedlings to their customers as a way of reminding them of Aristech's commitment to the environment).

I was always looking for ways to get my name in front of prospects. Once, as I was looking through my college's alumni magazine, I spotted the name of the director of public relations at The Washington Hospital that was the largest healthcare provider in my hometown and one of the five target clients I wanted. I made an appointment to meet her and we instantly struck up a rapport based on our attending the same college. I sent her a thank you note for her time and added her to my newsletter list. A few months later she called, offering me the chance to create a physician's directory for the hospital. I quoted a price of \$6,000 and delivered it for just over \$5,400, saving my new client almost 10%. That led to another job and yet another and still another. Townsend Advertising represented the hospital for five years.

This brings up another item that I believe is important for the entrepreneur. If you quote a job and deliver it under the quote, pass the savings on to your client. They'll appreciate it and you'll sleep better. Plus, if you ever under-quote a project, your client may be much more willing to help cover the higher costs knowing you had saved them money in the past.

In the early days of my business a young woman came to me looking for a job. Wendy Petronka was a recent graduate of Syracuse University with a degree in Advertising and Psychology. I couldn't afford to hire her at the time, but thinking back to the opportunity Bruce Todd gave me, I suggested I'd teach her what I knew. She could

work with me and any business she brought in she'd run and profit from. She jumped at the opportunity, starting the following week. She worked for me not only at the ad agency, but in two other jobs as well. When I campaigned for a seat in the United States Congress she became my campaign's treasurer and de facto day-to-day manager. When Lycos was founded I hired her to run the advertising technology and traffic system, where she excelled. All this was due to her willingness to jump a hurdle (my inability to pay her) to gain practical experience to help her reach her goals.

Could Wendy have known when she first knocked on my agency's front door that a few years later she'd be working for Lycos and sitting on stock options worth thousands of dollars? Absolutely not. But by taking the first step to reach her goals, she opened the door to opportunity.

I was a guest at a women's networking event sponsored by The Indus Entrepreneurs, a networking organization focused on entrepreneurship. The guest speaker, Donna Dubinsky, former CEO of technology innovator Palm, Inc., was asked by a participant what women can do to make advances in the workplace. Her response? "Do good work. Do great work. You will be noticed."

In 1990 I read an article in a business journal where Ed Smalis of Smalis Corporation wrote: "Smalis will fund any individual having the capabilities and qualities of becoming an entrepreneur. Smalis will provide funding for operations. Smalis will provide funding for inventory. Smalis will provide the capital to interested parties desiring to establish themselves in New Stanton, Pennsylvania. The above are but a few of the opportunities that exist today and are far greater than for those who crossed the Allegheny's in covered wagons."

I was so intrigued by these statements that I immediately called Mr. Smalis and set out to visit him. I learned that he had been a successful

salesman to the mining industry and in his 60s decided to try to help anyone with a marketable idea. In an effort to discover the thinking, background, and business prospects of a potential entrepreneur, Ed would hold lengthy interviews with many potential entrepreneurs. As we discussed his efforts I learned that despite his offer to help entrepreneurs, the one problem he most encountered was the lack of real desire on the part of the prospect. Often people have a great idea, but they aren't willing to work hard to make it a success. They expect everything to be given to them. Sometimes they start a business but don't have the passion to work hard at it, developing new customers, serving those customers, and making their business successful. They expect customers to come to them. Passion is about desire. Desire, coupled with hard work, is what turns motivation into success. Ed had interests in everything from bulldozers to mailboxes. Some things he made money from and some he didn't, but he never knew which would pay off until he worked hard at it. I left that day with much admiration for this gentleman...and a new client for my agency.

Over the next couple years, Ed would share stories of how he overcame great odds to become successful. He would often preach "you must be willing to dedicate yourself to your business and to making money. To do this, you must possess all the qualities of an entrepreneur. Golf, cocktail parties, membership organizations and hobbies are of secondary importance. You can't allow interference from family or friends. You can't be distracted by time off, by so-called "free" evenings, weekends or vacations. Goals are not achieved on the golf course, at cocktail parties, through travel or by attending conventions." If you are into all of the above, you will only be working part-time and no successful business was ever built on part-time work."

I suggested that the highly motivated, hard-driving individual he was searching for no longer exists. "Hogwash!!" he barked back, "He or

she is out there and I'll find that person! I found you, didn't I?"

I don't believe Ed was saying that you have to work 100 hours a week to be successful. I think he was trying to say that if you want to be successful, you have to be dedicated to that pursuit. It may take 40 hours a week or it may take 80 or it may take 100. You won't know how much effort or how many hours you'll have to dedicate to reaching your goals, until you try. But keeping in mind that balancing work, family, recreation, fitness, and other factors of living is important to a person's overall success, it is important to stress that being committed to your career is just as important as being committed to your spouse. You will find the right balance so don't worry about becoming a slave to work. Focus instead on working smartly and accomplishing steps along the road to success and eventually, you'll not only reach your goal, but charge right past it toward another one.

One weekend, Ed invited me to join him and his female companion in Deep Creek, Maryland. We spent hours discussing his background, what worked in business, and how he overcame obstacles. A wealthy man who lived in one of the most luxurious residences in Pittsburgh, he did something during that trip that forever stuck with me. Ed wanted to purchase a camping lantern, and he found the perfect Coleman lantern in a local hardware store. It cost \$39. As I offered to carry it to the cashier he told me to wait a moment while he talked to the manager. I figured he was going to ask questions about the operation of the lantern, but in no time I realized he was inquiring as to the wholesale price and working to get a discount on this relatively inexpensive item. This haggling went back and forth for a couple minutes, and we left with a \$39 lantern discounted to \$28 including tax. In the car I asked him why he'd spend the effort to get an \$11 discount on such a minor item. He responded by saying that the money wasn't the issue; he wanted to find out if the manager was

focused on his goal. “You see,” he said, “that manager’s goal is to become successful and the only way he does that is if he sells products. I wasn’t going to pay \$39 for that lantern and I let him know it, but he wanted to make the sale so badly he dropped the price. Because that sale gets him closer to his goal.”

On the way out of town the following day I stopped at the hardware store to ask the manager why he lowered the lantern’s price. His reply? “I have to support my family and the only way I do that is to sell goods. I may never see that man again, but I believe he’s now a satisfied customer and will come back here in the future for his hardware needs.” This goal-oriented store manager gave up \$11 in profit, yet still makes money because the lantern cost him only \$18, netting him about \$10. In effect, he made \$10 while acquiring a new customer thus putting himself closer to his own goals. If you ask me, that’s not a bad way to conduct business.

Whenever you are in business for yourself you begin to see people in a different light. Before owning my own company I would meet people but never really got to know what motivated them or what they did in their professional lives. Once I owned my ad agency and the monthly bills only got paid if I brought in business, all those two-legged humanoids marching around the malls, movie theaters, restaurants, sporting events and bars became prospects. I saw each person I’d come in contact with as a potential client or someone who knew a client. I wanted to know as much about someone and who they knew as I could.

Ask For Help

Many years later, one of my companies owned a web site called sixdegrees.com. The concept behind Six Degrees was that you could

connect to any person in the world through one to six degrees of separation. It was based off the award-winning play (and later movie) by John, Guare, "Six Degrees of Separation." You know Doug. Doug knows Matt. Matt knows Dean. Dean knows Kevin and you want to know Kevin. The concept works well and can be applied to your own networking to introduce you to the people who can help make you successful. I happen to know a Doug who knows a Matt who knows a Dean who knows a Kevin who I'm helping investigate a new business in the solar powered water purification field.

Don't be afraid to ask people who they know. I am convinced that roughly 90% of the reason people don't succeed is because they don't ask for help. Perhaps they're afraid of rejection. Perhaps they just don't know how to ask. I gladly offer assistance to people who are trying to improve their lot in life. I know dozens, perhaps as many as 100 successful people who will try to assist someone who proves to be ambitious, courteous, and seeks advice. Or, as it says in the Bible, "Ask and ye shall receive." Or as the Law of Attraction simply says, you attract into your life whatever you think about. It's true, and the successful entrepreneur knows it works.

The worst thing that can happen when you ask someone for something is they will say "no". Oh my, the sky is falling! They said NO! Capital N. Capital O. Two big, huge scary letters that when combined form a word that millions are afraid to hear. "No." Did I scare you? "No, no, no, no, no, no, no!" I hope you are still standing and have not died of a massive coronary from hearing "no" so often. My point here is that most people I meet are afraid to ask for help because they're afraid of being rejected. But rejection isn't going to kill you. Perhaps the person you asked doesn't have an answer for you. Perhaps they don't know anyone who wants your product or service. Perhaps they are having a bad day because his wife said "no" the night

before or her husband is an idiot who refuses to put the toilet seat down. Who knows? All I know is that when someone says “no,” it just means you have to move on until you find someone who says “yes.”

The Japanese have a saying, “A nail that sticks up will be hammered down.” In their culture, standing out isn’t viewed as a positive trait. But in our culture, standing out – reaching out – asking for help – is the perfect way to meet the types of people who can help make you successful. Perhaps the saying should really be, “A nail that sticks up, stands out”.

You have to want so badly to succeed that you live, breathe, sleep and eat your vision of success. If you are lazy, neither this book nor any other book can help you. If you make every excuse known to mankind, you’ll never succeed. However, if you’re willing to focus on succeeding and tune out all the rubbish in your life in order to attain your goals, then you are ten steps ahead of everyone else who chooses to watch life pass them by. If you need help, ask for it. The worst that someone can say is “no,” but I’ll bet you’ll be surprised at how many people respond by saying, “yes.”

Repeat that again, “*the worst that someone can say is ‘no’*”. “N” and “O”: two simple letters that don’t have to be scary. “N” and “O”: the opposite of “Yes”. See? There is nothing to be afraid of.

By the way, that company called sixdegrees.com? It was the intellectual property behind the formation of another successful company called LinkedIn.

What Did You Learn?

1. If you are eager and ready to dedicate your time and life to becoming successful, then take a chance and do it.
2. By identifying everyday defects you will begin to train yourself

to think like an entrepreneur, and may even uncover the “million dollar idea” in which to base a business around.

3. Your business model doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, the simpler, the better.
4. Begin networking with people to expand your circle of prospects. Ask for help and don't be discouraged if people say “no.” A “yes” may be right around the corner.