

Your First 100 Million

Prologue

The Price of Fear... the Reward of Courage

As this book goes to press, the financial world is free falling through the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Men of wealth and presumed integrity in the financial world have committed treachery on a scale of uncounted billions of dollars, affecting millions of “ordinary people” around the globe.

Bernie Madoff is the most despicable of these “pirates in pinstripe,” committing fraud of some \$50 billion, deceiving even his closest associates and oldest friends. By March 2009, Bernie was in custody while lawyers bickered over the bones of his frozen assets, and he awaited his turn to plead guilty in court. “So what?” say his victims. “Our life savings have vanished.”

We cannot change the past, only recover from it. And perhaps learn its cruel lessons. The first lesson is this: the paralysis of fear can cost dearly; while the rewards of determined courage are incalculable.

In the meantime, concealed amid the carnage of financial ruin, are some stocks that dare to offer the prospect of profit. B2C, our own investing group, for example, is engaged more in “contravesting” than investing – looking for stocks anywhere in the world that are undervalued, mostly paying dividends. We think this period of bear market is an excellent opportunity to reach boldly for the bargains that are out there.

Our advice, as you seek to venture into the heady whitewaters of business acquisition, dream team building and Quantum Leap expansion, is to take courage. Grasp chaos. Force change. And follow the methodologies you’re about to read. One day, sooner than you could have imagined, the financial nightmare of the first decade of this millennium will be a harsh but fading memory.

And you’ll have survived to be the super success you knew you could be.

D e d i c a t i o n

In the book you're about to read, I talk about the importance of mentors as a Quantum Leap to wisdom. Years ago, as a young hot shot in the corporate world, I learned the secrets of super success from three gentlemen who mentored me at critical times in my life.

Constantine "Costa" Gratsos had made his fortune as a lifelong associate of shipping icon Aristotle Onassis. He took a liking to me, became my first mentor, and showed me how to swim in the deep, dangerous waters of business.

Jim Newman, the business visionary who created the term "comfort zone" showed me how to expand my horizons. Thanks to Jim, after I attended one of his PACE Seminars in 1978, I moved out of my comfort zone at Bear Stearns and became a super successful oilman.

Jerry Ormand was already a legendary Texas oilman when I met him. Yet he took the time to introduce me to the fine points of the oil business, and how to survive and prosper amid the chaos of a rough-and-tumble industry.

Jerry... Jim... "Costa"... this book is gratefully dedicated to you.

- Dan

FOREWORD

By Dr Klaus Kleinfeld

Former CEO of Siemens, AG.

Congratulations! You have chosen an extraordinary book that describes a step-by-step framework and methodology for building a super successful business from scratch, while attaining the skill sets of a high performance person. The precepts described in this book are straight forward, yet very powerful. The author, Daniel S. Peña, has put into simple words how he achieved success at the highest level starting with nothing more than a dream and the passion to succeed. I strongly recommend “Your First Hundred Million” for those who have a dream, little or no capital, and desire a road map to build a significant net worth and achieve the life of a high performance person.

It is written in a style that will ingratiate you to the author, because he tells it exactly like it is, with no varnish or hesitation. At times you may even be shocked by how he describes what it takes to be a high performance person and achieve your dreams in today’s rough and tumble ever changing business environment. He calls his precepts and methodology QLA, or Quantum Leap Advantage and it’s based on his almost 40-year personal worldwide track record of success.

Over many years Dan has become a very good friend. I know Dan’s comments might often raise your eyebrow with his candor. However you will truly enjoy hearing what it takes to succeed from someone who has really lived it. And you can tell this isn’t theory, because he gives you real examples from his life and those that he has coached and mentored. Dan has operated in the same real world you do every day and succeeded against all odds. But more importantly, countless devotees have used QLA successfully and achieved their dreams and goals!

Read this book and I know it can be the first step towards the realization of your dreams and being a successful high performance person.

All the very best,

Klaus Kleinfeld

Introduction

Your Quantum Leap Advantage

“Always try to go into business with an unfair advantage.”

You will never have read a business book like this one.

Because you hold this special edition, you may have heard me speak. You may have even been to my castle; you might even be a business partner. So you’ll realize immediately this book is written the way I talk to audiences at my “Quantum Leap Advantage” seminars. You’ll also understand it’s not a book for everybody, because success (and the wealth it brings) isn’t for everybody. But I know you’ll profit from it, because it captures under one cover – all the Quantum Leap strategies I’ve been pounding into people’s heads for several years now.

The Business sections of bookstores and libraries across America, the UK and Europe are packed with books that tell you how to become a successful entrepreneur. Some of them are written by men and women who have achieved a respectable level of success. Others are written by professors who understand business as a theory, but have never had their own business. These books typically take the reader through the step-by-step mechanics of starting, growing and ultimately selling a business. Others are manuals that cover taking a company public, tax issues, raising capital and other topics an entry-level entrepreneur needs to know. They include checklists, graphs and formats for business plans and letters of intent. There are probably nuggets of “how-to” information in these books. But I’ve found most of them to be as flat and lifeless as road-kill.

But more to the point, none of these books tells you how to prepare your mind for being super successful. They skip over how to adjust your perspective just slightly, so you can take what I call a Quantum Leap...make millions of dollars...and do it over and over again!

What if you had access to the secrets of a man who has the strength, skills and self-confidence to make one Quantum Leap after another, even make them simultaneously, and knows he will ultimately become a billionaire before he quits? What if you could receive, in his own words, the wisdom of this active multi-millionaire – not one of those “real estate rich” morons or some silk-suited seminar mooches – but a man who took his own energy corporation from an \$820 investment to an incredible \$400 million in market capitalization in just eight short years!

That’s what this book is all about.

It's about achieving the mental toughness and laser-beam focus you need to make a ton of money. I've packed this book from beginning to end with the same strategies I've been thundering across the financial capitals of five continents. But I've left most of the detailed checklists to that pedantic crowd of pedestrian business people and dusty professors who write those "how to" books.

Putting it another way, most business writers give you some weapons, or at least a weapon's manual, and send you out to face the realities of business. Through my Quantum Leap methodology, I show you how to prepare and focus your mind and spirit for executive battle – against entrenched institutions ... vicious corporate assassins... and those nay-savers of success, the purveyors of conventional wisdom. Don't let anyone tell you, 'You can't do that!' Because you can! That's the Quantum Leap difference.

They used to call me crazy...and worse. They'd say, 'Dan, you can't do that!' And, by God, I'd do it. Then, when I made my first few million dollars, they started calling me "controversial." A London newspaper labeled me "the most controversial man in London in the Eighties." (A public figure is "controversial" when he's got too much money and influence to be called crazy. Besides, he might be crazy enough to sue you into oblivion.) My British advisors would shiver and say, 'Dan, you can't do that!' So I'd do it. Now, in my early fifties, I'm mellowing into "eccentric."

I thought I would stay retired – I sure as hell don't have to work – but then I realized what poor advice most people are being fed about success by "feel good" frauds in the personal development field. You've seen them grinning and charming on TV. You know who I'm talking about.

I have become a business success coach to a selected group of entrepreneurs who I feel have seemingly boundless energy and determination to become super successful. I also conduct seminars in the U.S., the United Kingdom and the E.U. – and at my 15th Century home, Guthrie Castle, near the North Sea above Edinburgh, Scotland.

Through my U.K. enterprise, the Quantum Leap Organisation, my associates and I identify entrepreneurs, and nurture them along in pursuit of their dream. The success stories coming to fruition in Scotland and England are proving what I've said all along – that Quantum Leap strategies are universal in their application. You can sell a solicitor, a proper "City gent" in London, on your dream as easily as you can a lawyer in the United States, and you can take £500,000 from the Bank of Scotland as smoothly as you can from a Second Vice President of Citi Corp.

I call my basic seminar "The Quantum Leap Advantage," and I deliver others as well on more specific entrepreneurial topics. They are all hard-hitting, no-nonsense seminars, packed with the brutal truth about making big money and are delivered "in you face." One attendee wrote on his critique sheet, "Dan Peña is a bulldozer of knowledge..." – I like that!

This book, in content and tone, is an extension of those seminars. It is my answer to the question I get continuously, “Dan, you’ve said so much in three days. Do you have something I can take home and read?” I do have such a book, written in the late Nineties. The QLA strategies and methodologies – how to make your first 100 million – are as relevant today as they were then. Like any good recipe, the QLA recipe for high-performance and super success never goes out-of-date.

But since our first publication, so much has happened in the world, the global economy and the business community. So I decided to update the book in time for the second decade of this century and for a new generation of passionate, fired up entrepreneurial achievers. Maybe like you.

Bear in mind that I didn’t write this book to make you feel good inside or to stroke your self-esteem. Instead, I give you the unvarnished truth you deserve about how corporate business really works, and how you need to think, feel, train and be prepared to make the system work for you, so you can take your first Quantum Leap.

And begin building your own dream.

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Chapter One

Super-Success – Not for the Touchy-Feely

‘Super success is not for the wishy washy. Victory in business, like war, comes to the toughest son-of-a-bitch in the valley.’

This is a book about making money.

I don’t mean a few extra bucks in your spare time. Any moron can do that. I don’t mean increasing your sales 20%, or buying real estate or getting into the discount mortgage scam. I’m talking about making so much money you can’t count it – you’ve got to weigh it.

This is no “get rich quick” book either. “Get rich quick” implies “get rich easy,” and if you think you can get rich easy in today’s world, you’re either about to murder your rich uncle – or you’re stupid.

Nor is it one of those “wealth without risk” books. Accumulating money without taking risks is a fantasy fed to the faint-hearted or the elderly who are not so much interested in achieving wealth as they are terrified of becoming poor. The high performers – the super successful – do take risks. I sure did. Still do. Anybody who’s not taking risks in business is not making real money. There is no super success without risk. There just isn’t. And no safety in being a high-performance person. If you want safety, this book isn’t for you.

Finally, this is not a book to help you feel better about yourself.

Conventional wisdom is that if you feel good about yourself, you’ll make money. As you’ll see – if you read on – I grew a company to over 400 million dollars in real market value, working on the premise that all conventional wisdom is crap. The truth is that when you make a lot of money, then you’ll feel good about yourself.

So why should you read on? Here are some reasons. I’ve built from scratch more dollar value than any other personal development or business success coach who’ll ever try to sell you a book. I’ve lost more money in just one bad deal than a lot of those slick-suited guys on the “feel-good-get-rich” lecture circuit ever made in their whole lives.

What else?

I've made over 75,000 business decisions during my 37-year business career. That's probably 70,000 more than anyone who'll read this book – or anyone selling success books and tapes. I've made more than 600 financial presentations on five continents (all but Antarctica – there's no money there!), raising over one billion dollars during times nobody else could raise a cent! And in between I've logged million of miles in travel, thousands of nights in hotels, thousands of business meetings, and more than 250,000 business phone conversations.

If anybody wants to talk about more business experience in the past 37 years than Dan Peña – in the trenches or in the peaks – let me know.

You should also read on because, if you can handle it, this book is written for you.

I'm writing to aspiring entrepreneurs who have the fire in their belly to achieve super success. I'm talking to the owners of small or mid-sized businesses, people who are already successful and want more... and the CEOs, Directors and other top executives of companies who are now looking for geometric growth in a competitive, unforgiving marketplace. In short, this book is for "serious players."

But beyond that circle of capitalists, anyone who seeks a greater degree of success in their life can benefit from this book. To borrow from Joe Batten, the advertising legend and mentor to Ross Perot, whose accounts included the U.S. Army: I'm writing for you if you want to "be all you can be." Now that you've bought me – I assume you haven't browsed this far – let me assure you I've got more for you between these covers than you'll find in an entire library of sudsy proverbs and platitudes. Hence, the cover price.

When I retired the second time, a few years ago, I quickly got bored with doing nothing. I gradually became interested in sharing the brutal truths I had learned in the business world with others. After all, I had made tens of millions before I was 40 years old. Why not pass along the benefit of years of experience to those who were on the cusp of success, so that they could enjoy extraordinary business achievement of their own. And, quite frankly, my ego demanded it.

That idea led me to make a commitment to be a business success coach. I reasoned that if other super successful business performers could deliver their proven wisdom and strategies to a willing and receptive audience of eager listeners ready to take bold action, so could I.

I couldn't have been more wrong!

THE SEMINAR CROWD – PERPETUATORS OF THE BIG LIE

The Nazis taught us how effective a Big Lie could be. They shouted their propaganda so loudly and so often that we in the “civilized world” accepted their crimes until the brutal truth slapped us in the face. Today pimple-faced neo-Fascists scream there was no Holocaust – and a lot of well-meaning people give them an audience.

At the same time, a much smoother type, the “success evangelists,” are infiltrating the country, filling conference rooms and convention centers, and feeding desperate audiences the Big Lie about personal success.

My introduction to the “seminar circuit subculture” was a real eye-opener. It didn’t take more than five minutes for me to realize what the seminar business is all about. The sad truth is nearly all seminars look alike. Most of them are the same distillation of conventional wisdom, spoon fed to you in outline form so you can copy it down. And if you’re too slow or lazy to take notes, you can always buy the \$495 to \$2995 tape-set, manual and even software packages conveniently set out on the table at the back of the room. They take all major credit cards...

Even more to the point, if you listen to the tapes . . .if you actually read the book, you get the overwhelming feeling of, “Yeah, that’s right. I guess I already knew that, I just never saw it organized so neatly before.”

Of course, doofus! It all sounds familiar because you grew up listening to the same conventional wisdom these guys did! Now they’re making money selling you the stuff you’ve heard all your life.

‘Achieve a balance between your business life and your personal life.’

‘Make a list of what’s good about yourself and stick it on your mirror.’

‘Make a list of what you need to do this week.’

‘Set achievable goals so you’re not disappointed.’

‘Buy a used car, because it’s already depreciated.’

‘Get a 15-year mortgage instead of a 30-year mortgage.’

Crap...CRAP...CRAP!

You may be one of those people who attends seminars, buys the books, the videotapes, the cassettes and the financial advice life support systems. If you are, then I suspect they're all lying around your home or office right now gathering dust; thousands of dollars invested in advice your parents gave you for free and against your will years ago.

But just as important as realizing the content of the typical seminar message is to expose the "authority" of the smooth-tongued performers who deliver their wisdom around the country and on late-night infomercials. I was appalled at the lack of business acumen of so many of the seminar presenters. Those personal motivation gurus that come to your city . . . those pearly-teethed infomercial guys . . . the so-called authors that line the bookstores with "how-to" success books – they're mostly frauds!

You need to ask yourself, how many of these business success "experts" have made any serious money. Damn few. Next ask yourself if they made their money in the business world? How many of them scrapped their way to super success in the kill-or-die corporate environment? How many of them started from scratch and built a business empire worth hundreds of millions of dollars? Don't bother scratching your head. The answer is: hardly any.

It didn't take me long to learn that most of these phonies have made what little money they do have in the seminar business – taking your money!

I quickly discovered that I'm the only multimillionaire I know of on the seminar circuit who made my money in the real business world, creating a hundred million dollar empire. As you'll learn in the next chapter, I wasn't just exposed to 400 million dollars of transactions one day. I created a company that catapulted to a worth of over 400 million dollars on a major stock exchange – starting with a phone . . . a leased fax machine . . . and \$820.

Another question. These people are supposed to be teaching you how to become successful, which is a code word for "rich." But how many of them are multi-millionaires? Few if any. In fact, the only one I know is a good friend, Ted Nicholas, one of the finest marketing copywriting and self-publishing guru in the country, maybe in the world. A lot of the rest live in rented properties and are dodging the tax man. Yet they're telling you how to get rich!

Before you buy your next book or tape, consider the author and ask yourself, 'Is this guy where I want to be? Is his success story the blueprint I want for my success? And how did he make his money? In the business arena, or selling books and tapes, and putting butts in seminar seats?

Think about it.

I'm not going to tell you what I think you want to hear so you'll like me. I don't care if you like me or not.

I also discovered something interesting about those roomfuls of seminar attendees I assumed were so eager to take "bold action." I was stunned to discover the level of apathy of the average seminar attendee. Most of them are more interested in hearing feel-good stories and pleasant proverbs than the truth about becoming super successful. Most of them just want to be stroked, to hear "You've already got within you what it takes to succeed. Reach inside and draw from the wealth of your own potential." They want validation that they're okay, in the tradition of "I'm okay, you're okay." What crap!

Take some risks.

The super successful understand that risk is necessary to grow.

The super successful also have a different perspective on risk. Several years ago, a guy named Charles Givens made a ton of money on a book he called *Wealth Without Risk*. He put together a whole program based on money-making/money-saving ideas, hired some used car salesmen, and peddled his program in hotel conference rooms all over the country. A close examination of his book revealed that virtually all his "ideas" were little ideas to make a little money here, save a little money there – stuff any financial advisor could tell you.

The only people who grew anywhere near "super successful" were Givens and his inner circle of associates. His converts saved a few bucks on insurance premiums, made a little money in real estate – mostly "flipping houses" – and thought they were rich. But without taking risks, they were all small potatoes, and eventually the Givens organization was dragged into court and has long since disappeared. (Givens' legacy is the half-hour "Paid Advertising" TV program – the infomercial – and a generation of skilled and dapper pitchmen who still work the seminar circuit trying with only limited success to replicate the Givens phenomenon.)

The genuinely super successful understand that risk is necessary to grow. In my seminars I refer to the "Quantum Leap," an explosive, geometric growth in your company that merely more sales or new locations could never achieve. A Quantum Leap requires risk.

One of my favorite "disciples" was a young guy named Fidel Vargas, one of a group in the mid-Nineties I called the "Mexican morons." I quickly saw Fidel's potential and paid for him to attend the seminar at my own Guthrie Castle in Scotland. Much like myself, Fidel was a product of the Los Angeles barrio – except that this Latino firebrand completed his undergraduate work and MBA at Harvard. He also made national news several years ago by becoming the youngest mayor in the United States at age 23 – of Baldwin Park, California. These days, he runs a venture cap fund for an investment firm in Southern California. QLA made some lasting impressions on Fidel.

“Dan Peña struck me immediately as larger-than-life,” Fidel said recently, “somebody determined to squeeze every last drop of juice out of life. The lessons of QLA are simple but powerful. You’ve got to take risks to be really successful. You’ve got to be willing to throw your hat over the wall and commit yourself to your dream. Dan also taught me that most obstacles to success are created in an imagination driven by fear of defeat, and by listening to the platitudes of conventional wisdom.”

If you’re already in business, you understand risk. Remember when you first got started? Didn’t establishing that business require risk? Doesn’t marriage require an element of risk? Or raising kids, or buying a new home? Then why do so many people who take risks in other areas of their lives shudder at taking risks in growing their business? No matter how tight your strategy and how sure of success you are on a given deal, the specter of risk lurks at your side until signatures are on paper and the money is in your bank. And preferably spent!

I believe that if you’re not taking risks to grow your business, it begins to wither. I hate someone to tell me everything is running smoothly. By definition, I know their business is not growing anymore – and probably dying. They have forgotten that from chaos comes order.

Some people take a risk or two, and fail, and retreat beneath their shell of safety. Failure destroys their self-confidence, sometimes for the rest of their life.

In 1955, at the height of the Cold War, everybody had atomic bombs on their minds. School kids were drilled to hide under their desks so a 50 megaton bomb detonated downtown would miss them. My father, the L.A. policeman, was lured into investing \$10,000 in the Luck 13 Mining Company, an outfit with uranium mines in Nevada. It was a con job, a scam, and he lost his ten grand, which in 1955 was a small fortune. But maybe more damaging to him than the financial loss: he was disgraced in front of his family and friends and laughed at for years afterwards.

In 1958, Dad had a chance to buy an undeveloped piece of land northwest of Los Angeles for \$3000 – the intersection of Topanga Canyon and Ventura Blvds. All four corners! He turned it down. No use being made a fool of twice, he must have figured. The next time that property was sold it went for \$640,000. Then 3.5 million, then 8 million. The last time we looked, one corner sold for \$12 million! For the rest of his days, Dad didn’t like to drive up in Northwest L.A. around Woodland Hills. One failure drained his resolve to ever take another risk.

Never fear failure – Understand it.

The super successful also have a different take on failure. They understand that failure is what happens when you do something. The greatest successes in the world also experienced the greatest failures. The all-time strikeout record in major league baseball is held by... Babe Ruth. But we don't remember him for his strikeouts. We remember him for setting a home run record that stood for decades, long before performance enhancing drugs destroyed America's love affair with baseball. No one cares about the Babe's strikeouts. The point is he kept swinging the damn bat! Most of us never get out of the dugout – let alone up to the plate. Those people not only wonder why they never hit a home run – they even begrudge the determined hitters who do.

Donald Trump has lost billions in his financial deals. But who cares? He has made billions more with his successful ventures, and he just keeps swinging the bat. After stumbling into the New World, Christopher Columbus failed in his subsequent explorations and died a poor and disappointed man. But on Columbus Day do we celebrate his dying destitute? Of course not. We celebrate his success.

This reminds me of a story about Tom Watson, Sr., founder of IBM, being asked by a young management trainee, "Sir, how do I get to the top of the management ladder here?" Watson immediately replied, "Double your failure rate, son. Double your failure rate." His point was, of course, that more failures could only result from more tries, more initiative, more risk taking . . . all the actions required for growth.

Most of Thomas Edison's experiments failed miserably – thousands of them. He thought direct electrical current (DC) was the answer to lighting the world, and that alternating current (AC) was a passing fad. He was wrong. And nobody cares. Instead, we're indebted to Edison's genius and his determination whenever we turn on a light bulb, or hear recorded music, or watch a movie.

For the super successful, failure is a valuable lesson. It's a road not to take again, or at least under the same conditions. And then they move on. Failure is nothing more than testing. As Edison said, "Success is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration." To the high performance person, "Fear" is False Expectations Appearing Real.

As a high performance person, you have the confidence in your judgment to stand by whatever decision you make.

The sure-fire formula for failure? Try to please everybody. That's the biggest reason most people never achieve success. They try to keep everybody happy. As a result, they fail and the people they were trying to please don't give a damn. Instead of listening to everyone around them, they should have consulted within themselves. They should have trusted their instincts. They should have listened to their intuition.

Listen to your intuition – It's almost always right.

Intuition plays a strong role in the decision-making process of a high performer. Over the years, women have tried to monopolize intuition. "Women's intuition" is a given, but what about "men's intuition." I think intuition is what we call instinct in animals, a primal survival skill. All of us have a sense, a gut feeling about situations affecting our best interests. Usually we run into problems when we ignore our intuition.

Nowadays the tyranny of computers has undermined our reliance on intuition. Too often we "Excel" things to death. Suppose you're a guy at a party and you meet an attractive woman. Her smile seems, well, more than friendly. She touches you a lot, innocently. You know she's hot. You don't need to run back to your office and "Excel" it. You don't have to think about it. You know. Business is much the same. But conventional wisdom dictates we over-complicate issues because, after all, our world is very complicated now. The Internet, personal computers and other electronic breakthroughs we wouldn't have dreamed of 20 years ago give us access to a universe of information we can use. I personally believe that reliance on the computer can be the single biggest drawback to being a high performance entrepreneur. But even I got on-line in April 2001, because it has become an integral part of all our personal and business lives.

Forget what others think.

Too many worry more about what others will think about their decision than they do the wisdom of the decision itself. What are the guys I play golf with going to think? What will obnoxious cousin Rudy say? Or Aunt Martha who has cartons of Amway products in her garage? Come on, do you think Bill Gates gives a hoot what others think? You think Trump gives a damn for the opinions of "experts" making a fraction of his money? Of course he doesn't. The fact is, you should have all the data you need to make a decision. You've done your investigation and due diligence. You've met and sized up the other players. Somewhere deep inside, your gut tells you this is an opportunity you need to seize.

In contrast, the high performance person such as myself measures the risks, makes the decision, takes action . . . and never thinks, "Well, maybe I should have done this or that. Maybe I made a mistake." As a high performance person, you have the confidence in your judgment to stand by whatever decision you make. And you've got more to do than second-guess yourself. You've got other important decisions – so you move on. Without looking back. I often say, "I may be wrong – but I'm never in doubt." How else could I have made those 75,000 business decisions?

Never look back.

One more pre-requisite for super success. The high performance person never looks back. Do you know someone who suffers from terminal buyers' remorse? That individual shops for a new car, new home, new dress or new anything and then makes a purchase. The next day, he or she begins to revisit all the reasons the item they didn't purchase was a better buy. Soon they're miserable. If they can, they return the item for a refund, and start the same tortuous shopping process over again. They'll never be satisfied because they don't have confidence in their ability to make a decision. Make every decision as if it's your drop-dead final word on the matter. Down the line, you may have to do a mid-course correction based on the dynamics of business. But that's not looking back – that's keeping your eyes forward toward where you're headed. Big difference.

Make the sacrifice of Pay Price to Action... Take risks... Don't fear failure... Listen to your intuition... Avoid conventional wisdom... Ignore what others think... and never look back.

As we prepare to launch into the tactics and strategies of the high performers, you may have already figured out this is not going to be a comfy drift through mainstream thinking. Like they say in Texas, where I learned the oil business, this book is written for those who want to hunt with the big dogs – and pee in the tall grass!

Super success is not for the wishy washy. Victory in business, like war, comes to the toughest son-of-a-bitch in the valley. Not the touchy-feely. I cannot think of a single high performance success who is touchy-feely. If they exist, I've never met one. High performers are the gladiators of the glass towers. They're tough, they take action, but never take prisoners. They make mistakes and never look back . . . and they make a lot of money.

I don't care if I have to drag, push, slap, kick or cajole you to super success. You will not necessarily like me, but I don't give a damn. What I do give a damn about is making you into a super success, and helping you make enormous sums of money.

If you're interested, we'll get down to specifics soon enough. But first you need to understand who I am, so you know Dan Peña has the credentials to kick your apathy into action for the next 12 chapters.

So why did Dan Peña, iconoclastic curmudgeon of the business world, decide to get into the seminar business and write a book? Because my goal is to change the way personal success development strategies and business success coaching are communicated to the world – and make another ton of money, of course!

I have implemented my success strategies continuously over most of the past 35 years and made tens of millions in the process, but I have another unique advantage that works to your benefit. I'm not going to tell you what I think you want to hear so you'll like me. I don't care if you like me or not. If you want a friend, buy a dog. I don't care if you don't listen to what I have to say. I'm not in this business to make friends and to be your friend. (If you personally knew the very few high performers of today, guys like Donald Trump, Richard Branson or Steve Jobs, you'd understand they don't give a damn if people like them or not. Personal acceptance by the masses is just not on their agenda.) I'm in this business to give you the opportunity to learn how to be enormously successful. Even though half-truths and misinformation are easier to sell, I'm going to give you the no bullshit, unvarnished truth.

When I first started lecturing, I talked to my audiences like I would talk to my staff, expletives and all. Half of those audiences, mostly women, would get up and leave in the first fifteen minutes. I didn't care, because I was speaking with passion and true to life. "This is the way the super successful talk in the glass towers of success," I told them. "So get used to it." If they had seen the movie Wall Street, they had already heard a fairly representative dose of the language used in the real world. They left anyway. I was amazed to see their naiveté.

My marketing advisor and the people who schedule seminars finally said to me, 'Dan, you've got to tone it down. Some of these people are really interested in what you've got to say, but you're offending them with your language.' So I toned myself down to become a kinder, gentler Dan.

Paying the Price for Super Success

Now that I've given you an idea of where I'm coming from, let's talk about some of the basics of becoming super successful. To begin with, it's not easy. Every worthwhile goal in life has what I call a "Pay Price to Action." To achieve that goal you must take action that requires you to pay a price in some other area. It's a trade-off. The mooches in the seminar circuit tell you, "You can have it all. You can be a well-rounded parent, make a bundle of money and be loved by all." That's crap. The truth is, you have to give up something to get something. Throughout this book, you've got to ask yourself – what are you willing to give up, or to trade-off, to get what you want?

If you want to become an Olympic javelin-throwing champion, for example, your Pay Price to Action is giving up evenings and Saturdays with the boys (or girls) and throwing the javelin a zillion times. You may have to give up beer and go on a special energy-building diet. You may even have to give up your job and get a new one that enables you to throw the javelin more. But you pay that price. You want to get to the Olympics. And you don't want to bring home a Bronze or Silver Medal. You want a Gold Medal and you're willing to pay the price.

At the Beijing Olympics in 2008, one superstar emerged at Beijing's National Aquatics Center – the famous “Water Cube” – a young man who exemplified paying the price. During years of preparation, American swimmer Michael Phelps sacrificed the carefree life of other guys his age so that he could become a Gold Medal athlete. His motto was, “Eat, sleep and swim.” As part of his monastic regimen, he avoided fans, friends and even family members who might divert his time and attention from achieving his goal. It was a price he was willing to pay to be the best.

It's not generally known, but Phelps was meeting and overcoming challenges long before he'd even heard of the Olympics. When he was a child, a few “experts” doubted whether he would be able to accomplish anything. Even in pre-school, teachers complained that he couldn't stay quiet, sit still, or concentrate. “Your son will never be able to focus on anything,” one teacher told his parents. He was later diagnosed with ADHD – attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Somewhere along the way, young Michael learned to focus. His typical 18-hour day prior to competition at Beijing 2008 began at 5:00 every morning. Every hour, in fact every minute was scheduled to reduce out-of-pool time. During the Olympics, to maximize TV viewer ship in the U.S., the preliminary competitions were held at night and the finals were held the next morning, a grueling day even for champions. Phelps dismissed talk of making schedules less strenuous. “If you can't get up to swim in the morning, don't go.”

That level of commitment leads to the next lesson: Super success, whether it's in the Olympics or in the boardroom, is not for everybody. When I was building my fortune, one price I paid was not seeing my family and not being home for 242 days during the first year of my daughter's life. And I was rarely home to celebrate the birthdays of my three kids.

You may remember how Michael Phelps' commitment paid-off. He won eight Gold Medals in Beijing, eclipsing the record set by American swimming legend Mark Spitz at the Munich Olympiad in 1972. I wonder if Michael's childhood teachers and the other “experts” were watching.

That costly Pay Price to Action may not be for you. It isn't for most people. That's why there are so few: Ted Turner's and Ross Perot's and, yes, Mary Kay Ashe's in this world. But – and this is important – that's all right.

Mark Zuckerberg followed the classic American success formula set by Bill Gates and other “technowhiz” kids. Mark paid the price, spending more of his young years tinkering over a computer than he did being a typical teenager. The pay off? He redefined “social networking” for the 21st Century and founded the enormously popular Facebook. That phenomenon now claims more than 70 million active users worldwide and gives Zuckerberg, a 23-year-old very eligible bachelor, a net worth of \$1.5 billion. Yet I doubt whether he would recommend his path to super success for everyone.

If you put into action just some of the strategies I give you in this book, you'll be a whole lot more successful than you are today. And, by the way, you'll save a lot of money by not buying more tapes and books at future seminars.

A lot of people I talk to assume you have to be incredibly intelligent in order to be highly successful. I'm living proof you don't. But let's suppose for a second you have an IQ of, say, 100. That's average. In this example, I might be taking some away from you; on the other hand, I might be giving you a little. (Those who've spent a lot of time seeking Universal Truth through seminars, books and tapes, and those who ask me obtuse questions during seminars probably have what I call a "room temperature IQ" . . . a comfortable 72.)

Let's also pretend I've got a 100 IQ as well (although my old pals from school days would argue the point). Can anyone have ten times our IQ? As far as I know, the highest IQ's ever recorded were in the 240 range (160 will qualify for membership of an elite High-IQ group called MENSA). So it's not possible for anyone to have ten times our IQ – or even five times for that matter.

So how in hell do people make ten times more than you make? How do people make a hundred or a thousand times what you make if they can't have a hundred or a thousand times our IQ? How? I'll tell you how! Because they dream bigger than you. Their expectations are higher than yours. That's how.

One of my colleagues in recent years has been Peter Sage, an energetic and highly successful British entrepreneur, adventurer and international bon vivant. Peter says that when he has an inspiration for a new venture, if he has any idea of how to bring it to reality, he's thinking too small. Now that's my kind of thinking!

I'm often asked, if I had my life to live over again what would I change. I'd only change one thing. I'd set my goals higher. That's right. With all my mega-success, I'd still set my goals higher.

What about you?

Have you set goals that allow you to "be all you can be?" If not, reading this book will be an astonishing revelation. At the risk of overstatement, reading this book could change your life. Following the systems and methodology in the chapters ahead could change the course of your destiny. I say "could" because you must take action to change. Change is absolutely essential. I want you to understand right now that doing the same things over and over, like you've always done them, and expecting different results, is insanity.

You see, these high-performance individuals, like myself, achieve super success because they want it more than you. They forge favorable circumstances by using the two advantages of high performance business people – practiced skills and force of good habits. Or as Jim Ryun, the former world record holder in the mile said, “Motivation gets you started; habit keeps you going.” Trust me on this. Intelligence has nothing to do with it.

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