

## Preface

I began writing this book in the winter of 2008 as snowflakes drifted in the gentle breeze and slowly blanketed our vineyard and orchards. Our home sat beneath the Sierra Nevada, which, draped with snow-covered ponderosa and Jeffrey pines, made for a beautiful winter wonderland. I wanted to share my story with family and friends. As the words of each chapter came to life on paper, it became more apparent to my editor and publisher that my autobiography had broad commercial value and that a much wider audience could benefit from its contents.

Usually, readers don't learn about the difficulties encountered over a lifetime or the financial challenges that most small startup companies face. Either the young, struggling business simply fails, or the entrepreneur doesn't wish to disclose his or her setbacks and failures. In my story, however, I want to be upfront about what it takes to put together a business so I can share the numerous life lessons I've absorbed throughout my career. Ultimately, you must be willing to accept financial risks if your business is to succeed and your dream realized. With every failure, you can't become jaded. The tenth time a door closes might be the time when another opens. A successful entrepreneur is part visionary, strategic thinker, and inspirational motivator. A leader is an intense listener, a consummate dealmaker, and a perpetual problem-solver. I can't honestly say that I embody all of those virtues, but over my lifetime, I have certainly tried to do so.

As a leader, you will realize your job is about recognizing and defining problems and implementing solutions effectively. Rarely do things in life go as planned. It is not about passing the buck, finding blame, or giving excuses why something didn't work as anticipated. In the end, it's about taking personal responsibility, creative thinking, and grabbing the bull by the horn so that you can make things happen.

<p><b>Life Lesson #1:</b> "If I had sixty minutes to solve a problem, I'd spend fifty-five minutes defining it and five minutes solving it." —<b>Albert Einstein</b> (theoretical physicist, 1879-1955)</p>
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Circumstances change for a person with an entrepreneurial spirit on a weekly, if not daily basis. Someone on a fixed career path might find his or her life to be fairly consistent from day to day, while others choose the direction I have taken. It's exciting and quite

invigorating but has its drawbacks. Every decision I've made, nearly every person I've met, had an impact on my life, for better or worse.

Not everyone has the desire to become the boss. Indeed, the world runs on the manpower of dedicated employees who are ready, willing, and able to deliver goods or services to people all over the globe. Businesses succeed through a team effort, not just due to the leadership atop a corporate hierarchy.

For the young person entering the business arena today, once you begin to experience the reality of adult life, you'll likely be in for a rude awakening. News flash: society doesn't revolve around you no matter who you are. As M. J. Croan once said, "Maturity is when your world opens up, and you finally realize you're not the center of it." In order to appreciate the sweet taste of success, you must first experience failure and other life-altering events that will change your outlook forever—hopefully for the better.

Accept that life usually isn't fair for the majority of the people around the world. It's not fair that those in third world countries are born into poverty and will never have the opportunity you've been given, so don't squander it. Appreciate the fact that you have a chance at the American Dream—that is, if you work hard and smart to achieve it. Be aware that the employer will nearly always hire the best qualified and pass on the least. He or she will retain and reward the most competent and fire the incompetent. Life is about knowing how you deal with the curve balls thrown at you and how you react. To savor success is terrific, but the real question is this: How do you handle defeat or rejection? There are no guarantees in life, so simply accept reality and enjoy the ride. When the going gets tough, learn to cowboy up!

You need to be comfortable in your own skin and to be a good person to others. Don't worry about who you strive to be; just be the very best you can be in whatever profession or career you choose for yourself. Don't lose sleep over not being the greatest. Learn from your mistakes, always try to do the right thing, and be a loving son or daughter and a kind and considerate spouse. As a parent, teach your children the virtues of honesty, integrity, respect, personal responsibility, and faith in God, the Father Almighty. The rest will take care of itself.

If you evolve into a renaissance person with talents in a wide variety of fields, great! Now that I've been given the opportunity to look back at my life, I must admit that I was never really great at any single thing, but I'm pretty good at a number of things. Humility is to be embraced. Never take yourself too seriously. One of the most valuable assets of a person's character is honesty and integrity. Simply stated, keep your word, be truthful, take responsibility for your actions, be timely, and treat people the way you want to be treated. Be

respectful to others, especially those less fortunate and those who could use a helping hand. Have a grounded moral compass, and always strive to do the right thing. When reasonable, don't take no for an answer, and when possible, never give up and never say quit.



The substance of President Theodore Roosevelt's "The Man in the Arena" passage from his "Citizenship in a Republic" speech in 1910 is not about race, religion, class, or ideology. His eloquent writings are meant to pay tribute to those individuals who have the tenacity to fight every day for what they believe in. Whether they fail or succeed, the credit goes to those individuals that have the courage to jump into the arena in the first place.

"The Man in the Arena" has played a crucial part in my perspective for my entire adult life. I have identified with it since that early morning in October 1965, when, as a sophomore, I gave my first speech before Mr. Cargile's public speaking class at Santa Clara High School. I spent weeks preparing for my elocution debut in front of my classmates by studying at the city library in the heart of downtown Santa Clara. Even at that age, I enjoyed reading about US and world history and was fascinated by great leaders of the past and present.

While conducting research for my speech, I was drawn to charismatic Teddy Roosevelt's autobiography, which told the captivating story of a sickly, underweight boy burdened with poor vision, who suffered from asthma. This physically challenged young man possessed incredible determination and persistence to rise above adversity. He lifted weights, took boxing lessons, and became a voracious reader and outdoor enthusiast.

Teddy Roosevelt's love of forests, mountains, lakes, streams, and hunting and fishing—and his eventual Rough Rider persona—inspired me. I felt that his commitment to do the right thing and his relentless desire to achieve greatness were to be admired, while his sense of integrity was to be embraced and adopted.

**Life Lesson #2:** "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

—**Confucius** (Chinese philosopher, 551-479 BC)

On April 23, 1910, one year after his presidency, Theodore Roosevelt delivered what is considered one of his most memorable and inspirational speeches before an impressive audience of French dignitaries and the faculty and student body of Sorbonne University in Paris. In my research in 1965, I read every word of text but was drawn in particular to the notable "The Man in the Arena" passage from his "Citizenship in a Republic" speech, which reads as follows:

*It is not the critic who counts—not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; because there is no effort without error or shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds, who knows the great enthusiasms, great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who—at the best—knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who—at the worst—if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.*

At age forty-two, Teddy Roosevelt was the youngest person to serve as president of the United States. I have spent much of my life trying to emulate his love of America, his never-ending zest for life, his “bully for you” tenacity, and his steadfast determination.

It’s understandable to want the winning hand, my father often told me, but when you’ve been dealt a pair of twos and not a full house, play the hand you’re dealt. Don’t make excuses or blame others for your predicament, setback, defeat, or failure. Legendary Olympic swimming coach George Haines embodied that tenacious attitude and forever embedded in my mind the following: no matter how many times you may fail, stumble, or fall, never give in, never give up, and never say quit.

After more than seventy years on planet Earth, I believe my destiny was to spend a lifetime reaching for the brass ring and living life to the fullest so that one day I could share my stories with you.

**Life Lesson #3:** “The whole secret of a successful life is to find out what is one’s destiny to do, and then do it.”

—**Henry Ford** (founder of Ford Motor Company, 1863-1947)