

Better Off in Four Years

Repeat: *It it's going to be, it's now up to me!*



by Gregory S. Downing

FOLLOWING THE ELECTION, many people are wondering, *What will Obama's reelection mean for job creation, Social Security, healthcare, college tuition, and other hot-button issues?* Given the shaky state of the economy, some angst is unavoidable. But it's absurd to think that whoever occupies the White House for the next four years will seal your fate and make or break your future. *They* can't save you. Only *you* can save you.

Repeat: *If it's to be, it's up to me.* You can't afford to wait on salvation from any politician—or, for that matter, any employer or teacher in any school.

The old formula that allowed people to build a comfy middle-class life is gone. Instead of obsessing over what you can't control, focus on what you *can* control. Learn how to think about work and wealth in a whole new way.

For example I know firsthand how *entrepreneurship* can transform your life. Once a car dealership manager working grueling 80-hour weeks, I'm now a millionaire many times over who takes four months of vacation a year (I made my wealth as a real estate investment business owner). Regardless of the field you choose, entrepreneurship is the *only* logical path to financial freedom in a global economy where half of all college grads are moving back home jobless and saddled with debt.

The entrepreneurship I espouse is *not* the *open your restaurant and bust your butt working there seven days a week* variety. Rather, it centers on *generating multiple streams of income* (earned, passive, and portfolio) so that *the money you make* isn't directly connected to *the time you spend*.

A single paycheck, even two paychecks added together, is no longer enough to allow a family to live comfortably *and* provide for the future. If you're lucky enough to get a good job—and that's a *big* if—you might scrape by, but you'll work yourself into an early grave. And, if the job goes away, the money stops. It's no way to live—and it's no way to teach your children to live.

Anyone can make the leap to entrepreneurship, and financial freedom. Sure, you may have to learn new practical skills—but mostly it's a matter of

changing your mindset. Once you break free of *middle-class programming*, half the battle is won. Here are ways to do it:

- *Commit to changing your life—and don't break that commitment.* You keep your word to others, or at least try to. But what about the promises and pacts you make *with yourself*? You are more likely to break agreements with yourself. Since becoming an entrepreneur requires a dramatic change in both mindset and habits, you won't get far if you keep letting yourself off the hook.

It's easy to justify breaking an agreement with yourself because no one will ever know. Sometimes you even do it unconsciously. But your private decision has consequences for both your future and your family's future.



Breaking commitments hurts you because your subconscious gets accustomed to your *crying wolf*. Then, when you want to make a big change in your life, your subconscious simply doesn't believe you. It will work against your success. So when you don't do what you say you are going to do, you are actually giving yourself permission to falter, to quit, and to fail.

- *Take action now. Don't wait. I'd like to build my wealth. I want to start my own business. It would be great to be in firm control of my financial future.* These are nice, positive thoughts, but when they're not paired with action, they are only daydreams. Only action—not plans, not goals, and not ambition—gets results. Every day that you *don't* take a concrete step forward is another day of the status quo, another day of accepting a mediocre, hum-drum life.

Take action toward your dreams each day. Even if it's an imperfect action—even if it's later revealed to be an out-and-out mistake—it's still better than letting fear keep you stuck in an unsatisfying life. Life rewards action.

And yet, most people just keep going through their daily motions, procrastinating, thinking their ideas to death, and never moving forward on them. Every morning, ask yourself, *What action can I take today to move toward my dream of financial independence and self-reliance?* Then do it, for your own sake and for the sake of your family. Otherwise, one day you'll look back at your life and realize that while you had good intentions, you did not create results.

- *Remove all unconscious, negative, and scarcity-based programming.* You have been *programmed* with belief systems that aren't designed to help you attain wealth—indeed, they barely work at all anymore. But because everyone around you is buying into the formula, you assume it's the *right* way. We all have an *inner sheep* that is afraid to go against the herd, that fears it will be punished if it goes against cultural norms. That's a shame, because while we're staring at the hindquarters of the sheep in front of us, we're ignoring a world filled with riches for the taking.

Evaluate what works for you as you strive toward a life of wealth and abundance. First, think critically about risk and reward, and determine how to effectively balance the two. This involves looking closely at your emotions, your willingness to take action, and your desire to move forward when an opportunity to build wealth arises.

Often, you'll find that fear, not a rational reason, is holding you back. But you can gradually reprogram your beliefs about the fear of investing, the availability of money, and the lack-mentality that is so common in our society. And as you begin to experience greater rewards, you'll confirm the beliefs and actions that create wealth.

- *Assume 100 percent responsibility for the results in your life.* It's easy to blame disappointments and failures on everything *other* than yourself—the economy, the weather, your work. You can't always foresee or control what happens in your life, but you can choose how you respond to those circumstances.

I get it—life has a way of derailing your plans. There are bills to pay, problems to solve, and circumstances that need attention. You need to deal with these issues, but you cannot allow them to stop you. Every day, you *must* make time to move toward the life of your dreams, no matter how small the step. **PE**

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ACTION: Seek a life of abundance.