



# FOREWORD

*by Dr Tony Alessandra*

How do people learn?

In my work as a business owner, motivational speaker and author, I have come to realize that people learn more easily when they have been presented with a clear picture of the goal. Dr John Lee, a leading management expert, demonstrates this in his workshops by giving groups of participants a 70-piece puzzle to assemble.

One group views a picture of the completed puzzle; the other group has no idea what the finished product will look like. Consistently, the group that has seen the final picture finishes first. Why? They already know their goal. They have the advantage of possessing a blueprint for success which they tackle one bite-sized piece at a time.

George Tan explores the hows and whys of individual success structured around his compelling life skills model called PRAISE. The first component of PRAISE is the Prizedream.

The Prizedream is a clear picture of the final goal, plus more. It is also a clear picture of the reward – the prize – that comes with achieving that goal. It is a picture so clear, so attractive and so inviting, that it drives a person to give his blood, sweat and tears to realize that goal and make that dream come true.

Yet this is only the first of six major – plus many more minor – steps. As Tan explains in the rest of his PRAISE model, you will also need to Lay the Rules; Do the Analysis; Cultivate Invincibility; Execute the Strategy and, finally, Achieve Excellence.

Interestingly, the achievement of excellence is presented here not as the final goal, but merely as one of the steps in the process. The final goal is not simply success. It is success over and over again, or what Tan calls ‘Success Unlimited’. It is not so much the ability to achieve great things, but more the ability to keep rebounding from setbacks as and when they do occur.

Tan has had more than a fair share of setbacks, as can be seen from the anecdotes from his life story that he intersperses throughout the book to illustrate the model. He recalls painful memories of growing up in extreme poverty, being abused by his father and getting red marks in his school report book as a child; of being unfairly treated by unreasonable bosses and let down by business partners as an adult. Life was indeed rough for Tan. Yet he also speaks triumphantly of overcoming his life’s challenges to excel in studies, career and entrepreneurship.

Equally, Tan illustrates the PRAISE model with the life stories of great – and lesser – achievers. They include historical figures like Alexander the Great, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Thomas Edison and Florence Nightingale, as well as contemporary personalities like Mother Teresa, Bill Gates and even Rod Stewart and Carlos Santana.

Snippets of their life stories make compelling reading. We are told that the Brazilian author Paulo Coelho one night went to bed having given up his dream of becoming a writer, but fate somehow did not allow him. We (those of us old enough to know the 1968 Mexico Olympics) recall how one high jumper dared to be different by jumping backwards, and his unique style is now universally adopted

as the Fosbury Flop. We read about the positive attitudes of Matsushita, the founder of National Panasonic, who considered himself ‘lucky’ despite being hit by a whole series of misfortunes. And while most of us are probably familiar with what The Good Samaritan did, Tan points out the many things he did not do – to show what an ordinary person The Good Samaritan really was.

Benjamin Franklin, a hero to many Americans, is Tan’s hero as well – even though Tan hails from Singapore. His choice of Franklin as a model of excellence – what he calls a PRAISE Champion – is truly appropriate. As Tan puts it, “Benjamin Franklin left such a deep imprint on the soul of humanity that it is impossible for anyone to pass a day without coming into contact with something that he invented, discovered, thought up, popularized or fought for.”

Tan’s bottom line: All successful people, male and female, past and present, from all cultures and in all fields of human endeavor consciously or subconsciously apply similar principles of success. And Tan offers not one, but six, success formulas – for change, creativity, passion, fulfillment, learning and excellence.

The notion that there is some special or ‘secret’ formula for success is not new, of course. Yet there is no secret, really. Success comes with discipline, determination, never giving up, and so on. It starts with setting that goal – setting it clearly – and then tenaciously working toward it.

How effectively we pass on this success formula depends, largely, on how we are able to package and present it in a way that inspires the reader – or the participant at our talks, seminars and workshops – to get up, get going and put his or her wholehearted energy into making the dream a reality. Our role as motivational speakers is merely to help our clients achieve success for themselves.

This is where, I feel, Tan has succeeded with this simply written, reader-friendly book. By sharing his struggles and his triumphs, Tan assures readers that they, too, can accomplish great things no matter how bleak their present life situation may be.

*Rough Life Rich Life* is a unique book that combines “How to...” with Tan’s autobiography and the biographies of PRAISE Champions, and even a news analysis – of how the City of London won the bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games.

The book discusses theories on motivation and differentiates it from what Tan calls ‘incentivation’. To him, motivation arises purely from within and it does not depend on external rewards or incentives. In addition, it presents Sun Zi’s *The Art of War* in a way that is easy to understand and easy to appreciate its relevance to modern day living.

To weave it all together, Tan spins a story about a soul guide called Ume – whose name means ‘You and Me’ – who appears at crucial moments in his life to offer guidance and wisdom. This is written in a light-hearted manner and it provides a nice balance to the more serious stuff.

*Rough Life Rich Life* is a rich book – rich in information, rich in wisdom, rich in experiences and, most significantly, rich in inspiration. Read it...and become enriched.

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