

Simple Success



"There must be more to life than increasing its speed." —Mahatma Gandhi

"Most people are about as happy as they make up their mind to be." —Abraham Lincoln

by Alan Cohen, M.A.

Business mogul Warren Buffet, the second richest man in the world, recently donated \$31 billion to charity. In a CNBC interview, Mr. Buffet talked about his life and revealed his secrets for success. Here are some of the shocking facts:

He still lives in the same, small three-bedroom house in midtown Omaha that he bought after he got married 50 years ago. He says that he has everything he needs in that house. His house does not have a wall or a fence. He drives his own car everywhere and does not have a driver or security people around him. In addition, he never travels by private jet, although he owns the world's largest private jet company.

His company, Berkshire Hathaway, owns 63 companies. He writes only one letter each year to the CEOs of these companies, giving them goals for the year. He never holds meetings or calls them on a regular basis. He has given his CEO's only two rules: *Rule number 1: Do not lose any of your shareholder's money. Rule number 2: Do not forget rule number 1.*

He does not socialize with the high society crowd. His pastime after he gets home is to make himself some popcorn and watch television.

Bill Gates, the world's richest man, met Warren Buffet for the first time only five years ago. Bill Gates did not think he had anything in common with Mr. Buffet. So he scheduled his meeting for only a half hour. But when Gates met him, the meeting lasted for ten hours and Bill Gates became a devotee of Warren Buffet.

Warren Buffet does not carry a cell phone, nor has a computer on his desk.

His advice to young people: Stay away from credit cards, invest in yourself and remember:



Money doesn't create man, but it is man who created money. Live your life as simple as you are. Don't do what others say. Just listen to them, but do what makes you feel good. Don't go on brand names. Wear those things in which you feel comfortable. Don't waste your money on unnecessary things. Spend on those who really are in need. After all, it's your life. Why give others the chance to rule your life?

As I consider Mr. Buffet's lifestyle and advice, I am most impressed by his simplicity. No cell phone? No computer on his desk. One letter a year to each of his CEOs? No fence around his house? You mean all the gadgets, busy schedules, and complexity that we have been taught are so crucial to success, may not be necessary? *How liberating!*

Take a few moments now to consider if you could simplify how you conduct your business. Consider your work; what do you love to do? What do you detest? What do you do because you think you must, or because others have placed their values and expectations on you? What would you be doing differently if you let yourself have more ease, free time, creativity, and fun?

I know of a man who is the CEO of a large company. He was working five very long days a week and the company was not growing. He was also highly stressed. His personal coach suggested that he take one day off a week and just nurture his spirit. The CEO agreed and took one day weekly for recreation and relaxation. Afterward, he reported that his time of refreshment created space for him to think clearly and find more inner peace. As a result, the other four days he worked became more enjoyable and more productive than when he was working five stressed days. Your strongest investment in success is inner peace.

We have more time- and labor-saving devices at our disposal today than at any time in history. You can communicate with anyone anywhere via email instantly at the press of one button; shop on the Internet without ever having to leave your home; get directions to your meeting via wireless GPS to your PDA; download music, movies, and podcasts without having to go to a theater or store; meet people, date, and have cyber-relationships without having to get dressed and go out. The amount of time saved is mind boggling, which raises the question; what do you do with the time you have saved? The answer for most people is: work more. Thus while amazing technology saves time, if you use your newfound free time to work, you are no closer to happiness. Maybe even farther from it.

In light of the changes we have seen over the last half-century, two noble quotes come to mind: Mahatma Gandhi noted, "There must be more to life than increasing its speed." Abraham Lincoln declared, "Most people are about as happy as they make up their mind to be."

Warren Buffet is my new hero. Sometimes I wonder how I ever survived without a cell phone or email. Sometimes I wonder how we will all survive with it. I am sure we will, but wouldn't it be cool if we connected with ourselves and each other through the original wireless? I think they call that God. ▼

Alan Cohen is the author of many popular inspirational books, including *The Dragon Doesn't Live Here Anymore* and his new bestseller *Don't Get Lucky – Get Smart*. Along with *Mary Manin Morrissey*, he will be conducting an inspiring workshop in Sedona, Arizona, on November 2 – 6, 2008. For information on this program or others, or to receive his free daily inspirational quote and monthly newsletter, visit www.alancohen.com, email info@alancohen.com, or phone 1(800) 568-3079.