

# Business Strengtheners



**Key  
Strategies  
to Move  
from  
Survival to  
Security  
and  
Affluence**

**Rich A. Gaines**



***I dedicate this book to my loving and amazing  
family and all of their ongoing support!***

***Rich A. Gaines***



***Business Strengtheners:  
Key Strategies to Move from Survival  
to Security and Affluence***

***Rich A. Gaines J.D., LL.M. Taxation***

***Owner of Legacy Legal, Inc.***

# **“Business Strengtheners: Key Strategies to Move from Survival to Security and Affluence”**

**by**

**Rich A. Gaines**

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# About Rich A. Gaines

Rich A. Gaines is an author and a leading expert in showing people how to strengthen businesses and fortify wealth. He created a new simple 5-step program that individuals, families, entrepreneurs and business owners can take advantage of and apply to strengthen their business and fortify their wealth.

Rich's background includes pursuing a legal education where he graduated from Southwestern University School of Law in 1983, completing the highest level of training in tax law at Denver University School of Law where he received a Master of Laws in Taxation in 1984, and receiving the distinction of becoming a registered investment advisor. Rich uses all of this training as a wealth advisor showing people how to strengthen business and fortify wealth.

For more information about Rich Gaines, visit  
[www.familylegacylegal.com](http://www.familylegacylegal.com)

*“Whenever you see a successful business, someone once made a courageous decision.” - Peter F. Drucker*



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## **RICH A. GAINES**

“Rich is multi-talented. He takes from his many years of experience in estate planning and taxation, looks to discover the big picture of my family’s needs and has been able to apply his knowledge in the way that will help my family the best.”

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“Thank you Family Legacy Legal!  
I have my life back thanks to you!”  
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“Rich is a consummate networker. He is outgoing and active in the marketplace. He keeps his eye out for businesses that can benefit his clients and their businesses.”  
S.P., Solana Beach, CA

“Rich is a ‘Go-Getter!’  
What an inspiration to us all, thank you!”  
Speaker Erik “Mr. Awesome” Swanson

***“Action is always your next move.”***

***Napoleon Hill***

***“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”***

***Benjamin Franklin***

***“Don’t let life change your goals because achieving your goals will change your life.”***

***Unknown***

***“Whenever an individual or business has decided success has been attained, progress stops.”***

***Thomas J. Watson***

***“Don’t let the fear of losing be greater than the excitement of winning.”***

***Robert Kiyosaki***

# Motivate & Inspire Your Whole Team,

This book is one of a series of books on strengthening business and fortifying wealth. Additional books will include Wealth Fortifiers, Legal Strengtheners, Tax Strengtheners, Inspirational Strengtheners and more. The word “strengthening” is used as an acronym to bring various simple tips, stories and action steps that you can use today to begin strengthening your business and fortifying your wealth. Your business success does not happen in a vacuum. You have confidants, colleagues and staff who should share your vision for the future. The best way to work with a consistent purpose is through awareness and education. Share this book with your influencers and supporters.

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from Survival to Security  
and Affluence**

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# *STRENGTHENING SURVIVAL INTO SECURITY*

## *S ~ Sales, Sales, Sales*

If your business is in the first step of Survival and you are having a tough time making ends meet, selling more of what you have and selling correctly is critical. Selling involves meeting the need of your customer. What you think, what you want, what you believe is completely irrelevant. If your customer likes blue Post-it notes, attempting to sell them yellow ones just won't work and you won't make a sale. Period.

Sell me the pen. In the movie the *Wolf of Wall Street*, which is based on the true story of Jordan Belfort, there is a scene where Jordan and other salesman are sitting at a table. Jordan takes out a pen and asks one of the sales novices to sell him the pen. As Belfort tries to hand him the pen, the salesperson panics. He's caught. He can't think on his feet. He doesn't want to embarrass himself and he wants Belfort to think he's a good salesman. Rather than accept the challenge and fail, he sheepishly asks if he could do it later. Belfort moves onto one of his long-time buddies and asks him the same thing, "Sell me this pen," telling the other men at the table that this guy can sell anything. His buddy says, "Why don't you write down my number on that napkin?" "I don't have a pen," Belfort replies. "Exactly! Supply and demand, my friend!" answers his buddy.

You are selling something people need, don't be afraid to point out the obvious to them. Sell me the pen goes to the heart of the selling process—it's about the benefits of the product or service you are selling. Let's not kid around, everyone is a salesman in some way, even professionals who traditionally don't think of themselves as salespeople sell. For a surgeon to make money he has to do surgery. For an attorney to make money he has to advocate on behalf of his client in court or draft contracts, etc.. Everyone sells.

Selling has a sequence. Follow the sequence and you can make even greater sales.

### **Sales Action Steps**

What do your customers want?

What benefits are you selling them?

Do you have a selling system?

What are the steps in your selling system?

Is your selling system working?

## *T - The Hooker Principle*

The Hooker Principle stands for the idea that once services are provided it's a whole lot harder to get paid. We start from a place where a customer has a sense of urgency to receive a product or service. Until it's received and completed, the customer remains under the urgency of want and is willing to pay for the service, sometimes more than usual. Once the urgency of the emergency/need/want is over, the elevated sense of need drops. When that happens, the consumer is not as motivated to take action toward making payment.

A simple example is the house with a plumbing leak. With water pouring out of the pipes the urgency to take care of the problem is high and the call to the plumber is frantic. The plumber comes over and takes care of the leak. The next day, the plumber sends out his invoice, and because the homeowner is back to other busy things in life the invoice sits on the counter for several weeks. Or even worse, the homeowner can't believe how much was charged to turn one screw to stop the leak and purposely delays payment. We've had clients who wanted emergency legal services.

In the past, we'd be kind and offer to get paid after we rendered the service. We usually don't do this, but we have made exceptions because the clients have already done business with us. Making these exceptions often resulted in us waiting months because as you'd suspect, the client's busy life took over and we were no longer high on the priority list.

The hooker principle has significant implications for the most important part of your business-- Cash Flow. Cash flow is the life-blood of a business. Part of what we do in working with business owners in the Survival Step is to give them the tools and knowledge to fix their cash flow.

### **Hooker Principle Action Steps**

What payment or deposit are you getting for your services?

When are you getting those payments?

Are you accepting discounts?

Are you allowing payments to extend weeks, even months?

Are you aware of your cash flow?



## *R - Rules are Made for the Masses*

For the purpose of strengthening business, the phrase “rules are made for the masses” means the majority of people must be controlled in their movements and their actions, otherwise chaos would ensue. Yellow light, red light, green light, go.

One of the primary complaints of business owners is that there are too many rules and that all of the rules and regulations interfere with their ability to run their business and make money. Too much time is spent filling out paperwork, complying with forms, and doing tasks that have nothing to do with making money.

In the legal field, if an attorney followed all of the business and ethical rules as part of the licensing requirements, he/she would be severely hampered from making any money. Time spent writing letters to retain clients, terminate clients, limitations on advertising, referrals and many more would make actually practicing and earning money almost impossible. Of course, some might think this would be a positive improvement.

If following all the rules makes doing business almost impossible, then to move from Survival into Security means you have to choose a different path. You have to make decisions on which rules to follow and which ones you won't. You must be different than the masses. Being different from the masses allows you to get out of the Survival Step into the Security Step.

### **Rules Action steps**

Which rules do you follow and why?

Which rules would you like not to follow?

What difference would it make to your business if you could eliminate some rules?

## *E - Everything Counts*

If you are in the Survival Step struggling to make ends meet in your business, Everything Counts. How you look. How you dress. How you talk. How you act. Actions speak louder than words and what you do, how you do it, when you do it, why you do it, and where you do it counts. It all matters. Everything you say, everything you do and everything you read. In fact, even if you are in the other steps of strengthening your business and fortifying your wealth these principles still apply. You want affluence in your life? You want to influence others? You want a Legacy? Everything Counts.

I'm a lifetime member of Frontier Trainings, a company run by one of my mentors, Clinton Swaine. In this company we are trained with special skills for speaking on stage, business skills and running workshops in a powerful style of interactive learning called experiential learning. One of the conversations we have while we're training is how we're showing up. Are we treating the training room as one of our own? Are we playing full out and making sure others are doing the same? Everything counts. You never know who you might meet and the level of influence they can make on your life.

An excellent business coach I work with, Bob Donnell, whose company is Next Level Entrepreneur Association, says, “What is acceptable is inevitable.” What we accept becomes our reality and our truth. If we accept bad behavior then we get bad behavior. If we accept lower standards, then we get lower standards. If we demand higher standards and higher expectations then we get higher results. What are you accepting and to what standards are you holding yourself?

When we think about how everything counts in our relationships, in our friendships, in how we think and treat our children and each other, the meaning of these two simple words “Everything Counts” and their significance is abundantly clear.

### **Everything Counts Action Steps**

How are you dressing?

How are you behaving?

How are you talking?

What actions do you take that speak louder than words?

Who do you have to become to have the things you want?

## *N - Never Surrender*

Surrender comes to the man who quits. Quitting is a state of mind. Surrendering is a state of mind. You can only quit or surrender if you decide to do it. Never surrendering- also called perseverance- means continuing to do the actions and hard work necessary to get to that goal or dream that you always wanted—. When a person perseveres, eventually, they will attain their goals.

For many years I thought doing a good job alone would lead to the success I wanted. People would come and use my services, my practice would grow and I would have the life I wanted. While I had success and a good lifestyle, doing a good job alone wasn't enough. Times changed, life changed and I had to change to keep what I had-- never surrendering my dreams for flexibility, freedom, travel, good friends, etc.. As I changed, finding a new way of providing my services was necessary and I have now spent years moving toward new visions and goals. There is an inner spark driving me to do this and I know that by never surrendering, no matter how many times obstacles come up, I will break through and reach the goals I have set while improving other people's lives and the life around me.

“Never give up, for that is just the place and time the tide will turn.” - Harriet Beecher Stowe

Never surrendering in the Survival Step is critical. Surrendering in this very first step could be devastating to you, your family, and the people who count on you. It could put you in a situation that binds you to creditors, taxes and heartache. Whatever your situation, there are answers and solutions to get you to a place of security.

### **Never Surrender Action Steps**

When have you surrendered in your life?

What are you surrendering now?

What has become acceptable that is now inevitable?

What are you willing to change that will no longer be acceptable?

What will be the price of non-acceptance?

## *G - Get Over It*

Easier said than done!

I had the pleasure of listening to a speech by a famous actor, Glenn Morshower. His message was to get over it. Why? Because each and every day we wake up, we are a different person than when we went to bed. Do you think that when you woke up this morning you were a business owner, a professional, a cook, a teacher? No, you were you. A person filled with ideas, believes, values, bones, blood and organs. It is only in your mind that you decided that you could be this or couldn't be that.

When you woke up if you chose not to be a smoker, not to be fat, not to dress shabbily, could you in fact do these things and be on your way to appearing exactly how you want to be. Of course you could. The only thing stopping you is you, and the stories you tell yourself. The stories that make you feel good, the stories that protect you from some past indignity, past harm, past way of getting things. Get over it. When you get over it is when you release the attachment to what holds you back in the past. When you let go, that's when you'll be ready to move forward at the speed of light.

I come from a family of professionals who have high expectations. I was the third of three brothers. Keeping up and competing was high on my emotional stability list. The challenges I had to go through were no big deal to them because they had already been through them. What I said didn't matter, It wasn't new to them, it was just mundane. That was the mindset I grew up with. My challenges didn't matter and my complaints fell on deaf ears. Regardless of whether it was really true, I had to make the decision to shed my own perceived stories of challenge and limitation. When I let go of my belief that I didn't matter, that what I said wasn't important, and that what I did was no big deal, my world, experiences and enjoyment of life came alive.

Get over it. Easier said than done. Just get started! We can help.

### **Get Over It Action Steps**

Write down a few emotions that hold you back in life. Be honest

Write down a few behaviors that hold you back in life. Be honest

Write down a few ideas as how you might change some of those emotions or behaviors. Don't judge. Just write. Allow your inner self to express. Let it come out.



## *T – Track All Progress*

Tracking all the progress you make will provide you with massive amounts of information that will help you determine what is working and what is not working in your business and your life, all of which is critical to move from Survival into Security.

W. Edwards Deming once said, “You can’t manage what you can’t measure.” So think about a goal you have. Are you tracking the progress towards that goal? Oftentimes we set a goal as the end result and forget about tracking the progress along the way. Success is the progressive realization towards a worthy ideal. Tracking progress simply lets you focus in on specific areas of improvement that need to be made in your business, your website, and even your health.

A business coach’s favorite line is to know your numbers. You have to know what your break-even point is. From your break-even point you can measure how many sales you need. From how many sales you need you can measure how many people you need to reach in order to convert a certain amount to sales. You have to know your price and from all of this you can know whether you will succeed or not.

In our company we knew we wanted to work on higher-priced clients. The problem was the work was taking us longer to complete because of the complexity. That meant our cash flow was delayed, but our cash flow delay didn't stop the bills from coming. We made a decision and an adjustment to work on clients who had the best capability of completing work within one workweek. When we started focusing on this metric we were then able to develop and discuss priorities, needs, obstacles and other matters necessary to finish tasks and be successful at meeting our revenue targets each week. This tracking of progress has been highly successful for streamlining workload, efficiency and cash flow resulting in continued year-over-year growth.

## **Track All Progress Action Steps**

Pick one area of your business.

What goals do you want to set?

What is working and what isn't working?

Start working on a plan to change action steps to achieve the goal.

Are you tracking your progress?

## *H - Hedgehog*

What would building a successful business mean to you, your future, the future of your family, your legacy and the people you can impact in the world? Having all three keys is what's called the 'sweet spot.'

The keys to building a successful business come from a concept called the hedgehog principle explained in more detail in Jim Collins' book, *Good to Great*. There are three keys to building a successful business. Knowing these three keys is vital to moving from the Survival Step into Security.

Key #1: Have passion. If you don't have passion you won't have the Never Surrender attitude to keep going when the going gets tough and move from Survival into Security.

Key #2: Be in an industry that is financially lucrative. If your industry is no longer financially lucrative I suspect getting out of the Survival Step will be next to impossible.

Key #3: Be able to achieve mastery. While you can survive without being a master, being mediocre will make moving from Survival to Security challenging, especially as a business owner or entrepreneur.

After 23 years in my industry, I was an expert, having mastered my craft. I also was burnt out and I saw that the industry was changing. Without innovation I would be in trouble. I took what we do in this industry and made substantial shifts that would be more lucrative. I developed new skills. I took my knowledge, skill and training and developed the simple Five-Step approach to move from Survival to Legacy.

I have all three keys and it certainly has created a sweet spot for all areas of my life.

### **Hedgehog Action Steps**

Do you have passion?

Is your industry still lucrative?

Are you an expert or have you otherwise mastered your craft?

If you don't have passion, take some time and think about what will make you happy because there are no second go-rounds in this world.

## *E - Emotion High, Intelligence Low*

Have you ever been in an argument and said things that are just stupid? Of course, we've all been there. We get so upset it just seems there is no control over what comes out of our mouth.

The amygdala part of our brain controls our fight or flight reflexes. When we have high emotions the amygdala is fully engaged, releasing chemicals to put us in a peak emotional state of fight or flight. Similarly, rational thought resides in the neo-cortex. When the amygdala is engaged, the neo-cortex is not. Therefore, when we need to take action quickly we may be in a highly emotional state and we say stupid things.

Making good choices comes from being calm and able to properly evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the choices available to us. We want our intelligence to be high and our emotions low. As business owners we especially want to be able to be in control of our emotions in situations that demand full attention, such as engaging in negotiations, dealing with vendors and customers.

Attorneys argue as a means to advocate for their clients. Oftentimes, this means they simply want to be right more than they want to understand. The opponent's perspective and viewpoint doesn't matter, it just can't be right because being right means not winning and not winning means not doing a good job for your client. So attorneys just disagree. The result is that a once mild-mannered person, acting on behalf of his client, resorts to name calling and unreasonable behavior. Emotion high, intelligence low.

### **Emotion High, Intelligence Low Action Steps**

When was the last time your emotions were high and your intelligence low?

Describe the situation?

What were the triggers you experienced?

Think about what you could have done to keep your emotions in check.

Write down three of those actions.

Practice those three actions when you are calm so you will be prepared to use them when you are in a difficult position.

## *N – Negotiate, Negotiate, Negotiate*

I have come to a point in my life where if someone wants to offer a discount for something I want and am ready to purchase, I'll take it. By contrast, I don't offer discounts very often because it means I am diminishing the value of what I have to offer. I'm amazed at how fast the first thing people will do is reduce their price. Knowing this means you have an edge because you can negotiate, negotiate, and negotiate.

One day, I was with a few of my colleagues and we decided to test the theory of "everything is negotiable." While we ordered our lunch at a Subway we asked the employee if we could get a free cookie with our meal. After using the power of personal connection, we eventually got the prize of a free cookie. Later, while I was conducting a sales training, I asked the audience how many of them thought they could get a free cookie at a Subway. To my surprise, not one person raised their hand. Not one!

Everything is negotiable, but you can't prove it unless you go for it.

In the Survival Step, as with all things in life, negotiation can mean saving substantial amounts of money and those savings can be the difference between staying above water and making it, or not making it at all.

### **Negotiate Action steps**

Name some benefits you could achieve by negotiating?

How much money might you be losing by not negotiating?

What was your last negotiation?

What negotiation techniques do you use?

See if you can get a free cookie!



## *I - I Alone Am Responsible for My Actions*

Life will change for you when you accept this lesson. When you accept that you alone are responsible for your actions, when you realize that the consequences of what happens to you comes from you and you alone, when you take control of your life, events and circumstances around you will begin to line up in your favor.

Have you ever wondered why some people seem to complain all the time about what happens to him? Others, they just keep taking action and moving on without any negative thought or second guess. This is the difference between a person who is in control of his life and a person who thinks life controls him.

A good business coach once told me that if I explain to someone how to do a project and he fails to do it properly it is my fault not his. I was responsible for making sure he understood all of the details and if he didn't, it was my responsibility to check in before the project got too far along. Taking this perspective changed everything about how I conducted business and communicated within all of my relationships.

A simple tool you can use in this area is to ask a simple question. What do you mean by ...? This simple question can assist you in getting great clarity from people about their beliefs, ideas, thoughts, intentions and more. Test it out and see if it works.

Being responsible is a theme that applies throughout the Legacy Hierarchy, particularly in the steps of Influence and Legacy, which will be the subject of future books.

### **I - I Alone Am Responsible for My Actions, Action Steps**

Do you complain?

Are there things in your life you could change?

Are there times when you wanted to change but didn't?

What three events happened in your life that keeps you from believing in yourself?

## *N - Nerves of Steel*

To be an entrepreneur you must have nerves of steel. Over 75% of businesses fail within the first two years. The odds are already stacked against you and yet you persevere. When you have a regular job you are responsible for one thing—doing what you do best. When you are an entrepreneur you end up taking on many roles. Struggling as a business owner, along with the stress of making enough money to pay your employees, pay yourself, and keep your lights on can be daunting and it requires nerves of steel.

There is a saying that poor is a state of mind. Broke is a fact. When you have nerves of steel you do not succumb to the idea that you are poor, only that you may be broke. Being broke can be fixed. It may take a lot of hard work and it requires recognizing that the money situation is only temporary. The mindset of being poor is very different and will only lead you to continue to be poor because of the rigidity of the mindset.

After a 23-year career in tax law, having a good practice that allowed for a good living, I found myself faced with the reality that I wasn't making enough money to pay my mortgage as timely as necessary. It was during the great recession of 2008-2009. I never had this problem. I always paid my bills on time and yet here I was struggling to make ends meet. Without the lesson of nerves of steel and that poor is a mindset but broke is temporary, I'm not sure I would have been able to make it through. What made the difference was the realization that if I kept working hard and doing my best, the lack of money was only transitory. Each day, each week meant something different in our financial picture and we would eventually be in a better position. Sure enough, after a year or two of struggling, we did make it through and are now thriving.

### **Nerves of Steel Action steps**

What made you become an entrepreneur?

What motivates you every day?

How many roles do you have to play?

When must you have nerves of steel?

## *G - Give Yourself a Break*

As I stated in the Get Over it section, I am one of those people who came from a family of high expectations. It's pretty hard for anyone to be harder on me than I am on myself and I think that holds true for many people. We seem to focus on the faults and mistakes, not on the accomplishments and successes. We put ourselves under constant scrutiny to do better, be better, work harder, do more, and achieve more. The ironic thing is whenever I hear a friend or colleague criticize his own performance the way I criticize myself, I quickly help him correct his thinking. It's always easier to do for others what we don't do for ourselves.

In the end, when we allow ourselves the chance to realize how much we really have accomplished, it's that positive thinking and reinforcement that gives us the ability to push on.

I love tennis. I am a decent player. Of course, many times I have that self-talk of "how could I have missed that shot" or "how come I didn't hit the shot better?" However, when I'm in the right frame of mind, give myself a break by recognizing the good effort and stay in the present, my body relaxes, the tension leaves, my head is clear and usually I end up hitting harder and better from that point on.

It's not easy to do all we do in running a business. There are constant demands and pressures. Making a mistake is a natural part of human nature and being alive. Give yourself a break. Mistakes happen. Life can throw us curve balls; a cracked tooth, a car that needs new tires, a good client leaves. All of this is just a part of life, and putting extra pressure on ourselves won't change the reality of the past. Put the past in the past. Stay in the present, lean toward the future and give yourself a break.

### **Give Yourself a Break Action Steps**

Are you hard on yourself?

Do little mistakes bother you?

Could you ease up on your self-criticism?

How would you feel if you gave yourself a break?

**Strengthening in Survival.** By taking these actions and following these lessons you give yourself a great chance to stop just surviving and getting more security in your life.



***STRENGTHENING  
SECURITY INTO  
AFFLUENCE***



***Congratulations on working through the Survival Step. The Action Steps provide you with tough questions that can make you confront some hard realities. Now you're ready to be secure in your business, your life, and get ready for that future you have always wanted. A future filled with the pleasures of life, the influence you can have on others and eventually the legacy you want to leave.***

## *S - Systems*

Systems are the muscles, joints and bones of business. They are the mechanics that make sure the business will do what it is supposed to do regardless of outside influences, changes in personnel or changes in the direction of the business.

Systems in a business can be repeated, they are transferable across services or departments. Systems are impersonal. It is not a person's fault. It is the fault of a system. Systems can be, and should be, refined. As was mentioned in the previous Survival section on Tracking All Progress, systems should be measurable so you can manage them. If something is not working in a business, the first area to look at is the system, not a person who may not have performed as well as they could have performed.

Statistics show that 94% of mistakes come from a failure of a system. 6% of failures come from people themselves.

Professionals do not typically learn how to run a business. We learn information and our expertise is in providing that information. After 23 years, my business hit a revenue ceiling. No matter what I did I couldn't exceed a particular gross annual revenue. At this time I sought out some business coaching. One of the key points of advice was to systematize the business; from how we talk with clients when we first meet them, how documents are prepared, how clients come to sign documents, and how employees are hired, etc. With a system in place I was able to focus on other parts of running the business and growing revenue.

### **Systems Action Steps**

Do you have systems in your business?

Do they run smoothly?

Where could they be improved?

Is your business suffering a breakdown because of bad systems?

## *T – Tax Angels*

In the Security Step, having some understanding of taxes and doing tax planning can secure your business and keep more money in your pocket. A penny saved is a penny earned. I use the term tax angels to describe some of the benefits that are just waiting to be picked up by business owners.

**Tax Angel # 1: Tax Deferrals.** Tax deferrals are strategies that allow you to defer paying taxes until a future date. These strategies include individual retirement accounts, simple and self-employed retirement accounts, 401k's, and annuities. These tools allow you to make investments, increase your wealth and not pay taxes until you are older, 70 1/2, to be exact.

**Tax Angel # 2: Tax Preferrals.** Tax Preferral strategies allow you to take deductions without ever having to pay for them. Examples include tax rate differences, and a mileage allowance for business mileage. Also, when you buy equipment like a copy machine or rental real estate you get to take a deduction every year.

**Tax Angel # 3: After-Tax Freebies.** The After-Tax Freebies are a bit of a mixed blessing, but the long-term benefits are incredible. With the After Tax Freebies tax must first be paid on money that is made, but then that money is put into investments that are forever tax-free. The investments grow tax free, the money never has to be taken out, and if the money is taken out it is tax-free. Some of the strategies in the After Tax Freebie camp are the Roth IRA, or Roth 401k, Life Insurance and Municipal Bonds.

Investing with the idea of not having to use the money is a great way to think about a Legacy for children and grandchildren.

### **Tax Angels Action Steps**

Are you using tax deferred investment accounts?

Are you taking advantage of Tax Preferrals?

Have you looked at the phenomenal benefit of the After Tax Freebies?

## *R – Rules are Breakable*

*“Rules are mostly made to be broken and are too often for the lazy to hide behind” - Douglas MacArthur.*

*“In all matters of creativity, rules are meant to be broken when necessary.” - Haley Langford*

“Rules are breakable” doesn’t mean that all rules can or should be broken. It also doesn’t mean that laws should be broken. What is the purpose for rules? Rules control behavior, usually behavior of the masses in order to avoid chaos. As such, the only way to not be one of the masses and to succeed is to break rules. The challenge is to determine which rules you can break and what consequences are tied to those actions.

I had a client who received a check for a business that was no longer active. He wanted to cash the check but the bank was reluctant to cash it without an existing account or one that would be maintained for a while. Even when he opened an account, the funds of that size would not be available for a couple of weeks. That was the bank's self-interest and universal rule. So how does he get his money? He has to break the rules. If he had to set up a savings account, he would, but in a way that wouldn't be in the best interest of the bank. As soon as the funds were available, he withdrew the entire amount and closed the account. The bank did not benefit from earning interest on his money but that was the cost to them for the time and energy he wasted setting up an account.

## **Rules Are Breakable Action steps**

What are mass rules you can think of?

How do these rules help or hinder business?

What rules could you break without negative consequences?

## *E - Everything is Negotiable*

Prices and conditions are not fixed. To negotiate is to come to agreement with the objective to reach a mutually acceptable result. Everyone needs to win. The art of negotiation is to reconcile what is a good result for both sides; otherwise the next negotiation breeds animosity and vengeance. Successful negotiation leaves both sides feeling they received a fair enough deal. Knowing what you want from a negotiation is critical and understanding what the other side wants is just as important so that you can find crossover points.

A very successful commercial and residential real estate broker told me a story about a client who wanted to lease an awkwardly constructed office. Once the lease was signed the tenant requested certain modifications be made to the space to make it more suitable. The landlord was upset about this request after the fact and felt he had no legal obligation to make the improvements. That's when the broker's successful negotiation perspective worked in everyone's favor.



The broker discussed the benefits of making the modifications; (1) the tenant might stay and pay a higher price later on, (2) the improvements add value to the real estate, (3) if the space had to be re-leased, a higher price could be requested because the office will show better, and (4) the tenant will be much happier.

Negotiation has to be a win-win.

### **Everything is Negotiable Action Steps**

What do you negotiate for every day?

When was your last negotiation successful in your eyes?

Were you prepared for the negotiation?

What could you do to negotiate better?

## *N - Needs Assessment*

Course corrections are inevitable. When it comes to sailing, I'd venture to say it is impossible to go from one point to another in a straight line. There are many conditions that influence the journey; waves, ocean currents and wind, to name a few. On occasion, it's necessary to gage where we've been and the route we're taking to make sure we're on the right course.

In business it is challenging to get anywhere in a straight line. Markets change, customer attitudes change, and competition gets tougher, etc. An occasional needs assessment for your business is important to assure the right resources are in place to keep you on course to attain your goals.

A successful business starts with a vision and the right people in the right places. As the business grows new ideas, products and processes will emerge. Each step of the way the business should conduct a needs assessment to determine the most efficient way to continue to achieve its vision.

In our company, we have a weekly meeting to determine our revenue targets and what is and not is working to get us there. My partner and I meet periodically to look at the bigger picture of the strategies, services and products as well as review the direction of the company and determine what is missing or needed for the business to continue to move towards our goals. For example, we might take note of the people with whom we are strategically aligned to determine if they have the right commitment to a mutually productive goal and whether they have the resources to deliver on the commitment.

### **Needs Assessment Action Steps**

What is the vision of your company?

What works well in your company?

What doesn't work well in your company?

What could be improved in the company?

## *G - Good to Great*

In his book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins says the vast majority of companies never become great precisely because the vast majority of companies become quite good. That is their main problem. So what's the difference between good and great? Well the word good is defined as sufficient or average whereas great is defined as remarkable exceptional or outstanding.

Oftentimes we'll get to a point where we are quite good. We are seeing results and our finances are better than when we first started out, so we settle, we stop pushing for more and striving to be better. We stop pushing because we become good even though we are not yet great. If you truly want to be great, then the mindset of "good is never enough" is absolutely critical.

Here is an important distinction. There is a vast difference between always wanting to be better versus nothing is ever good enough. You have to be able to move on and keep progressing. You have to be able to look at the overall picture, and realize there is always room to reach higher, that there is always room for improvement. It doesn't mean you have to critically analyze every single micro detail of everything you are doing in order to move on.

In the world of business, especially that of entrepreneurship, and in most aspects of life, the ones who typically are most successful are the ones who are able to achieve that extra something, the ones who give that extra push, when everyone else has given up or settled.

## **Good to Great Action Steps**

What are you good at?

What should you be great at?

Are you settling for good?

How could you make your company great?

## *T - Testimonials Tell All*

It's one thing for you to say it; it's quite another when someone else says it. A third party testimonial or endorsement can be gold for a business. People will naturally be skeptical of what you have to offer and when you are the one doing the offering a self-serving conflict of interest is inherent. When someone else is describing your products and services, something changes. The wall of skepticism is reduced because that third party is relaying first-hand experience and people are more willing to hear and accept the validity of the story.

I would ask a simple question. If your customers really liked what you've done for them why wouldn't they tell everyone they know about the benefits of your service or product? They should. Make it easy for them. When you ask for a testimonial, give them direct links to your Yelp page, your LinkedIn profile, or any online review mechanism that will reach far more people than they can tell on their own.

The statistics are that a satisfied customer will tell about five of their friends about the experience. An unsatisfied customer will tell twenty-five people. The ratio is clear that keeping a customer happy will do much more for your business. It takes a long time to build a reputation and a short time to ruin it.

### **Testimonials Tell All Action Steps**

Who are some of your best customers?

Why do they buy from you?

Do they refer the people they know?

What testimonials could you get from your customers?

## *H- Hire Slow, Fire Fast*

This could be one of the most valuable tips for businesses. Think about the cost to hire a person, train him, realize he isn't what you want and then have to let him go and start all over again. Think about the time lost. Think about the revenue lost. It is a business killer not to hire the right people. The idea that desperate times call for desperate measures should not apply to your hiring process. Hire slow.

By the same token, fire fast. An unhappy, non-productive or disruptive employee can take a quick toll on the morale and productivity of the rest of the business. It is essential to eliminate the people who aren't working out.

A business is like a band. Each person has a role. If people are in their proper roles then the business has a chance of functioning at its optimum. What is a proper role though and who are the right people. Having the right people in the right place means the people are doing what they love to do. They don't need to be convinced. They are working at their optimum in line with the vision of the company.



Our company's vision is to change the way people think and talk about wealth, not only in money, but in values, beliefs and traditions. This is how we carry ourselves. Everything we do, how we act, and what we offer is built around this idea—from Survival to Legacy. We show people how to strengthen their business and fortify their wealth. We bring families together to look at the opportunities they have to build wealth as a united force.

### **Hire Slow, Fire Fast Action Steps**

Do you hire slow?

Do you fire fast?

Who is working in the business that shouldn't be?

What is the cost?

## *E - Every Number is a Negotiation Point*

If everything is negotiable, where do you start? A good first place is to look at numbers wherever they appear. Time, quantity and price and any other number can be negotiated. For me personally, I am truly amazed how many businesses and professionals give away discounts competing on price rather than value, which is one step from being broke. When a product competes on price it becomes a commodity and its value has been diminished.

One day I looked at my credit card statement and noticed I was being charged 23% interest. I knew I had a few late payments and the rate had been increased but this had gone on for one year. I called the credit card company to re-negotiate the interest rate and the first comment I received was we have no programs to allow this. After finally getting to speak to a supervisor, I explained that in reality I always made my payments, sometimes higher, sometimes lower. I never went a month without making a payment, wasn't in Bankruptcy, and didn't default. After submitting my request to the review department I fully expecting to only receive a lower interest rate. To my astonishment, my next bill showed not only a lower interest rate but it was also retroactive for the previous four months, saving me over \$6,000 dollars.

Every Number is a Negotiation Point and Everything is Negotiable.

### **Every Number is a Negotiation Point Action Steps**

Where in your life or business do you deal with numbers?

What numbers can you negotiate?

What impact would it make to be able to negotiate numbers?

## *N - Neglect is Needless Need*

This is a simple concept. When something is neglected it ends up costing more to fix it. We may think we are saving money but in the long run we spend more. It's like the old saying, "pay me now or pay me later," and yet we see this everywhere in our business and our lives. From rusty pipes that spring a leak, to car maintenance avoided that shortens the life of the vehicle. Neglect will not make issues go away.

In the legal industry it's the difference between doing good work up front or ending up in court paying tens of thousands of dollars in attorney fees to fix the situation. Yet many people don't want to pay for the value of the service. You get what you pay for. Why would you want to pay twice for the same product or service?

## **Neglect is Needless Need Action Steps**

What are you neglecting in your business?

What is the cost of neglecting it?

What is the cost to fix it?

What benefits will be achieved by fixing it?

# *1 -It's Not What You Make it's What You Keep*

What good is it to make money, spend all of it and end up with nothing? It's not what you make; it's what you keep.

There is a simple and often told principle that you have to live within your means. So simple yet so many don't, won't or can't. We've all had financial struggles at one time or another. The only way to wealth is to pay ourselves first and make sure money is put away where it can't be reached. If there is nothing set aside for later, we won't have anything to show for our efforts.

There are many opportunities to build wealth. There is a concept called The Rule of 72's which says if you take a certain rate of interest and divide the number 72 by that rate of interest, the result will be the number of years it will take to double your money, assuming you can generate that rate of interest every year. For example, 72 divided by a nine percent rate of return means it will take eight years to double your money. That's a long time. Keeping what you make is critical. How hard do you work for your money? If it's lost easily, how much harder will it be to make more of it?

## **It's Not What You Make, It's What You Keep Action Steps**

Do you put away money for the future?

Do you save money to buy something nice?

What could you not spend money on that you could put away?

What benefits could you obtain by paying yourself first?

## *N- Now or Never*

A body in motion stays in motion. The largest obstacle to doing is getting started. When you get started adjustments can be made, lessons learned and continuous progress can be achieved. So the biggest way to accomplish something is just getting started.

We hear people say, “I’m getting too old to start.” Or “I should of or could have....” “You aren’t getting any younger and the past is the past. You can’t change the past but you can change the future and that time is now. Take action and get started. Our system can help.



## **Now or Never Action steps**

What are you putting off that you could do today?

What steps do you need to get started?

What is stopping you?

What is the reward for getting started today?

## *G - Genius of the And*

This is one of my favorites. Most of the time when people ask a question it will be phrased as an “either or.”. We must select one or the other. We must make a choice as if one were really better than the other. But what if we could choose both using “and” not “or?” I choose both. The either or scenario assumes that a choice is between two opposites. The genius of the And presents the notion that we can hold what seems to be two opposing positions in the same space and have both co-exist at the same time.

Should regulation of business be encouraged or discouraged? One camp would argue that regulation of business is necessary to protect people while another camp would argue that regulation of business stifles it. We can have both, the encouragement of regulation to protect people and discouragement of regulation to prevent the choking of business. These days it seems government is regulating everything and making doing anything a Herculean task. Who and what do we want to protect and when should business not be restricted? Taking what seems as polar opposites and reconciling them to meet both needs is the genius of the ‘And.’

## **Genius of the And Action Steps**

Listen for choices when people use the word “or.”

Think about how both might be valuable.

Create solutions and use the word “and.”

## ***Bonus Strengtheners***

### *Grab My Attention*

For you to be successful in selling, pitching to investors, speaking about your product, your company, even yourself, you must grab people's attention. If you have seven seconds to make a first impression then break the rules, be different, stop doing things the same old way and grab someone's attention with a phrase, a story, a picture, something different that will make people take notice.

The hardest lesson I had to learn as I moved into speaking and workshops was to stop teaching like a boring professor spewing out a bunch of information. I call this the podium person. Most people come into a workshop and the speaker stands behind a podium starting with point number one and moving along methodically until the audience is asleep.

Bill Gates when he did a "TED" talk began by releasing a jar of mosquitoes into the audience to demonstrate the ravages of malaria. Do you think anyone forgot that opening?

Here's an example of an opening I used in a talk about what it means to think like a business owner. Acting like Chicken Little, I started,

“The sky is falling, the sky is falling. taxes, regulations, competition, what are we supposed to do? I thought I could just be a business owner and sell my product or provide my service and I will be able to live the life I want to lead.”

It was short, concise and to the point of what I wanted to get across. That being a business owner has all kinds of pitfalls and to be successful we have to think like a business owner not like someone who has a job working for themselves.

In the next book, as we move into the Affluence Strengtheners, we'll be looking at expanding your brand and how to construct a 30-second commercial. But don't wait until then to work through the following action steps.

### **Grab My Attention Action Steps**

What are you selling?

What is your pitch?

What is different about your pitch?

How do you grab people's attention?

By taking these actions and following these lessons you give yourself a great chance to be secure and ready to have more affluence in your life.

“Most people don’t plan to fail; they fail to plan.” - John L. Beckley

Fail = Family Anger in Lawsuits. Fail= Financial Abundance is Lost.  
Failure=Family Achievement is Lacking Undermining Real Enrichment.

Plan=Preserve Legacy Act Now. Plans are like a roadmap showing you the places to go, the hazards to watch out for and the destination you’ll reach. In this book we have provided you a plan of Business Strengtheners and questions to move you from a place of worry, stress over financial matters to a place of greater reward, greater leverage, greater satisfaction and greater contentment.

Security is a place of knowing you can keep what you have worked hard to earn. And yes, many times when the telephone wasn’t ringing, I wondered whether I’d get a new client that would enable me to pay my bills that month.

This is the first of a series—more work needs to be done. More needs to be learned and we should never stop learning. My next book is how to move from Affluence into Influence.

How many times have people rested only to fall back, only to have something they treasured taken away from them? Have you ever had something you cherished taken away from you?

Now is the time to keep going. It's time to think about how to keep what you have, move to a place of Affluence, and consolidate the gains you've fought for so you can live the life you want. What does that look like? You're able to go to the places you want to go. You can become a bigger part of your community and enjoy the comforts of what you've earned.

My next Strengtheners books will reveal how to move from Affluence into Influence and Influence to Legacy. What is your purpose? What makes you unique? What is your life's vision? What impact will you make while you are here and How do you want to be remembered? I'll walk you through each step and help you create more action plans for your success.

[www.familylegacylegal.com](http://www.familylegacylegal.com)





# BUSINESS STRENGTHENERS

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