

PREFACE

This book is written for young people in the United States, as a handbook for success in everyday life. It presents time-tested people skills and other key life skills. It covers a refresher in American civics, geography, U.S. history, and some classic works like Teddy Roosevelt's *The Man in the Arena*. The opportunity to pay for one's college through national service is presented.

This book is based on my experience over a 50 year period in several capacities, including being a college adjunct lecturer, U.S. Navy Captain, international trade businessman over three decades, and as an Arizona State Senator. I was a candidate for Governor of Arizona during an 18-month campaign for that high office. I continue to teach college-level business, management, and logistics courses online and in the classroom. I own an international logistics consulting LLC, *American Quality International Consulting* (www.ameri-qic.com.) It is now in its 16th year.

The method of this book is to put forward many important things that can make one's life very successful. We learn by doing and, unfortunately, that is often doing things the hard way. Sometimes we get lucky, and we receive some great advice that can help us in our lives. One of the most important things that I have learned is the importance of people skills.

About ten years ago, I was teaching an evening class in logistics as an adjunct teacher at the University of Arizona South. During a break, one of the students mentioned to a group of students and teachers that she had read that one's people skills account for 80% of one's success in life, regardless if a person is a brain surgeon, astronaut, or international banker. At first, for me, it did not sink in, but the more that I thought about it, I came around to agreeing. Over the ensuing years, I have asked many people if they agree with this key statement, and I have never come across anyone that did not agree.

"The president of a great technological school was asked what traits or abilities ranked as most important in the success of their graduates. He said: 'Even in so technical a field as engineering; personality ranks about eighty percent, engineering skill twenty percent.' Then he went on to say that this was no appeal for shoddily prepared engineers, but that the ability to get along with people was always a greater factor in success than mere skill, memory, high grades, or even genuine ability."

There are many people skills that we need to be aware of, and near the top of the list is humility. In dealing with others, never lose a sense of humility. This is a critical part of the often mentioned Golden Rule in that we should endeavor to treat others as we want to be treated ourselves. Another important people skill is listening to others when

they are speaking to us. In conversing with others, many are guilty of always transmitting and not receiving. All of us need to work at being a good listener.

Honesty is always a great policy, and it goes a long way in our dealings with others. At the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY, and the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, CO, the Cadet Honor Code reads: "A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do." By any measure, honesty is always the best policy in dealing with others. This book will cover these and other people skills in greater detail.

Another significant part of this book is the coverage of life skills. Persistence is one of them, and it has been critical for most of the achievements in my life. I have a plaque in my office at home that has the following quote from U.S. President Calvin Coolidge:

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

Along these lines, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill is famous for saying: "Never give in, never, never, never, never--in nothing, *great or small*, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense." Another famous quote of his is: "If I have found the right words, you must remember that I have always earned my living by my pen and my tongue. Writing and speaking, especially public speaking, are very good people skills to acquire."

Discipline is a life skill that is critical for one to have a successful life. This book gets into this subject in detail. Planning in one's life pays big dividends. There is a saying that is called the Five P Rule: "Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance."

A key part of this book is a list of recommended books to read and why they are important. The first book listed is the *Bible*. Wikipedia states the following: "The Bible has been a massive influence on literature and history. With estimated total sales of over 5 billion copies, it is widely considered to be the most influential and best selling book of all time. As of the 2000s, it sells approximately 100 million copies annually."

The second book on the list deals with the Ten Commandments. In Dennis Prager's recent book, *The Ten Commandments (Still the Best Moral Code)*, he states, "The most important words ever written are the Ten Commandments. These words changed the world when they were first presented at Mt. Sinai to the Israelites, and they are changing it now. They are the foundation stones of Western Civilization." Those words of Dennis Prager are very powerful.

One of my favorite books on the list is titled: *Why Didn't They Teach Me This In School?* by Cary Siegel. The subtitle is *99 Personal Money Management Principles to Live*

By. He starts the book with “Principle 1: Marry the ‘financially right’ person, and Principle 2: Stay married to the ‘financially right’ person.” Marriage and families, throughout history, have been two pillars of civilized society. These are keys to a successful life.

Two additional favorite books of mine are the classics: *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, by Dale Carnegie and *The Power of Positive Thinking*, by Norman Vincent Peale. Chapter 18 is titled Recommended Reading and contains other important books. Based on my current reading, I recommend the following truly outstanding books: *12 Rules For Life (An Antidote To Chaos)* by Jordan Peterson; *Man’s Search for Meaning* by Victor E. Frankl; and *A Place Called Heaven* by Robert Jeffress.

The final part of this book deals with American history, civics, and things that every American citizen should know, including the answers to the basic questions that a naturalized citizen must know to take the oath of allegiance as a new citizen of the United States. There are important excerpts from the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights. There is a chapter on important dates and events in U.S. history, including presidential elections, wars, and other events, such as the landing of the first man on the moon.

In my home office, I have a picture of Neil Armstrong, the first man to set foot on the moon, as a reminder of the heroic achievements of him and his fellow astronauts. The date was July 21, 1969, fifty-one years ago. There is a chapter on U.S. and world geography with applicable facts and figures. In closing, this book covers definitions of key terms, a listing of important quotations, and the verbatim inclusion of some famous speeches, including Abraham Lincoln’s classic 272 word *Gettysburg Address*.

This book can also be used as a textbook. At the end of each chapter, there are five questions for discussion. God bless you, and God bless the United States.

Al Melvin