

What became of your Childhood Dreams: Reality or Fantasy?

By Mark E. Charnet

When I was a teenager my dreams were to have an unlimited bank account, never to have a boss, to own my own business, to live in a mansion, drive a Porsche Turbo on the odd numbered days and a Rolls Royce on the even numbered days, wear the finest clothes, have the top of the line stereo and video systems, have a few professional pinball machines, so I wouldn't have to feed quarters into the machines at the local arcade, to complement my arcade a quality pool table and cues were necessary, I wanted a classy men's diamond ring and matching diamond Rolex watch, I believed I deserved to marry a beauty queen, have at least two kids and I wanted to travel to where the most famous show on television and Robin Leach vicariously took his viewer's on *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. To get there I needed my own luxury jet and 100 foot yacht. I didn't want the fame, just the fortune with the frugal side of me not wanting to pay for all of the necessary bodyguards.

I was a kid, free-spirited, full of desire and ready to get to work to accomplish my goals. As a pre-teen the world's first video game came to the market called Pong and I wanted it. The cost was \$75.00 and between my three paper routes and washing the kitchen floor for my mom, along with babysitting for a friend's younger brother at 50¢ an hour, Pong was mine! I planned, I worked, and I conquered. Later in life at age 14, I got the much coveted working papers that entitled me to my first minimum wage paying job at a laboratory washing test tubes by hand. I was *told* that my pay was to be \$2.35 per hour; at the end of the week I discovered it was a lie. Immediately I stormed into the boss' office demanding my fair due. It was then that I learned about the acronyms: SUI, FICA, FED W and more! How could that be, "silent partners"? There were no silent partners when I washed the kitchen floor or delivered the newspapers or collected the weekly newspaper money for that matter. I was furious!

I vividly remember at the age of twelve having a revelation that rich parents give birth to rich kids and middle class parents give birth to middle class kids and poor folks give birth to poor kids. It was my station in life to be born into a middle class family with both of my parents having to work. It was at 12 years of age that I decided to become a millionaire and work myself out of the middle class. But how, I thought. I needed a plan, an idea, an invention perhaps. The normal routine was to work for 40 years and get a pension. That was too long a plan for me with no guarantee of success anyway. There had to be a better way. College was one idea, I'd be a business major and finance minor and learn how money works, you know, to read and understand the *Wall Street Journal*. Well, that plan failed since no one at the college had any idea of what the contents of the paper were all about and there were no courses on money management and stock selection anyway. An old mentor of mine once told me that, "if hard work was the key to riches, than the sanitation engineers and refuse collectors would be the highest paid profession." (He used the term garbage men, but I "cleaned" it up.) He continued, "If brains and smarts were the key to financial independence then all of the college professors would be the highest paid people in the country and we know that's not the case." So I asked him, what is the answer to the riddle? His answer was simple and two-fold. First he said, "Find someone who is a millionaire and who is willing to share with you how he or she did it and do what they did. The second way is to find a need that people have and fill it!"

This seemed simple to me, all I have to do is find a millionaire to talk to and interview and follow in those footsteps, or I could be a student of people, observe what they need and fill it. I could do that. Last I looked though, there weren't any millionaires on the corner selling maps to their fortune and the copy machine, the light bulb and overnight package delivery had already been invented. Then it hit me like a

ton of bricks; I already found the need, at least every hour of every day on the radio the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the S+P 500 values are aired and you know what, no one I knew understood what they represented or meant. Another example was the rate board in the bank, the one that says yield to maturity, effective yield, nominal yield, Annual Percentage Rate and so on. No one I knew could explain the differences between them. What was the rule of 72, the rule of 115 and the inverse relationship between bond yield and value? These examples were but a few of the financial basics that neither I nor my parents and their friends understood. In fact, all of the middle class people I asked about this list had no idea what they were. The rich people understood it and much more, such as the term leverage. My Mom said that leverage is what you need to pick up a heavy object; my millionaire mentor told me it's a tool to amass wealth. The more I learned, the more I learned what I didn't know and took for granted as a member of the middle class. If I could learn the rules of the rich I could apply them to my own situation and then I could share them with others, to fill their need to know and apply them also, what an idea, what a plan!

To further my studies, I invested in a book by Napoleon Hill, entitled, Think and Grow Rich, a book he published 25 years before I was born. In this book were revealed the secrets and commonalities of the smartest, greatest, fastest, strongest most successful people in the world and what made them tick! It was amazing, all the research was done for me and you too if you read this timeless work.

So, how did I do with my list? Well, I married the beauty queen, but, I'm still working on the jet and the yacht. Got everything else on the list too and a lot more. My wife, Terry, is my life and business partner and together we found happiness and have 4 beautiful healthy children. I don't have a boss (if I don't count my wife) and now I'm the mentor advising others how to achieve their childhood goals and dreams regardless of their age today. My advice to you is never stop dreaming, goal setting and achieving, replacing goals accomplished with new ones to strive for. Along your road to success, pick-up a few hitchhikers who need a ride and share some of your success by being charitable. May you awaken your imagination to create and follow your dreams of success and happiness while sharing your ambitions with your children, encouraging them to do the same.

On March 3rd, 4th, and 5th I am conducting a financial course that everyone is welcome to attend and learn from. There should be a green flyer inserted in this paper describing it. If yours is missing, call us for the details today as seating is limited. The number appears below.

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