



# The End of the Beginning

*Now this is not the end.  
It is not even the beginning of the end.  
But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.*

Winston Churchill

Robert Livingston  
September 2009



## Introduction

My title comes from a speech Winston Churchill made in November 1942. The Russians had stopped the Germans at Stalingrad and the British had their first major victory in Africa at El Alamein. General Alexander asked Churchill to "Ring out the bells" to celebrate the Allies' victory. Churchill in a speech commenting on the two victories said: "This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

So let your bells ring out as you leave your high school days behind you and you march out its doors. Whichever choice you make, whether it is college, university or a trade school; whether you take a gap year; or whether you get a job; you are moving from one chapter in your life to the next. This next chapter will provide you with many challenges; the rewards are up to you.

Almost forty years ago I was in the same position you are today. I had just completed grade 13 and the world was my oyster. With my marks (81%) I was accepted into all the programs that I was interested in. Five years later, I graduated with a MBA degree. With degree in hand, I interviewed for several different jobs, and in all cases except one, I received job offers.

As I reflected upon the changes I have seen take place over the last forty years, I made two observations and came to one conclusion.

This was my first observation. The low hanging fruit is either gone or has been relocated. It was so easy forty years ago. It was so easy to get into most academic programs. Not all programs; medical and law schools being some of the exceptions, but for the most part there was not the competition there is today. When I finished my MBA five years later there was a variety of different jobs available.

This was my second observation. The traditional model of attending university or college for four years, getting good marks, graduating and finding a good job does not work anymore, or at least not in the same manner it did forty years ago. As Will Rogers points out, education involves learning and learning how to change. In many ways forty years we primarily focused on the first part, learning how to learning. The last forty years have forced us to learn the second part, learning how to change.

From these two observations I came to one conclusion. Young adults today need to be far better prepared than we were forty years ago. I believe it is just that simple. Of course, the question is how do they do that? My response? It starts with a simple but challenging decision – to assume responsibility for your life. It requires a decision to assume responsibility to become a better person. It requires a decision to make personal growth an integral part of who you are. Who you are allows you to grow to who you want to become.

What is personal growth?

Personal growth refers to both individual self-development and the development of others. Personal growth includes goals and plans directed at accomplishing some of the following:

- > Improving self-awareness
- > Improving self-knowledge
- > Building or reviewing identity
- > Developing strengths or talents
- > Building employability or human capital
- > Realizing dreams
- > Fulfilling aspirations
- > Creating and implementing personal growth plans

I believe for the most part personal growth is not taught in the classroom; it must be learned outside the classroom. This is why it can be so challenging to learn. There is no preset course that you can register for. The material is available but it is up to the individual to seek it out. Once you find it, it is for the most part up to you to study and learn the material. And lastly, there are no final exams for it is a course that never ends.

This presents a challenge and an opportunity. Personal growth is a challenge because it requires the individual to be willing to change and move outside their comfort zone. It is an opportunity because it involves change which can lead to growth. When you embrace personal growth as a core value in your life you will become a better person and a better member of our society.

### Three Questions

I want to pose three questions for the reader to reflect upon:

- > What Do You See as Your Biggest Concern?
- > What Do You See as Your Biggest Challenge?
- > What Do You See as Your Biggest Opportunity?

### What Do You See as Your Biggest Concern?

When I asked my son Ted to review this paper, here is part of what he said, "Also, for grade 12 graduates the biggest thing they will struggle within first year is figuring out "Why am I on this earth?" If you can speak to that the audience will be able to connect."

Many of your peers are in the same position as you. They don't have a clue what they want to do and are just following the crowd. So you are in the majority if you have a concern. Be in the minority; acknowledge and then start to deal with it.

If you are hesitant to share your concern because it might reveal either uncertainty or a lack of confidence in yourself, get over it. There is nothing to be embarrassed

about in reaching out to talk to people about this extremely important challenge in your life.

Dealing with your concerns I believe will produce some of the following benefits:

- > You will begin to take control of who you are
- > You will begin to discover your passion
- > You will become more financially responsible
- > You will gain an inner self-confidence

### **What Do You See as Your Biggest Challenge?**

I can tell you from personal experience, you will face many challenges in this next phase of your life. Some challenges will be fun; some will be not so much fun. Some challenges will result in victories; some challenges will result in defeats. Remember though, all challenges, whether good and bad, combined with the right attitude, will be learning experiences.

Take the time to write down three or four challenges you think you will face in the few years. Some suggestions would include course selection, new friends, financial independence, and career planning.

Select one challenge from your list and focus on it. Write out a plan for dealing with this challenge. As you begin to feel better about dealing with the first challenge, start working on the second one.

This will help you begin taking control of your life. Hopefully you can sit down with your parents to discuss this important time in your life. If not your parents, reach out to other family members, friends or guidance counselors at your school.

### **What Do You See as Your Biggest Opportunity?**

I have found in life that when I have overcome a challenge, many times it has led to an opportunity.

As you begin to take control of the process, I believe you will discover the greatest opportunity in your life is understanding and taking control of who you are and what you to be. To do this I believe you must focus on your personal growth.

Personal growth requires plans, executed with discipline and nurtured with patience. As you begin to sort out your academic programs, finances, friends, boy or girl friend, career selection, etc., the bigger picture will start to come into focus. Be patient. It takes time and hard work. Remember, "The only place success comes ahead of work is in the dictionary."

*The End of the Beginning* I wrote for you. *Shift Happens* I wrote for your parents. I strongly recommend you read both. Discuss the material either with your parents or someone else you trust. By getting the conversation started, it will help you help you answer my three questions.

I have three sons either at or have finished university. I hope this paper challenges you to reflect and ask yourself questions about this next phase in your life. While at university I did some things right and I also made some mistakes. I will share both with you. I hope my experiences, my observations and my suggestions stimulate conversations to help you establish your dreams and develop plans to make them happen.

My agenda is no more than that.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1	My Core Philosophies	1
Chapter 2	The Times They Are A-Changin’	2
Chapter 3	My Years at University	3
Chapter 4	Getting Started	8
Chapter 5	The Cocoon and the Butterfly	15
	About the Author	17



## Chapter 1: My Core Philosophies

*Only by centering on timeless principles and then living them can we enjoy sustained moral, physical, social and financial wellness.*

Stephen Covey

### Outline

- > Understand Who You Are
- > Commit to Personal Growth
- > Maintain Your Perspective

My approach to life centres on my core philosophies.

### 1.1 Understand Who You Are

It all starts with understanding who you are. What are your beliefs, your core philosophies, your core values, and your skills? Your values are so important in establishing who you are and who you will become. Integrity must be at the top of the list but there are other values I feel must also be included – empathy, being a team player, respect, forgiveness and self-control just to mention a few. Take the time to establish your values because you will want to work for, work with, and ultimately, have people work for you who have these same values.

### 1.2 Commit to Personal Growth

A commitment to personal growth starts with discovering your passion. It has been researched that 80% of the time passion will dovetail with competence. Not always (my golf game being a good example), but most of the time. I feel very strongly that when passion and competence come together you have the ideal job in life – a professional hobby. Don't be deceived by the word "hobby", as something that comes easily or not taken seriously. Let's look at a well known example in the hockey world – Sidney Crosby. "Sid the Kid" is passionate about hockey and is obviously very good at it. His passion met his competence; he turned the result into a professional hobby. I feel I have been able to do the same in my current career.

### 1.3 Maintain Your Perspective

Part of maintaining your perspective requires you to have a clear understanding of who you are and where you want to go in your life. This requires you to establish your dreams and create plans to bring them to reality. Remember: "A dream without a plan will remain but a dream." Dreams are not accomplished quickly and there will be bumps along the way. If you commit to personal growth; exercise discipline; practice patience; maintain your sense of humour; you will be surprised what you can accomplish.

## Chapter 2: The Times They Are A-Changin'

Before I share my own personal experiences at university, I want to share with you some of the academic changes I have seen take place in the last forty years:

- > Nearly all programs have become more competitive
- > Marks have increased dramatically
- > The academic world has become more global
- > Programs have become more expensive
- > Universities have introduced co-op programs
- > Admission criteria for many programs looks beyond the marks

The following two examples clearly show how the academic landscape is changing.

In 1971 a close friend of mine applied to the Queen's Commerce Program and got in with a 64% average. Today, needless to say my friend would not even bother to fill out an application. Basically you need a 90% average to be considered as a candidate for the program. But high marks don't necessarily guarantee admission. The 90% gets you through door one, but there is a second door to get through, namely your personal statement. Who you are and what have you done outside the classroom is examined closely. Marks are no longer the sole determinant of entry into the program.

A second example would be the University of Western Ontario Medical School. Thirty years ago, there were many applicants for a limited number of spots. For the most part, applicants were accepted into the program primarily based upon their marks. Today, that has changed.

My eldest son Michael applied to and was accepted at Western in 2007. That year the school received over 2,700 applicants for 147 spots. Of the 2,700, 450 were selected for interviews. Thus over 80% did not even make the first cut. At the White Coat Ceremony where the incoming class is inducted into the program, the dean shared with us that of the 450 interviewed, nearly all of them were excellent candidates. So what made the difference? Not marks. The program now looks closely at the candidate's ability to communicate. This change in emphasis was made to the admission process a number of years ago.

## Chapter 3: My Years at University

### Outline

- > My Walk
- > What Did I do Right?
- > What Would I Do Differently?

### 3.1 My Walk

#### Academics

I graduated from high school in 1971 and headed off to Queen's University with suitcase in one hand and stereo in the other. I had never been to Queen's before frosh week in early September. In those times it was easy to get into almost any undergraduate program in Ontario. For the most part no one did any due diligence; they just went to a university that sounded interesting and allowed them to get away from their parents.

Like most of my peers year one was just a blur of good times and minimal commitment to classes. A small dose of reality set in with the first year marks but with "proper" course selection in year two, I felt that situation could be easily reversed. Early on I felt I wanted to become a lawyer – looked good to me – it was a respected profession and I heard it paid well. What else would you want in a career?

Unfortunately my academic plans got off the rails. My second year course selection ran into academic department's intent on raising their academic standards. My two "bird" courses – show up and get 90%, turned into double bogies. By the end of second year my plans for law school were put on hold.

My father always stressed that it is important to have a plan B just in case plan A does not work out. I had heard about a new program at York University – a combined MBA and law degree. I applied. I didn't get into the combined program but I did get into the MBA program (I found out later by the skin of my teeth).

I completed the MBA in eighteen months – graduated Dean's List, and again applied to all six law schools in Ontario. There were no takers and my ambition to become a lawyer finally came to an end.

#### Extra Curricular Activities

Some of my fondest memories at university involved activities outside the classroom. I made a conscientious effort to seek out new adventures in my five years at university.

In my undergraduate days I joined the Queen's University radio club. I had never been involved in radio broadcasting but I thought it would be an interesting experience. As it turned out an opportunity presented itself almost immediately. After I had completed my radio broadcasting course, the colour commentator for the Queen's hockey broadcasting team transferred to another university and they

needed a replacement. Being the only applicant, I got the job. Within a year I became the play by play announcer. I pitied the poor hockey fans listening as I did my impression of Foster Hewitt. It was a great thrill and I thoroughly enjoyed doing it.

While at York University I became a columnist for the student newspaper, primarily responsible for covering the men's hockey team. Again I had little experience, but heart and commitment carried the day. Not only did I attend the home games, I also traveled with the team on the road. I got to visit a number of different universities including Cornell and Harvard. The highlight of my journalistic career was a visit to Ohio State where the team played two exhibition games against the Ohio State hockey team. Between games we attended the football game between Ohio State and Michigan, attended by over 80,000 fans. I was given a press pass which allowed me to go anywhere within the stadium. Standing on the sidelines behind the Ohio State bench was an experience I will never forget.

I share these two experiences to show you what you can learn and experience outside the classroom. A little initiative and some good timing produced two wonderful outcomes. Remember though they require your initiative.

### **3.2 What Did I Do Right?**

#### **Academics**

While the route left a little to be desired, I believe I ended up at the right spot in terms of my academic achievements. I started out with little idea of where I was going, but through some planning, luck and good timing I arrived at the right spot. I was not cut out to be a lawyer and the system told me that (and I eventually listened!). I was fortunate to transfer to York University and do my MBA. In undergraduate my marks were average. I picked up the pace in the MBA program, and more importantly started to concentrate on subjects that I enjoyed (this would explain why my marks improved).

#### **Extra Curricular Activities**

As I mentioned before, these are some of my fondest memories at university. My advice is to get involved. Take some risk. Make the time. This time will fly by and you won't get a chance like this again for a long time.

#### **Work Experience**

I was extremely fortunate to have a variety of very interesting summer jobs. In my first summer I worked in London, England. The pay was mediocre but the experience was priceless. As you begin to discover your passion and where your career might be headed, use summer jobs as wonderful opportunities to further explore your dreams.

In summers two and three I worked for Greenshields in the brokerage business which as it turned out set up a wonderful opportunity when I graduated from MBA School. By knowing the people and the firm, I joined Greenshields in 1976.

A good story to share.

My eldest son Michael early in university decided he wanted to become a doctor. There is a program at Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto which hires about 600 students for the summer. They do research work at the hospital and gain valuable experience. Michael applied to the program and was offered a position.

The lesson learned?

I think this experience played an important part in helping Michael get into medical school.

Even though my parents funded all my university expenses, I got a part-time job. It paid minimum wage but I know it helped me better understand managing my finances (and it paid for a few extra beers).

### **Friendship**

Your post secondary education can tend to be so busy, and pass so quickly, that building long-term friendships can get lost in the journey. We can get so focused on the destination; we forget to enjoy getting there.

Choosing friends is one thing; maintaining their friendship requires work. Make sure you put a structure in place to stay in touch with them post graduation. Later on I will talk about setting up a mentor group among your peers.

Thirty years post graduation I still get together with a group of friends from my Queen's and York University days. With the Queen's group we have an annual golf tournament and a Christmas lunch. The MBA group gets together once a year for a boys weekend.

When I share this with other people they are amazed that we still get together after 35 years. And they are also somewhat jealous. It does not happen by chance. It requires commitment and work. But it is well worth it.

### **3.3 What Would I Do Differently?**

#### **Academics**

I was too focused on marks. When I look back on the discussions I had with various professors concerning my marks, I realize today what little difference it made in my life.

A good story to share.

My son Ted wrote the following on his university application:

*Although I am able to obtain high marks, I feel they require a further explanation. When I first entered high school marks were my sole motivator. This peaked in grade 10 when I obtained the highest average in my grade. However, as I have developed*

*through life I have come to the realization that marks are not the sole factor in the equation for success in life. I don't write this to argue philosophies, only to explain my own. I agree that marks are very important. Marks hold a key to higher education, but that is what it is, a key. Once one travels through that door they will be met with another set of doors. As one progresses the importance of the "marks" door diminishes. The true turning point came from a series of lectures by Jim Rohn. I learned to "work harder on my life than I do at school". This has become the philosophy of my life. I have become less focused on marks and school and more focused on life. I am not the "golden" student who spends vast numbers of hours on homework every night. I have the gift and practice of being able to master my subjects in a small amount of time and so appropriately spend time on other areas such as reading. I realize that this philosophy I have adopted is somewhat radical for a person of my age but I feel it is crucial to my success. I always remember that "A formal education will make [me] a living; self education will make [me] a fortune.*

Ted was sixteen years old at the time.

The lesson learned?

Don't get me wrong – marks are still very important. They, however, must be balanced with your personal skills.

### **Develop Goals and Plans**

The whole concept of personal growth was seldom discussed in my era and definitely not taught in the classroom. Sitting down and writing out your dreams and goals and putting a plan in place was almost never done. If it was done, it was usually done by our parents. This for the most part does not work. They have to be your goals and plans, not theirs.

A good story to share.

A good friend of mine graduated from business school and was planning to enter the insurance business. He wanted to become an insurance salesman. His father felt strongly, "No son of mine is going to be an insurance salesman" and talked him out of it. Instead he entered the family business which went bankrupt five years later.

The lesson learned?

Despite the best of intentions, my friend's father might have prevented my friend from finding his "professional hobby."

Take the time to write out your goals and plans before you start your post secondary education. Get your parents to help out. They aren't cut in stone; they will change over the years. By writing them down it will help you explore what your goals are. Keep them in a journal. You will probably have a good laugh when you revisit them in twenty years.

## Due Diligence

I feel strongly that today's generation must take the time to research their academic and career goals. In my generation you just raised the sails and off you went to either where you wanted to go or where the wind took you. Competition existed but there were so many other opportunities that if you ran into a wall (my law school experience being a good example), there was always another door to knock on.

Today there are so many good people chasing fewer good jobs that one needs to differentiate oneself. I highly recommend you network with friends of the family who are currently working in professions that interest you. Don't wait until fourth year to start this process, start it now. If you are interested in marketing, ask your parents for a contact in the marketing field. When a meeting is set up make sure you realize someone is doing you a favour. They are giving up some of their valuable time to help you. Dress accordingly, do some research beforehand and most importantly send them a thank you note afterwards.

When it comes to academic research apply the same principle – do your due diligence. You are in the majority when you start your post secondary education if you don't know what you want to do with your life when it comes to choosing a career. Where you can be in the minority is taking control and doing the research to find out about different programs and careers that may be of interest to you.

A good story to share.

My son Ted in his second year of university began to think he might want to go to Harvard for his MBA. Remember, "Dreams cost nothing, implementation gets expensive." He phoned Harvard to enquire whether it would be possible for him and a friend to visit the school so to better understand the program. They readily agreed and set up a day for him to see the school and sit in on some classes. He also arranged similar meetings with Wharton and M.I.T. business schools. What a wonderful initiative.

The lesson learned?

Never be afraid to explore different opportunities.

## Enjoying the Journey

This is the most important one. At times I was too focused on the destination and I did not enjoy the journey enough. Beware though, it is easy to make the opposite mistake, enjoying the journey too much and not having a destination!

Before you head off in the fall to start your post secondary education, buy yourself a nice glass bowl filled with 112 marbles – similar to the kind you probably played with sometime in your younger days. Why 112? That is approximately how many weeks you will spend in a four year undergraduate program. Once a week, take out one of the marbles. It will remind you of how fast time passes by.

Life does not give us a dress rehearsal. Treat each day for what it is – a precious gift.

## Chapter 4: Getting Started

*The key is to continue making yourself a more attractive person by the skills you have, the disciplines you have, the personality you've acquired, the character and reputation you have established, the language and speech you use—all of that refinement makes you more attractive to the marketplace.*

Jim Rohn

### Outline

- > Establish Your Personal Values
- > Develop Your Personal Skills

One of my strategies in life is to develop goals and plans. Now I will be honest, I have never formally sat down and written out my goals and plans. It wasn't really needed thirty-five years ago. Today I think it is. Today, the world is changing far more quickly and the world is a more competitive place. Stop and ask yourself this question, "What am I doing to improve myself?" If the answer is nothing, ask yourself why not?

Reflect upon Jim Rohn's quote. Don't just get a job; begin to develop a career. Don't follow those who live a life of quiet desperation. Rather follow those who value finding a professional hobby. And grab a good seat!

### 4.1 Personal Values

Here are some suggestions to help you establish your personal values:

- > Create a Personal Mission Statement
- > Discover Your Passion
- > Take Some Risk
- > Expand Your Comfort Zone

### Create a Personal Mission Statement

I have come to realize a permission statement is fundamental if you want to take control of your life. It is your blueprint for the life you are going to lead. To be effective it must be in writing. This is not an easy task but if you do it, I believe you will be off to the races.

By putting it in writing, you accomplish the following:

- > It requires you to ask yourself some tough questions requiring honest answers
- > It allows you to flush out your core philosophies, values and skills
- > It provides a benchmark that you can measure yourself by
- > It provides clarity and accountability
- > It provides a simple to understand statement of who you are, which you can share with others

Your personal mission statement should include the following:

- > Your core philosophies
- > Your core values
- > Your dreams
- > Your plans
- > What are your strongest skills?
- > What are your weakest skills?
- > What do you like doing?
- > What do you not like doing
- > What makes you unique?

Do this simple, yet challenging exercise, and I believe you will not only become more successful in life; you will also enjoy it a lot more. Albert Einstein knew this when he said: "Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success."

### **Discover Your Passion**

I know discovering your passion is easier said than done. The best way to discover your passion is to have an open mind to change and be willing to take some risk. There is no better time to do this than when you are young.

Here are some suggestions to help you discover your passion:

- > Get involved in activities outside the classroom
- > Talk to people in careers that interest you
- > Get involved in some sort of charity work
- > Get summer jobs, putting experience ahead of money (if you can afford to)
- > Consider enrolling in a co-op program

A good story to share.

A good friend of mine entered the Queen's Commerce program in 1970. His parents had "coached" him to enter business but his heart was not 100% sold on their advice. In second year he applied and became a part time news reporter for the local radio station. In year three he moved into broadcasting the local hockey team's games and by fourth year he was working almost 20 hours a week at the station in addition to his full-time university classes. When he graduated, he joined the station as a full-time employee and five years later transferred to Toronto to work at The Sports Network in its early days.

The lesson learned?

My friend found his passion and turned it into a job he truly enjoys. Taking some risk, planning, patience and part-time work experience all played important parts in the ultimate outcome.

## Take Some Risk

You will not likely find your passion without taking some risk. I am not sure how it is done today, but the scoring in figure skating competitions used to have compulsory and free skating marks. Life is the same – there are compulsory and free skating marks. For most of us, a post secondary education (and getting good marks) is an important compulsory part. But life is so much more than what you learn in the classroom. The true leverage, enjoyment and ultimate fulfillment in life comes from the free skating. Free skating allows you to find your passion.

One key point in taking risk – you must not be afraid of failure. And you will fail! I will tell you some of my greatest accomplishments have occurred when I have successfully worked through my failures.

A good story to share.

My third son Blair last summer worked at an accounting firm in Toronto. While he liked the people and the pay (and the home cooking), he hated the work. He was bored. The company liked him and asked him back for his first co-op term. Despite my advice (and pressure), Blair turned down the job. He applied for jobs that he thought would better challenge him and more importantly interest him. His job selection meant sacrificing compensation in the near term, for the experience to help him discover his passion and ultimate career selection in the long term.

The lesson learned?

The lesson for me? Blair was right and I was wrong. The lesson for Blair? Sometimes you have to go ahead with your gut despite the advice from others telling you otherwise.

At a commencement address Robert Pritchard said it well, "Try everything once, and if you don't like it, don't do it again."

## Expand Your Comfort Zone

Staying in your existing comfort zone comes with risk. It is human nature for most of us not to like change, but change is an important part of life.

When I say to expand your comfort zone, I am not talking about radical surgery, but rather small incremental "sorties" like a military campaign. Not all sorties will produce fruit, but they will provide good learning experiences.

John Maxwell talks about growth and change, "You can't grow without change, but remember you can change without growing."

A good story to share.

At his mother's suggestion, my son Ted and his mother enrolled in a Toastmasters International course. Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that operates clubs worldwide for the purpose of helping members improve their communication, public speaking and leadership skills.

The lesson learned?

Ted greatly improved his public speaking skills, and as a side benefit, he got to spend some “quality” time with his mother.

Fred Smith, author of the bestselling book, *Breakfast with Fred*, wrote the following about being in your comfort zone:

*Something in human nature tempts us to stay where we're comfortable. We try to find a plateau, a resting place, where we have comfortable stress and adequate finances. Where we have comfortable associations with people, without the intimidation of meeting new people and entering strange situations. Of course, all of us need to plateau for a time. We climb and then plateau for assimilation. But once we've assimilated what we have learned, we climb again. It's unfortunate when we've done our last climb. When we have made our last climb, we are old, whether forty or eighty.*

Don't stop your mind growing when your body is still young. Old age will come too quickly and you will miss so much of life.

## 4.2 Personal Skills

Here are some suggestions to help you improve your personal skills:

- > Start a Personal Growth Library
- > Develop a Mentor Network
- > Start Managing Your Finances

### Start a Personal Growth Library

One of my three core philosophies in life is my commitment to my personal growth. To accomplish this growth you have to be prepared to work at it. The best I know to accomplish this objective is to have a personal growth library. In today's world your library must go beyond the traditional library of hard cover books.

I recommend the following:

- > Books
- > Ezines
- > Teaching CDs
- > Speeches

## Books

I asked my sons for a few of their favourite books. Here is their six-pack:

*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey

Covey's best-known book, has sold more than 15 million copies worldwide since its first publication in 1989. He promotes what he labels "The Character Ethic": aligning one's values with so-called "universal and timeless" principles.

*Never Eat Alone* by Keith Ferrazzi

In his insightful bestseller, Keith Ferrazzi makes the point that relationships are one of the most important keys to success. Of course, we all know relationships are highly significant in our lives – but Ferrazzi really takes the concept to the next level, organizing his entire career and lifestyle around relationships.

*Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill

At Andrew Carnegie's bidding, Hill studied the characteristics of these achievers and developed 15 "laws" of success intended to be applied by anybody to achieve success. *Think and Grow Rich* condenses these laws further and provides the reader with 13 principles in the form of a philosophy of personal achievement.

*The 80/20 Principle* by Richard Koch

In his book, *The 80/20 Principle*, Koch focuses exclusively on how to succeed personally as well as professionally, to make a good life as well as a living - while doing less. He pioneered the idea that we can achieve more if we relax, enjoy life more, and focus on the few things that matter uniquely to each individual.

*How to Succeed in Anything by Really Trying* by Lyman MacInnis

Lyman MacInnis offers the essentials for anyone ready to work their way to the top. Advising on topics from networking, leadership, conflict resolution, negotiation, to never embarrassing yourself when addressing a crowd, and even how to give and take advice, *How to Succeed in Anything by Really Trying* offers some great common sense and a wealth of simple knowledge.

*Failing Forward* by John Maxwell

Maxwell discusses how "the difference between average people and achieving people is their perception of and response to failure". This book contains a lot of great insights and pearls of wisdom about the process of learning and life.

## Ezines

Ezines are another great source for developing your personal growth. An ezine is an automatic email sent out either daily or in most cases weekly. It is free, as the individual or organization sending them, use them as a way of getting their products and services in front of potential clients. Here are some of the ones I recommend:

*Smart Brief* by the CFA Institute ([www.smartbrief.com](http://www.smartbrief.com))

This is a daily ezine sent out every weekday around 6:00 am. It highlights about a dozen investment stories written in the previous 24 hours in the major newspapers around the world.

*Sales Caffeine* by Jeffery Gitomer ([www.gitomer@salescaffeine.com](mailto:www.gitomer@salescaffeine.com))

This is a weekly ezine written by Jeffery Gitomer and his team. The way Jeffery puts it "I provide the best free sales advice on the web." It includes lots of good marketing ideas.

*Jim Rohn International* by Jim Rohn ([www.jimrohn.com](http://www.jimrohn.com))

This is a weekly ezine written by Jim Rohn's team. It includes lots of good material written on personal growth, strategic planning, etc.

## Teaching CDs

Teaching CDs are another great way of learning the concepts of personal growth. I am in the car a lot and I use the time as my "automobile university." Listening to CDs plays an important part of my ongoing commitment to make myself a better person.

Here are some suggestions:

*Lessons on Leadership* by John Maxwell

*Lessons on Leadership* consist of John's best teachings on leadership. The 24 CD set provides valuable insights on such vital topics as Leadership Development, Success and Teamwork.

*The Art of Exceptional Living* by Jim Rohn

*The Art of Exceptional Living* is one of the best guides that show you how to begin living life. You don't have to be a super-achiever or unusually creative. You don't have to endure great obstacles. You don't even have to do exceptional things. You just have to do ordinary things exceptionally well.

*Success Master Academy* by Brian Tracy

*Success Mastery Academy* is a 16 CD set focusing on many aspects of personal growth. It is a must for anyone looking for success in business...relationships...life!

### Speeches

Here are three well known speeches I recommend reading:

Stanford Commencement Address by Steve Jobs	June 12, 2005
Harvard Graduation Address by Bill Gates	June 7, 2007
Stanford Commencement Address by Oprah Winfrey	June 15, 2008

### Develop a Mentor Network

When we are young, we think of mentorship as coaching from wise knowledgeable, grey hairs that are much older (and supposedly wiser) than us. It is good to have mentors like that but something that is not talked about is having mentors your own age. Vertical and horizontal mentorship are both important.

When it comes to horizontal mentorship here is an idea. Ask 3 or 4 of your friends if they would be interested in setting up a mentor group. Once you have your group in place, purchase on behalf of the group a teaching CD on personal growth. My suggestion would be Jim Rohn's *The Art of Exceptional Living*. Produced in the early 1990s, his message is timeless. Common sense, insightful thinking and some humour thrown in, make it a must hear. I wish someone had introduced me to something like this 35 years ago.

Get the group to agree to meet on a regular basis and listen to one of the CDs at each meeting. Discuss Jim's ideas and then go out for a couple of beers. When an issue comes up at work (or in life) that you need to talk to someone about, you will have a readymade support group!

### Start Managing Your Finances

One of my favourite expressions is: "Dreams cost nothing, implementation gets expensive." At some point in your life you are going to have to take responsibility for your finances. Why not start today?

If you are so blessed to have your expenses underwritten by your parents, take some of the money, say ten percent, and set up a savings account. If you have a shortfall, get a job on campus. Become a teaching assistant, a tour guide, a parking attendant, etc. to make sure your savings plan remains intact. This process will give you a better understanding of how to manage your finances. Simply spending your parent's money is not going to teach you much and one day their financing will stop!

I also recommend you start a budget. Most people don't have one, and of the limited number that do, most do not have the discipline to follow it. At least they don't until the money runs out! Be in the minority and prepare a budget.

## Chapter 5: The Cocoon and the Butterfly

A final story to share.

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly, and he brought it home.

One day, a small opening appeared in the cocoon. The man sat and watched the cocoon for several hours as the butterfly struggled to force its body through that little hole.

Then it seemed to stop making progress. It appeared as if the butterfly had gotten as far as it could, and it could go no farther.

The man decided to help the butterfly in its struggle. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon... and the butterfly emerged easily.

As the butterfly emerged, the man was surprised. It had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. He continued to watch the butterfly expecting that, at any moment, the wings would dry out, enlarge, and expand to support the swollen body. He knew that in time the body would contract, and the butterfly would be able to fly... but neither happened!

In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. What the man, in his kindness and haste, did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle were required for the butterfly to be able to fly.

The butterfly must push its way through the tiny opening to force the fluid from its body and wings. Only by struggling through the opening can the butterfly's wings be ready for flight once it emerges from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If our Higher Power allowed us to go through life without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been...and we could never fly.

This story provides a great picture the route students must follow as they begin their post secondary education. You must start to take responsibility for yourselves. This means taking control of your finances, your course selections and ultimately your career choice to mention a few.

As you begin to contemplate this next important step in your life, many opinions will be given on where you should go, what you should take, etc. Your parents, of course, will have their opinions and so will some of your friends. But in the end, it is your opinion that counts the most. Lest anyone forget, including yourself, it is your life to live, not anyone else's.

I am not suggesting you don't listen to your parents and respect their advice. They have a lifetime of experience and only want what is best for you. If you are not on the same page, whether it is where you want to go or your course selection, talk with them about it. Communication is so important. If you can't reach a consensus, bring in a third party. Most schools provide counselors for exactly this purpose.

If your passion is taking you down a road that causes you to leave many of your friends behind, I recommend you stick with your gut. Your friends won't disappear. In fact you will meet new friends.

Robert Frost, in his famous poem, *The Road Not Taken*, declares that taking the road "less traveled by" has "made all the difference." Prudently discovering your passion will allow you to find the true enjoyment in working life – a job you can call a professional hobby.

In early childhood there came a day when you took your first steps on your own. Next fall, in a somewhat different way, you will be taking a new set of steps. If you chose the education path, no one will wake you up to get ready for classes. No one will ask whether your assignments are ready on time. No one will hound you to ask whether you are ready for the final exams. No one except maybe you!

With the wonderful opportunity a post secondary education provides, comes responsibility. It is your responsibility and no one else's, to get the most out of the next four years. The time will come and go so quickly. As you are packing up next fall, don't forget to pack your 112 marbles.

*"Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."*

Good luck!

## About the Author



Bob Livingston is a senior vice-president with McLean Budden in Toronto involved in their private client wealth management practice, managing portfolios for individual investors. Bob has spent over 35 years on Bay Street, both on the sell-side and buy-side.

In his current role, Bob has made many presentations on wealth management. In early 2008, Bob became involved in presenting to high school graduates, university students and young business people. Bob's presentations focus on the importance of personal growth and draw upon Bob's experiences as well as material written by John Maxwell, Jim Rohn, Stephen Covey and others. These gentlemen are leaders in the field of personal growth.

In early 2009 Bob began to write papers on his presentations and to date has written about a dozen papers on wealth management and personal growth.

When asked why he does it, Bob's answer is simple. "It expands my comfort zone, it gives me a way of giving back to the community, and most importantly, I am having fun doing it."

## Articles Written

### *Wealth Management*

#### ***It Starts With a Decision***

Taking control of one's finances is a decision, followed by a plan, implemented by discipline and nurtured by patience. And it takes time. It is that simple. Bob discusses wealth management at the 101 level. He concludes with the simple example of how giving up a café latte a day for 20 years can turn into \$55,000.

#### ***Acquiring Your Wealth to Fulfill Your Dreams***

Acquiring your wealth starts with defining your dreams, followed by taking control of your personal situation and then creating plans to fulfill the dreams. The plans must be executed with discipline and nurtured with patience. Bob discusses some of the common mistakes and concludes with five recommendations.

#### ***Managing Your Wealth to Fulfill Your Dreams***

Managing your wealth starts with defining your dreams, followed by taking control of your personal situation and then creating plans to fulfill the dreams. The plans must be executed with discipline and nurtured with patience. Bob discusses some of the common mistakes and concludes with five recommendations.

### ***Giving Away Your Wealth to Fulfill Your Dreams***

Giving away your wealth starts with defining your dreams. As we approach the end of our life, assuming there is a well financed retirement in place, the only two options for our wealth is to leave it to our family or the community we live in. Bob discusses the difference between success and significance regarding wealth management. Success is about how we acquire and manage our wealth. Significance is how we give it away. Planning plays an extremely important part in this process.

## ***Personal Growth***

### ***13:22***

Bob discusses the important role grandparents play in being a mentor for their grandchildren. He discusses the importance of preparing a personal mission statement or what he calls "a blueprint for life." Grandparents who are: "a little bit parent, a little bit teacher, and a little bit best friend" can be so helpful in these roles.

### ***A Tale of Two Cities***

Bob discusses the two different cities children can end up in: a city called *Responsibility* and a city called *Entitlement*. He discusses the important role parents play in which city their children choose. He provides some recommendations on how parents can better raise their children to become responsible adults and avoid becoming an entitled one. And when children ask for their first cell phone, take a look at chapter 6.

### ***A New Day Has Come***

Bob has come to realize the importance of preparing a personal mission statement. A personal mission statement discusses who you are: your core philosophies, your core values; your skills; your likes and dislikes; and what makes you unique. He outlines the necessary steps to put one together and shares his own.

### ***The End of the Beginning***

Bob discusses some of the changes he has seen take place in the education system over the last 35 years. Marks are still important, but in today's world, more than marks are required. He strongly believes personal growth has become a very important part of the process and most students have not been taught it. Unlike his generation, plans and better communication are needed to have success in today's environment.

### ***Shift Happens***

Bob discusses some of the changes he has seen take place in the education system in the last 35 years. He shares with the reader his experiences as a parent: what he did right, what he would do differently; as his children headed off to university. He concludes with some recommendations for parents to help their children in this next and very important phase in their life.

### ***Discover Your Passion***

Bob starts off with the premise that you want to find a job (if possible) that you are passionate about. He talks about the benefits, the roadblocks and the risks of finding that kind of job. He concludes with some recommendations on how to enhance your personal growth: establish your personal values and develop your personal skills. A must read for young adults.

### ***The Times They Are A-Changin'***

Bob discusses his 35 years on Bay Street: his career path, his experiences, and the lessons he learned. He discusses the changing environment in the job market: "the low hanging fruit is either gone or has been relocated." He concludes with some recommendations to help the reader get started.

### ***Three Coins from the Fountain***

Bob contemplates if he could go back 35 years and start his career all over again, what three core philosophies would he take back with him? He uses the analogy that there are coins of knowledge called Wisdom and Ignorance in the Trevi Foundation made famous in the 1954 movie *Three Coins in the Fountain*. What three coins of Wisdom would he select from the Fountain? What coin of Ignorance would he avoid? What has been Bob's biggest challenge in his career?

## **Contact Information**

Robert Livingston  
Direct Tel +1 416 361 2251  
Email [blivingston@mcleanbudden.com](mailto:blivingston@mcleanbudden.com)

McLean Budden  
145 King Street West, 25<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON, Canada, M5H 1J8

Investment Managers Since 1947  
[www.mcleanbudden.com](http://www.mcleanbudden.com)

