

## Super Rich: Russell Simmons' Real Wealth

Each year before and after the annual 4 of July celebrations across the nation, there will invariably be national news commentaries about the "American Dream." At a time of great challenges within the American and global economy, it is more than fitting to take an assessment on the state of social and economic progress. For the majority of more than 40 million Black Americans as well as for millions of others the possibilities of attaining the happiness and prosperity of the American Dream may appear to very difficult, if not impossible, to reach. That is why when someone from our community does attain wealth and prosperity it is important to look into how that outstanding success was achieved.

Recently on CNN's State of the Union with Candy Crowley a special was broadcast on "Making It in America." The CNN special featured Shaun Donovan, the U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, personal finance expert Suze Orman, and entertainment and financial services mogul Russell Simmons. "Making It in America" basically concluded that the American dream is still possible to fulfill, but it will require hard work, personal focus, getting the right information and acting on it in a timely manner, and steadfastness of faith and belief in your own capabilities to fulfill the dream of doing good and doing well.

I have known and worked with Russell Simmons for over 20

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years. He is a hard worker and he is focused on how to give and to inspire others to reach their true potentials in the journey of life. Russell's segment with Candy Crowley was interesting and revealing. Simmons was introduced as the visionary Chairman of Globalgrind.com and co-founder with Rick Ruben of one of the most successful record companies in the history of popular culture and music: Def Jam Recordings. Def Jam's list of artists from the earliest days of

Ludacris, Rick Ross, DMX, Public Enemy, Run DMC, LL Cool J, Big Sean, Young Jeezy, Beastie Boys, Chingy, Pattie LaBelle, Foxy Brown, Ja Rule, Musig, Slick Rick, Young Buck, Ron Isley, Dru Hill, Damon Dash, Juelz Santana, Cam'ron, Jim Jones and the Diplomats, and Beanie Sigel.

But, what caught my attention most was Simmons' direct response to Crowley's question concerning his personal wealth and how he was able to become a multi-million dollar mogul today from where he started out on the street decades ago in Queens, New York. Russell answered, "The goal was to get rid of neediness. Neediness is what causes so much suffering in the world today. Through my spiritual practice I have learned how to be content. I

somebody. Simmons has this title because he has a lifetime record of giving opportunity to others in the industry and throughout the world plus through his many philanthropic and other nonprofit organizations such as the Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation, the Foundation for Ethnic

what struggle is all about. He knows the importance of fighting for freedom, justice, equality, and empowerment. Consciousness about the suffering in the world is important to the point that you should care enough to give to the struggle to end poverty and neediness. Being prosperous is not just

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hip-hop and R&B music to today reads like a who's who list of some of the most gifted, talented, and high achieving recording artists in the world including but not limited to: Jay-Z, Kanye West, Lady Gaga, Nas, Rihanna,

know the value of giving."

Having lots of money was not Simmons' life goal. His goal was to serve and to give. Russell Simmons is known as the Godfather of hip-hop not because he has "muscled someone" or strong armed

'Happy can make you money, but money can't make you happy'

Understanding, the Diamond Empowerment Fund (DEF) and the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN).

'SUPER RICH: A Guide To Having It All' is the latest best-selling book by Russell Simmons. According to Simmons in this book, there are two paths to enlightenment which are necessary, if one is to find true fulfillment in life. First, one must strive to be conscious and remain conscious of what is happening to all people and things in the world. Second, there are universal rewards with multiple gifts and opportunities for those who learn the value of self-acceptance, self-improvement through meditation, and the happiness that comes from giving. But, I know from personal observation that Simmons knows

about "having, it is about "giving." That's Simmons mantra. That's his success model.

In Russell's own words, "Happy can make you money, but money can't make you happy." This is the key to the real wealth of Russell Simmons. We need more happy soldiers in the cause of making the world a better place. But, before we can change the world, we have to change ourselves by increasing our awareness, consciousness, commitment, and actions to open more doors so that all people can find true prosperity, happiness, equality, and empowerment.

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