

How to Become a Millionaire

Many of America's richest men weren't born to wealth—as winners of the Horatio Alger Awards prove—but they do have certain traits in common



ILLUSTRATION BY BOB SUGG

By KENNETH J. BEEBE

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of the American Schools and Colleges Assn.

as told to

Flora Rheta Schreiber

HORATIO ALGER was a drab, unhappy man. A poor boy, he failed in the ministry and then devoted his life to writing books that would show other boys how to succeed.

These books—*Strive and Succeed*, *Try and Trust*, *Sink or Swim*—inspired your fathers and grandfathers to achievement. Today Horatio Alger stands as a symbol of the American rags-to-riches dream—an old dream but still valid.

Each year I have had the great pleasure of handing out Horatio Alger awards to men who, as the embodiment of this American dream, have lived lives as if inspired by those old novels. They are selected by the Horatio Alger Awards Committee, supplemented by the votes of campus leaders at 500 colleges.

These award winners made fortunes because they possess the obvious virtues for success—a dynamic, outgoing personality, belief in people, a capacity for hard work, and a flair for salesmanship. In addition, they have four special traits that set them apart from more average men—traits which can help you develop a more successful life:

Self-Reliance—Movers and makers, the men whose lives personify the great American success story have pushed their companies into new methods and enterprises, always seeking better

ways to serve people's needs. For instance, somebody once said of super-self-reliant Murray D. Lincoln, insurance-company executive and chairman of the board of CARE: "When he goes to Heaven, he'll take one look around, decide the place could stand some straightening out, and ask St. Peter for a broom."

Most people think family connections are indispensable to success, yet many of our winners were forced into self-reliance early in life. Some became the "man" of the family even before they were in their teens. But spurred by having to support their families (typically a widowed mother and a large brood of younger brothers and sisters), they achieved success earlier and more impressively than persons who are less urgently driven.

Take, for example, Albert Dorne, renowned advertising artist, illustrator, and educator who was born in the slums of New York's East Side.

After finishing seventh grade, he had to leave school to support his mother, two sisters, and a younger brother. At five, he had resolved to become a great artist, but family circumstances made him take a detour—newspaperboy, office boy, salesman. By the time he was 21, however, he had caught up with his original ambition and was already earning \$20,000 a year in his chosen field. Today he is the most successful of all commercial artists and is reputed to have earned more money than anyone else in his field.

Moreover, altruism accompanied personal success. Spurred by the thought, "I studied art at home—so can you," he founded the Famous Artists' School and the Famous Writers' School in Westport, Conn. The schools have taught 54,000 students in 54 countries by correspondence.

Don't Make Money Your Only Motivation—None of our men wasted energy dreaming about gold for its own sake. As Joseph Sunnen, a multi-millionaire St. Louis industrialist and one of our winners, puts it: "I just don't think anybody who wants only to make a million dollars can be happy. He has based his happiness on nothing. The only way to achieve both money and happiness is to make money a by-product of service."

Joe Sunnen has lived this philosophy to the letter. The son of a coal miner, he left school at 14 to work in a garage. His observations about faulty cars on this first job led to his later developing a valve lifter for automobiles. Today he holds patents on 50 inventions and heads his own company, Sunnen Products.

Sensing and Seizing the Opportunity—Our men didn't wait for opportunity to knock but did the knocking themselves. Take an 18-year-old farm boy, the 11th of 12 children, without a high-school education or business experience, who lost three jobs in his first two working years. Still determined, he started making brushes in the basement of his sister's home.

It was through this simple undertaking that Alfred C. Fuller became the original Fuller Brush Man, whose company today has more than 7,000 door-to-door dealers and annual sales of \$100 million. He made his own opportunity in the face of total discouragement.

Learn from Your Failures—Too often, we surrender to failure and refuse to try again. Actually, failure can be a mirror which shows us how we erred, what part outside events played in it, and how we can avert future mistakes.

Taught to read and write by Annie Oakley and given his show-business ABCs by Buffalo Bill, award winner George A. Hammid, outstanding showman and authority on fairs and expositions, believes that: "Whatever success I have attained, I owe to my failures. A hungry showman learns more from one resounding failure than he does from two successes."

The experience of our Horatio Alger winners proves that in this country men without wealthy backgrounds or special privileges can succeed spectacularly. By their own efforts they pulled themselves up from obscure beginnings. They are a living testament to the fact that Americans can still transform their rags into custom-tailored suits and their pennies into dollars.

I can only tell you about them, however. If you want to join them, it's up to you.

COVER:

A roller-coaster ride or a trip through the tunnel of love wouldn't be complete without a popcorn lunch, too. The amusement-park scene was caught by L. Willinger.

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