

GIVE A MAN A FISH AND YOU FEED HIM FOR A DAY.
TEACH A MAN TO FISH AND YOU FEED HIM FOR A LIFETIME.
—Lao Tzu

1

TEACH A MAN TO FISH

"Excuse me. You're an average American. How you doing financially? Are you making enough money?"

"I'm doing OK."

"Would you like to do better than OK?"

"Sure, I'd like to be doing better! Who wouldn't want to get out of the rat race, travel, play a little golf, buy nice things for the family, be self-reliant, have some extra cash in the bank? But let's face it; it's not realistic. How many people ever make it in America? One percent?"

"Oh, so the American dream doesn't work anymore?"

"Maybe hundred years ago. But today? It's all a matter of luck."

"What if I could show you that it's not just luck?"

"I'll believe it when I see it."

"Somehow, I had a feeling you were going to say that. Feel free to be skeptical. That's healthy. But try not to be negative just for the sake of being negative. In other words, don't shut the door. Leave it open a crack. Because I'm going to prove that the American dream is alive and well and that anyone -- including you -- can make it happen."

"Yeah? How?"

"Let's start with the challenge: Send me to any unemployment line. Let me select someone who is broke, out of work and discouraged. Let me teach him in two days the secrets of wealth. And in ninety days he'll be back on his feet, with five thousand dollars cash in the bank, never to set foot in an unemployment line again."

"But why take an unemployed person? I'm an average American. What's the matter with me? I'll volunteer."

"I'm sure you would. But I want to prove that ANYONE can make it in America. And I'm willing to bet everything to prove it."

“Sounds kind of risky. You're rich. Why don't you just stay home and count your money or, better yet, distribute it to the poor?”

"Believe it or not, I thought of that. But if I redistributed my entire net worth to every man, woman and child on this planet, it wouldn't be more than a penny or two apiece. There's a better way. Wealth consists of much more than money. Maybe I could make a lasting impact by giving them my two cents' worth instead -- my advice, my knowledge, my experience."

The more I thought about the challenge, the more I was compelled to try it. Artists are compelled to paint. Musicians have to play. Entertainers must entertain. And I have a compelling urge to help people remove the barriers that stand between them and their dreams. If people from an unemployment line could actually turn their lives around in a few short months, what message would this send to the rest of the country? Wouldn't it prove that success has nothing to do with luck or status or social connections? Wouldn't it prove the American dream is for everyone?

This book is the true story of how I went to the unemployment lines of St. Louis, Missouri, and under the watchful eye of former St. Louis Mayor John Poelker, selected not one, but three individuals. First, there was Mary Bonenberger, an unemployed mother of two and wife of a Baptist minister struggling to make ends meet. Then, I recruited Philip Moore, a young black man born in the ghettos of St. Louis, with no skills, only a high school education, and no job to help support his wife and son. And finally, Nora Jean Boles came aboard, a single parent in her middle forties, behind in her mortgage payments, no job in sight. No hope.

“So what happened? Did they make it?”

“Come see for yourself. But don't forget that this book is not just about three unemployed people from St. Louis. It's about you. It's about your dreams and your goals. With this in mind, I have provided special self-help lists and guidelines throughout the book to give you an even more powerful knowledge and motivation on your exciting adventure in success. But I'm getting ahead of myself. First, let's go to St. Louis.”