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# The Best Advice These 11 Successful People Ever Received

What's the No. 1 piece of advice your closest mentor ever gave you?

The Oracles (/profile/the-oracles) | July 20, 2017

Mentors reduce your learning curve by years through mastering the best of wiser, more experienced role models. These 11 entrepreneurs share the No. 1 piece of advice their closest mentor ever gave them.

*Related: 8 Ways to Create a Killer Relationship With Your Mentors (<http://www.success.com/article/8-ways-to-create-a-killer-relationship-with-your-mentors>)*

## 1. Time is the most valuable thing you have.

My father, Charlie Harrington, was my first and best mentor. He taught me to analyze my day on a dollar-a-minute basis. Every Sunday, I examine the week ahead. I evaluate where to dedicate my time (<http://www.success.com/article/rohn-5-tips-for-using-your-time-wisely>) before moving things around. I ask, *How long will this take? What's my upside? What's the opportunity cost?*

I turn down free equity in people's businesses every day because they want too much of my time: a weekly one-hour call, a monthly face-to-face meeting, a quarterly retreat. But it's a startup. If it makes \$1 million in three years, I'll get 5 percent, which is \$50,000. The math isn't worth it.



I recently acquired 2 million shares of stock in a public company, trading at 60 cents a share. They only asked for a quarterly board meeting—two in person. The upside made it worth my time.

—Kevin Harrington (<http://www.kevinharrington.tv/about-kevin/>), inventor of the infomercial, pioneer of the “As Seen on TV” industry, and original Shark on Shark Tank (<http://abc.go.com/shows/shark-tank>)

## 2. Your income correlates with the value you bring.

I met my mentor, Bill Mitchell, at 20 years old. I vividly remember his best advice: He asked about my goals, and I replied, “To earn \$250,000 in commissions.” Laughing, he said, “Don’t focus on making money until after 30 years old.”



This seemed crazy because he was wildly successful

(<http://www.success.com/article/6-qualities-of-wildly-successful-people>), so I asked, “Why not?” He explained if you chase money, you’ll always just chase money and rarely be happy. “Instead,

become more valuable than anyone. Deliver more service, help everyone achieve goals and become their best. And guess what will happen? Buckets of money will be given to you.”

Too many in today’s world want life’s riches, but very few understand and act on my mentor’s advice: Your income always directly correlates to the value you bring to the market.

—Tom Ferry, founder and CEO of Tom Ferry International (<http://www.tomferry.com/biography/>), ranked the No. 1 real estate coach by the Swanepoel Power 200, and New York Times best-selling author of Life! By Design (<http://www.tomferry.com/product/lifebydesign/>)

## 3. Humbly say yes.

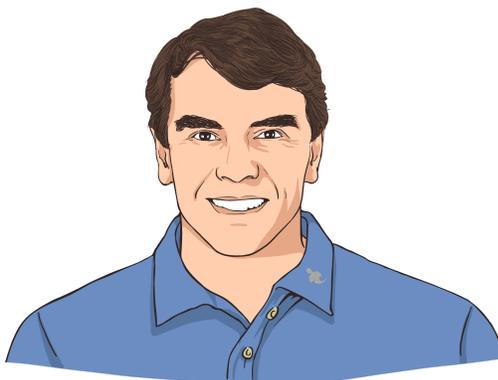
My mentor taught me, “The world likes inertia. It loves to say *no*. As an entrepreneur, it’s your job to keep saying yes and create the change that the world doesn’t yet know it needs. Don’t expect any thanks or pats on the back. Seeing the change you helped shepherd will be enough reward in itself.

—Danae Ringelmann (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/danae>), founder and chief development officer of Indiegogo (<https://www.indiegogo.com/>)



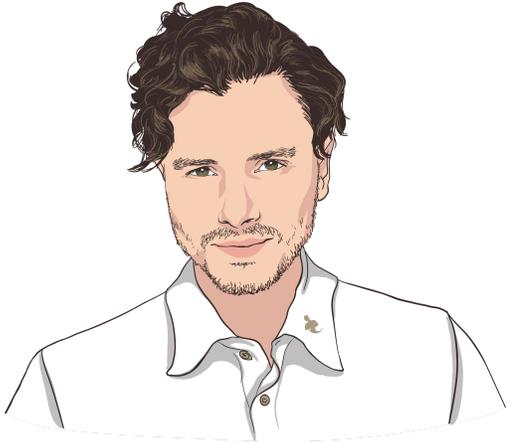
## 4. Remember the human touch.

Bill Draper, my father, told me that it doesn’t matter who is doing the selling or who is doing the buying; it’s the human connection that counts



(<http://www.success.com/videos/youtube/dr-henry-cloud-the-most-important-part-of-success-is-connection>). I think about that every time I raise a fund or hear an entrepreneur pitch me.

—Tim Draper (<https://links3.mixmaxusercontent.com/NNXkCsk5HT6WQWq5y//h58ICC1wyObueH8DL?messageId=UM4sgftRVes6gnsyK&rn=gIBXbhJ3SgE2YpN3clpkl&re=i02bj5yczV2YjV3cAVGctFmcrpml&sc=false>), legendary VC, founder of Draper Associates (<https://links10.mixmaxusercontent.com/NNXkCsk5HT6WQWq5y//x2q4JwT1IXrF8gCRg?messageId=UM4sgftRVes6gnsyK&rn=gIBXbhJ3SgE2YpN3clpkl&re=i02bj5yczV2YjV3cAVGctFmcrpml&sc=false>) and DFJ (<https://links4.mixmaxusercontent.com/NNXkCsk5HT6WQWq5y//pvnXbZOoAWdt93CPA?messageId=UM4sgftRVes6gnsyK&rn=gIBXbhJ3SgE2YpN3clpkl&re=i02bj5yczV2YjV3cAVGctFmcrpml&sc=false>)

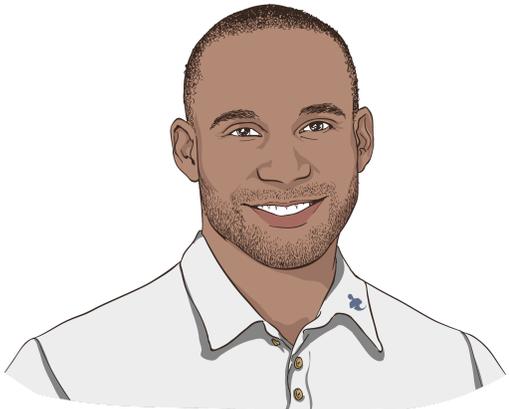


## 5. Don't get in your own way.

The advice I've carried throughout my career is, "Three things bring great people down (<http://www.success.com/article/do-these-5-things-if-you-want-an-unremarkable-life>): fear, greed and ego." If you look back at the downfall of any leader throughout history, you'll find they exhibited at least one of these traits, if not all of them.

Vinnie Viola, a man who beat the odds by becoming a self-made billionaire after growing up on the streets of Brooklyn, and whose father was a truck driver, told me this one night over a drink while we were in Austin. His advice guided me to make some of the most successful business partnerships (<http://www.success.com/article/this-is-the-key-to-a-successful-partnership-and-a-successful-life>) by focusing my efforts on people who are level-headed, generous and humble. And I too strive to exhibit these qualities in my own life.

—Michael Oved (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/michaeloved/>), founder of Swap Protocol (<https://swap.tech/>); passionate about a future where people fearlessly trade digital value without third-party intervention



## 6. Be very careful how you spend the first and last two hours of each day.

My closest mentor—one of the most successful leaders in the financial industry—gave me this tidbit early in my career: "Most people wake up reactively, adhering to the world's needs, not their own." In a world of unlimited communication, people don't disconnect from society to analyze their lives.

The first two hours of your day should be spent aligning your short-term efforts with your long-term goals. I wake up during the week at 3:30 a.m., taking the time to meditate (<http://www.success.com/blog/3-thoughtful-ways-you-can-benefit-from-meditation>) and read for 20 minutes. Then I spend an hour doing an intensive workout like circuit training or hiking.

The last two hours of your day dictates your energy for the next day. I spend an hour studying or learning a new skill (<http://www.success.com/article/22-ways-to-become-a-relentless-learner>), and the last hour planning my next day.

Learn to work harder on yourself than your job.

—Bret Lockett (<https://links2.mixmaxusercontent.com/NNXkCsk5HT6WQWq5y//EJzBquiPlqQHYtsBI?messageId=W8qfPAgYDdEHNvfo&rn=gIBXbhJ3SgE2YpN3clpkl&re=i02bj5yczV2YjV3cAVGctFmcrpml&sc=false>), former NFL player, and senior partner of M2Jets (<https://links8.mixmaxusercontent.com/NNXkCsk5HT6WQWq5y//RXJLq75pI7105UNN0?messageId=W8qfPAgYDdEHNvfo&rn=gIBXbhJ3SgE2YpN3clpkl&re=i02bj5yczV2YjV3cAVGctFmcrpml&sc=false>); connect with M2Jets on Instagram (<https://links3.mixmaxusercontent.com/NNXkCsk5HT6WQWq5y//WX2zVgMj4DaK02Mv0?messageId=W8qfPAgYDdEHNvfo&rn=gIBXbhJ3SgE2YpN3clpkl&re=i02bj5yczV2YjV3cAVGctFmcrpml&sc=false>)

## 7. Think big; don't be afraid to be bold.

Becoming an entrepreneur takes you from making a nice salary to suddenly raising or juggling budgets worth the same amount. Your scale completely changes. At times, it's terrifying to think of the risk taken with the money you could have lived off for a long time.

One of the investors in my first company, who was a successful entrepreneur with multiple businesses, pushed me to scale quickly and not waste time on building things slow. His advice: "Think big; don't be afraid to do bold things (<http://www.success.com/article/afraid-of-risks-how-to-be-bolder>) that will put your ideas and business on the map."



It pushed me to try bold strategies that still pay off today. Whether it's investing in a new product that generates press buzz or betting on an expensive employee who will pay off with dividends, "not afraid to think big" became my mantra.

—Yuli Ziv (<http://yuliziv.com/>), founder and CEO of Style Coalition (<http://stylecoalition.com/>), bestselling author of *Millionaire Influencer* ([https://www.amazon.com/dp/1544069383/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=ll1&tag=sm0fe-20&linkId=e3c29c73a30ffd6e9d1a3d7a21662963](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1544069383/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=ll1&tag=sm0fe-20&linkId=e3c29c73a30ffd6e9d1a3d7a21662963)), and immigrant entrepreneur who bootstrapped her business from zero to millions

## 8. Choose your spouse wisely.



A mentor once shared this powerful piece of advice: "The only person in your whole life you get to choose is your spouse—everyone else is given to us (<http://www.success.com/blog/you-can-choose-your-friends-but-not-your-family>): parents, siblings, schoolmates, co-workers, neighbors, even your children—so choose wisely."

I wholeheartedly believe that choosing a life partner is one of the single greatest influences on our life's journey—from

our health to our wealth, from the depth and breadth of the life we live.

Whether you're single, married or divorced, now is the time to work on "who you need to be" to attract (<http://www.success.com/article/11-ways-to-attract-abundance-in-your-life>), evolve or improve the relationship with your current or future soul mate. It's a choice—choose wisely.

—Allison Dunn (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/allisondunn>), president and CEO of *Deliberate Directions* (<https://www.deliberatedirections.com/giving-impacts>), and award-winning executive business coach

## 9. Invest in authentic relationships.



Business is personal. (<http://www.success.com/blog/michael-scott-was-right-business-is-the-most-personal-thing-in-the-world>) Be willing to give in relationships happily, whether it's your time, a favor or information relevant to the success of their business. Authentic relationships require an investment of time, energy and effort, so select the right people to spend time with, and enthusiastically invest in those relationships (<http://www.success.com/blog/3-things-successful-people-know-about-healthy-relationships>).

Additionally, integrity and character will always matter if your goal is to build real and trusting relationships. Be the type of person you would want to do business with.

—Joe Kakaty (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joe-kakaty-8856b93/>), co-founder and president of *Poker Central* (<http://pokercentral.com/>)

## 10. Live within your means.

The best piece of advice I ever got was, "Don't numb your desire for success by using debt to live outside your means." Using debt to acquire luxuries or a lifestyle outside your current income takes away any fire to hit your success goals (<http://www.success.com/blog/9-ways-to-achieve-your-biggest-goals-quickly>). You in effect put the work and reward backward.

I didn't take a vacation for years until I got my business to a consistent point that my lifestyle cannot even make a dent in it. If you're living well within your means and investing in education and skills, one day you'll wake up with more than enough to afford the things you want, and have the cash reserves.

—*Joshua Harris* (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joshallenharris/>), founder of *Quantum Jump Consulting* (<http://www.joshuaharris.co/about/>); started first business at 12 and now teaches entrepreneurs how to start and grow a digital marketing business from scratch



## 11. Be grateful, have fun and take care of others.

My amazing parents will always be my favorite mentors. As immigrants, they did whatever it took to take care of our family as six of us packed in a two-bedroom apartment in Redondo Beach, California.

They both worked two full-time jobs, yet made time to go dancing, take us to the beach, and give food or money to those less fortunate. They both eventually became successful businesspeople, yet

continued to live by the same altruistic principles no matter how much they were worth monetarily.

Today, my extended family still takes the time to have fun together, gratefully enjoy the things money can't buy (<http://www.success.com/article/rohn-9-things-more-important-than-money>) and give back to those in need. It makes the good days sweeter and the tough days easier.

—*Nafisé Nina Hodjat*, founder and managing attorney of *The SLS Firm* (<http://www.slsfirm.com/>)

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