

LEAD

THE POWER OF
EARNING INFLUENCE

OR BE

DAVID VILLA

LUNCH

Chapter 1

“You cannot fail, if you resolutely determine that you will not.” – Abraham Lincoln

I have often said, that where we ideally want to be, is in direct proportion to what we do and where we are at right now. This statement has proven truthful and as a matter of fact, this has been a catalyst in many areas of my personal–life as well as my career. So much of life, if not purposed, is spent watching it go by. A life that lacks purpose is similar to a football player who is sitting on the sidelines. They are looking at the game being played right before their eyes. The game is constantly changing. Players are going in and out, and various plays are going on. Despite our feelings and opinions, the game will continue with or without our participation. Are you itching to get off of the bench and participate? What part will you play? Or, a better question perhaps: What part do you envision yourself playing? What would be your ideal role?

I believe that, most of the time, it is a person’s lack of involvement, which determines one’s outcome of success. It isn’t a lack of talent, or a lack of opportunity or handouts. It is the individual’s own decision to not be fully involved. We all have big dreams. Many of us are talented. Opportunities and handouts (in some cases) can be abundant, but what you do with these gifts will ultimately define your experience. It will eventually determine whether or not you are victorious and successful. Imagine the football player, dressed in uniform from the helmet down to the socks and cleats. Your shoulder pads are on straight, and you anxiously bite down on your mouth guard. You have the look of a typical football player, but are you actually ready to get out onto the field and play the game? By the time you have determined whether your heart is in it and you are ready, it is already the fourth quarter and the game is winding down to an end, yet you do not have a single grass stain on you. Why?

You may have some talent, or opportunity has afforded you the ability to be a player. Like some, you may even have had more than enough schooling or continuous training. Yet here you are, standing on the sidelines. You are clean and untouched by the game playing out right before your very eyes. Apprehension and fear are paralyzing emotions and can silently defeat you without your notice. That is because they are preventative emotions. They prevent you from trying and ultimately winning. Remember that getting off of the bench has less to do with talent, or what has been afforded to us, but rather what we are actually doing with those gifts. Are you afraid to jump because you might fall? It is certain that the chance of failure exists, but so does the chance of success. You will not know what you are actually capable of until you try. I am here right now to encourage all who is reading this to **GET OFF OF THE BENCH!**

I am a father of three. I can vividly remember when my kids were little and just learning how to swim. For the parents reading this, you will know exactly what I am talking about. I would be in the pool while they stood at the edge, frozen with fears. Their eyes would be big and wide, and they would only stare back in silence, watching me in the water. They wanted so badly to be in the water, but were unsure of what exactly would occur if they decided to let go of their

inhibitions. I would swim up to them with my arms outstretched, encouraging them to jump, explaining that I would be right there to catch them as soon as they hit the water. This tactic, however, did little to make things easier for them. It was not because they did not trust me, but rather this act of jumping into the water would require more than faith. It would require them to take action. As a kid, this would be one aspect of their life only they had control over. Action, as we all know, is always scarier when doing something for the first time. Luckily, my kids decided to let go and jump. They have not stopped swimming since! The look on each of their faces upon realizing that they were safe and unharmed is a priceless memory of mine.

I happen to believe that there is no secret recipe to achieving success. There is, however, a key component that is required to achieve your goals. That key component is action. Success can be measured by an accumulation of actions set forth by you every single day. That will put you one step closer to achieving your overall goal. People neglect taking action because it requires actual work to be done. There is nothing glamorous about it at times, and it is not always the most fun thing to do. It will always be the correct thing if you want to find any level of success in your endeavors.

It is absolutely necessary to take persistent, massive action upon pursuit of greatness. Likewise, it's important to maximize your success and achieve specific goals. Action will require you to get out of your comfort zone and into the game, even when you may not feel like it. There are absolutely ZERO shortcuts to success. As human beings, it is not out of the ordinary to look for a way to cut corners so you will not have to use so much effort. In order to live out your dreams, you must make moves. It is easy to neglect the tasks that require the most effort, but do not be that type of player. Be any player but the one who is left sitting on the sidelines. Do not take your dreams and sit on the bench and pout. If getting off of the bench still scares you, look inside yourself for something to believe in. Use that as a crutch to propel you forward. We all have untapped abilities and qualities. Recognizing these strengths will allow you to better focus on something that you may need to work on.

I am a firm believer that talent alone won't cut it. Potential does not matter. You can develop your talent and you can unlock your potential; but, you cannot train or teach persistence. In fact, I will take persistence over talent any day of the week. If two individuals walked into my office for interviews for the same job function, and one was highly talented and the other was extremely determined—I would choose the determined candidate ten times out of time. The determined and persistent candidate's inability to give up, or take "no" for an answer, will go a much further distance than the talented one. Your talent, like the talents of others, can be developed and perfected. Unabashed persistence cannot be trained, nonetheless; yet, you will almost certainly succeed. Persistence reflects progress, no matter the outcome.

One of my favorite quotes on this subject comes from one of the NBA's all time greats, Michael Jordan. He explained it like this: "I've missed more than nine thousand shots in my career. I have

lost almost three hundred games. Twenty–six times, I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot, and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

Those who are afraid to fail will coast through their life, never coming close to reaching their full potential. Failure, despite genuine effort, is an underrated teacher and motivator. It is a sign that one is striving at close to full capacity.

There will be times where taking massive action is the last thing that you will feel like doing. Find ways to fire yourself up. You, like my kids who were standing on the side of the pool, might be afraid to jump in. You cannot allow fear to paralyze you. Some time ago, I came across an acronym for the word “fear” and it has stuck with me. The acronym has allowed me to better be able to conquer the things that cause me to be the most afraid. It is simply this: **False Evidence Appearing Real.**

Let’s break this down. Fear is, quite simply, the presentation of false information appearing real to you in order to make you feel afraid. If this acronym is true, then the subject of your fear is simply appearing to you as something much scarier than it actually is. Knowing this should make it exceptionally easier to conquer. It is less likely to subdue you in your pursuits to lead! Allowing yourself to let go of your preliminary fears will reward you ten–fold, simply by making the start easier for you every time action is required in the future.

Hang your most important goal somewhere where you will be able to see it on a daily basis. Talk yourself through it. Whatever you have to do–make sure you are constantly searching for ways to fire yourself up for it. Keep yourself in the game. Let the competition fall off and become complacent, but do not allow yourself to do the same under any circumstances. Massive success does not come overnight. If you are willing to wake up each morning, and declare that you are going to compete with the person you were yesterday, then you will be well on your way.

When I was younger in my career, I was still working for my father. The one thing that I was the most afraid of was letting go of my lifeline, for I was starting to work on my dream of owning my own business. At the time, I was in a position where I was stable and starting to make great money. I was presented with the decision to stay right where I was, or I could attempt to venture out onto something that was unknown. In the unknown was where I would find my dream. Everything at this point in my life was laid out before me. I was in a secure place, both personally as well as professionally, yet here I was– drowning in uncertainty and fear over what I should do. I could choose the option that perfectly laid out my future, or I could venture off down the road less traveled and work towards my own goals, with an unknown and uncertain outcome. I decided to choose the path of uncertainty. The entire world opened up to me. Everything from this point on was an adventure. By this, I do not mean that everything was perfect by anyone’s standards. I had to fail over and over again, in order to find myself, and to find my dream realized. I had gone from experiencing consistent success and financial security,

to road blocks, unexpected challenges, and more failures. In fact, if I recounted to you in detail each of the times that I experienced failure, the list would end up longer than this entire book.

Your goals shouldn't scare you. If they do not scare you, then the outcome is probably not going to be extraordinary. The fear of the outcome is necessary, and indicative of the challenge that has been laid out before you. Overcoming that fear is not only required. It is actually much easier to face than you imagined. Get off of the bench and face what scares you the most. Your persistence in your endeavors is the only thing that you need to hold on to in order to get yourself back up during the times when failure tries to take you down.

One of our nations greatest leaders, Abraham Lincoln, is a true testimony to the metaphor of "getting in the game." He absolutely fulfilled the idea that anyone can make it in America. Abraham Lincoln was a man of little means and a poor education. He was born in a one-room log cabin. It was this humble upbringing that made Lincoln an honest and hard-working man. Lincoln overcame numerous obstacles and failures in order to become the President of the United States, during a time in which the nation would be confronted with one of its gravest catastrophes.

Yet Abraham Lincoln was not always viewed as a winner. He failed so often that it is a wonder how he cemented his place in history at all! Many of you may not know that Abraham Lincoln began his political career in 1832, but he would not be elected president until 1860. In the 28 years which spanned his political career, Abraham Lincoln:

- lost his job
- was defeated in state legislature
- failed in his business career
- his lifelong sweetheart died
- had a nervous breakdown
- was defeated for House Speaker
- defeated for nomination for Congress
- lost re-nomination
- was rejected for land officer
- defeated for nomination for Vice President of the United States
- was defeated for Senate
- and then, he was elected PRESIDENT!

All of this occurred following the death of his mother at a very early age, which resulted in a very poor upbringing.

Throughout his life, Lincoln was faced with defeat. The truest testament to his character, and ultimately what granted him his place in U.S. History, is the fact that he never gave up. His road to the White House is one of the greatest examples of persistence that I personally have ever read. Over time Lincoln would lose eight elections and fail twice in business. He suffered a nervous breakdown, but this did not deter him from his political career. There isn't much that should derail you from achieving your dreams of success. Lincoln became a champion because he was unafraid. Let go of your fear and get in the game. Become your own story of persistence!

I will say it again: Where a person currently stands is relative to where they desire to be in life. To me, this statement defines not only a dream, but cements one's future as a visionary. If you can envision yourself and your future, then the investment you are making for your passion will solidify your dedication for your craft. Ask yourself if your dream is what you really want to see come to fruition. If the answer is yes, then everything you do today should enable you to get to where you want to be tomorrow. I encourage you to stop waiting for advantageous moments. Instead, be the pioneer and create movement on your own.

Visionaries keep envisioning their dreams. This happens in an expanding, forward movement. They are constantly adding to their objectives, sometimes before they even complete what they initially set out to do. Visionaries live today, yesterday! Vision always proceeds action. What was yesterday's vision is being lived out right now. Because something is only a vision at the time, and has yet come to reality, it can be an addition or adjustment to a more refined goal. A visionaries' ambitions and dreams are always being edited or revised. You must take the actions necessary to live your dream and continue to add to it. Look back to what you have in your hands. Use what is in them to propel you forward. Use your vision to keep you constantly changing. Do not stay the same. Allow your dream to get bigger. More importantly, permit your dream to keep repeating itself in larger forms. Always keep the seeds to your greatness in your hand. You can continue to plant them for a better tomorrow.

In order to help rid yourself of apprehension and fear, there are a few things that I recommend doing before leaping to action. The first is to create a plan for their vision. According to conventional wisdom, the first thing every visionary must do is to first create a plan for the vision itself. This plan usually describes the size of the dream, the problems that will need to be resolved along the way, and a solution that the dream will provide. Having a vision plan is essentially a research exercise written in isolation at a desk, before the visionary has even begun to build a product. It is possible to figure out most of the unknowns of a dream in advance, before you execute the vision.

Next, find what I call a “dream incubator.” This should be a confidant who listens and dreams with you. We all need a shoulder to lean on, and sometimes a shoulder to cry on. Someone there to support us through all of the challenging times and builds us up when we need it the most. It is very possible that, without the help of my dream incubators, I may have not achieved the level of success for which I have experienced.

Once you have your vision plan and your dream incubator, you should then get to work on executing your plan with diligence and persistence. When you find failure, don’t let it keep you down for long! When unexpected road blocks present themselves in front of you, take a moment to rest, reset, and revisit your blueprints. Refocus your energy on your “why.” Why are you here? Why is this dream important to you? Why must you continue?

As the CEO of iPD, our internal theme at the company is “ALL IN.” There are visions and goals, both personal and corporate, which are in front of us. In order to reach those summits, we must not go about things haphazardly. Rather, we should be invested fully by giving one hundred percent in everything that we do. It is my belief that all of us possess God given talents and abilities that only we can use. I want to remind you again to look at what is placed before you and inside you. God has given gifts to each of us that vary greatly.

Many of us face obstacles on a daily basis that seem insurmountable. However, we have been equipped with the ability to accomplish success and reach the finish line. Whatever is already in you, I assure you, that it is all you need to get started on your dreams and your vision.

Look at a flourishing fruit tree that is fully grown and full of luscious fruit. It may stand twenty feet tall, with thousands of leaves and ripe fruit, but it was not always so large and impressive. This tree first began as a seed. Sometime long ago, perhaps a farmer planted it. The farmer had to stand over freshly tilled soil, and took the seed from his burlap sack. The farmer placed the seeds in the ground, and over time, the earth nurtured those seeds until the tree flourished. Only then, would the farmer be able to eat the fruit that the little seed produced, taking the literal fruits from his labor. We hold the seeds that can eventually grow into our dreams, our visions, our goals, and our aspirations.

So what is the key? Be ALL IN! You have to be active in your pursuits and your endeavors. You have to consistently propel yourself and your goals in perpetual forward motion. You have to consistently take massive, vigorous action to conquer what it is that you are chasing. The key is to take what we possess and to actively give it all we’ve got. We cannot hold back, as it will take everything that we have. What do you have? How can you use it in pursuit of your own destiny? I love a quote that Napoleon said, “what the mind can conceive and believe in, the mind can achieve.” If you believe in yourself and believe in your dreams, then you can achieve absolutely everything that you set out for. Ask yourself, am I all in? If you are not giving one hundred percent, then the answer to that question is no. When you are all in and fully involved, your end results will be incredible.

In no-limit poker, to bet all of your chips is a sign of total confidence in what is in your hand. If you have a very good hand, you go all-in so that you can win the maximum amount, or to simply scare off mediocre hands so they won't catch the cards that they need to win. The only person who knows your dream is you. The only one who can see it realized is you. You are the common denominator.

The Bible says:

"God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well."

Paul emphasized that we're to actually use these gifts and abilities, as God has given us them for the benefit of those around us. Some people may say, "I don't know what to do" or "I don't really have any special talent to give." Moses said the exact same thing when God spoke to him at the burning bush. But God explained to Moses that he had more than enough to accomplish what it was that God had set him out to accomplish. Like Moses, you have to take what you have and use it. You have to be all in!

Theodore Roosevelt once said:

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

He was not wrong. Everything that you need to flourish is in you already. Trust the blessings that you are holding, and use them. You have dreams, aspirations, and a vision for the future. You would not be reading this book if you didn't, right? Well, are you ready to get off of the bench? My best advice to you would be to take inventory of your dreams and visions, get off of the bench, and get back into the game! Nothing has the power to stop you but you.

"For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord. "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." – Jeremiah 29:11