FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Business & Economics

Landing on Your Feet: A Story of Business Mistakes Survival and Success
Michael G. Kerrison
Broadview Press
978-0-9728566-9-0
(July 31, 2003)

Don't be afraid to fail: it's almost a mantra in business autobiographies. To achieve greatness, one must take risks that sometimes won't pan out. Too often, though, those same books don't provide a peek into the mechanics of failure. How does one pull oneself up by those bootstraps during the darkest hour, anyway? This book illustrates exactly how. The author gives an unvarnished look at the roller-coaster-ride that has been his career, and what a wild ride it's been.

Kerrison grew up in Iowa, the son of a telephone lineman and a restaurant hostess, a typical kid of the sixties and seventies, in love with baseball, not so much with school. His entrepreneurial spirit showed itself early on, trading cigarettes and selling lemonade. His dreams of a life in sales took second place only to dreams of pro baseball stardom. After the untimely death of his father, however, he was forced to strike out on his own, and went to college on a baseball scholarship. When an injury put an end to his first dream, his life as a salesman was born. Kerrison's brother-in-law and role model worked for IBM, and Kerrison joined the company right after graduation.

Infected with a fierce drive to succeed, Kerrison was hugely successful at IBM, but a major misstep derailed his career. It was at this point that the roller-coaster really began: Kerrison moved into a wildly successful computer-leasing business, where closing a year's worth of sales in three months was the norm, only to watch it collapse largely because of the owners' inexperience. From the ashes of that venture, he built a computer-reselling business. Another success, another letdown (this time his inexperience was aided by the backstabbing of several partners), followed by more success in the telecom, software, and consulting industries. Kerrison says the three secrets to his success are: pray a lot, never give up, and stay married. He amply demonstrates his commitment to all three throughout this book.

Written like a novel, filled with vivid characters from his personal and professional lives, Kerrison's business book is a hard one to put down. Not content to leave it at that, he concludes

with a “Toolkit,” which formalizes some of the lessons he’s presented so colorfully. In the end, Kerrison says: “You’ll find as I have that success is nothing more than going from failure to failure without losing hope.”