

The One-Minute Zillionaire: Achieve Wealth, Fame, and Success in an Instant Give or Take a Hundred Years

Lowell T. Christensen

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Lowell T. Christensen is not a powerful motivation guru like Anthony Robbins or a best-selling author with a “work less, make millions” message like Timothy Ferris or even an old-fashioned talk-your-way-to-success coach like Dale Carnegie. But he doesn’t have to be, because his book on advice for wealth and success is intended to be as serious as the goofy cover photo—and he’s on to something. Does the world really need another tome urging us to adopt seven more highly effective habits? To think outside yet another box? To shift one more blessed paradigm? To awaken further sleeping giants or titans?

Enough already, Christensen seems to be saying, and who could argue? What beleaguered middle-class readers surely don’t need right now is yet another slick, glib, possibility-thinking author insinuating that their bank account would swell if only they could think, talk, dream, believe, or imagine themselves rich.

Christensen, a newspaper humorist with a healthy sense of his own ordinariness, takes on the leaders of the get-rich-by-listening-to-me genre and good-naturedly offers an alternative: The key, he says, to making a million is to write a book about how to make a million. Isn’t that as good a strategy as working four hours a week, walking over hot coals, envisioning yourself achieving goals, or spending ten thousand hours learning to invest, invent, or intuit your way there?

The author has a light touch and the ability to laugh at himself and his own ideas. Without a doubt, Christensen is funny, and his newspaper-columnist chops are on display. This means that some chapters—full of satire, parody, hyperbole, and irony—might fare better as freestanding articles. About 30 percent of the book isn’t precisely about success in the financial sense. Christensen details some of his travel experiences, but he manages to bring even these around to traveling successfully.

The bulk of the book delivers on the promise of the cover, title, and introduction. In a section on achieving success as a celebrity, Christensen refers to the well-known Lady Gaga, “who released a CD titled *Born This Way*, which, if true, probably scared the crap out of the doctor.” He addresses the idea of igniting one’s “inner winner” by recommending that the reader listen to Queen’s “We are the Champions” at about 120 decibels. Says Christensen, “It’s very inspiring. It makes me realize that if I were a really high tenor with nice hair and could play the guitar, I’d be rich.”

The One-Minute Zillionaire: Achieve Wealth, Fame, and Success in an Instant Give or Take a Hundred Years is a fun book. It won’t make anyone rich, likely including Christensen—unless he really does get a bunch of readers to send him \$900 each for that baklava recipe.

LISA ROMEO (November 21, 2012)

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