

The Ultimate Wealth: Book One

Chen Gong Wah

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The Ultimate Wealth is a gentle and approachable introduction to principles of positive thinking.

Chen Gong Wah's engaging and allegorical self-help text *The Ultimate Wealth* serves as a primer on the power of positivity.

The flowering relationship between a master and a student centers this text, which begins as two old friends, Old Man Huang and Sifu Wang, meet to discuss Huang's grandson, Hai San, a teenager who lost his parents and sister a few years previous. Huang asks Sifu, a renowned master, to teach Hai about "the secrets," which are a source of power within himself that are capable of changing the world. Sifu agrees.

Over a series of lessons, Sifu shows Hai that people have relationships with the universe; when their intentions are aligned with the universe, he says, much is possible—including wealth and material well-being, but also extending to what's greater than that, including compassion, love, and kindness. The resultant series of captivating and rhythmic parables manage to teach the book's audience the tenets of positive thinking, too.

The story's master and student conversational structure proves effective: concise Sifu drives the instruction with his clear, down-to-earth explanations; and, when Hai voices concerns, doubts, and even resistance, he serves as a surrogate for those who have questions about the doctrine. Further, his interjections create logical breaks in the tale. The men's dialogues simultaneously convey the book's principles and propel the story forward in a smooth, authentic way.

The book's minimalist setting uses handfuls of items to set its scenes: a sick friend's home is built around a bag of healthy groceries, and Sifu's backyard garden is evoked with the mention of a limestone statue. These touches are realistic, if detail light; the teachings are the book's focus. And while Sifu and Hai are realistic characters, some of their reactions are idealized. Nonetheless, a warm relationship is established between the men, resulting in a constructive space for explaining the tenets of positive thinking, if in a sometimes rugged manner: upon being told that anything is possible, Hai wants to use his newfound powers to win a raffle at school. Of course, the odds remain against him, leading to anxiety, nerves, and sadness.

Chen Gong Wah's *The Ultimate Wealth* is a gentle and approachable introduction to principles of positive thinking that uses a story of new and old friends letting go of what doesn't serve them to accept the true riches of life.

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