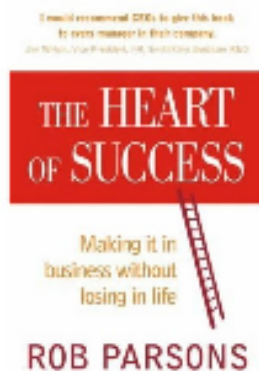




The Heart of Success – Making it in business without losing in life



The main theme of this book is work / life balance. The author explains the 7 laws required to “make it in business without losing in life”. However rather than being a conventional personal development book, the laws are incorporated into a story. It begins with a young MBA student who meets an old professor Tom Murray just before his course begins. The student tells him about his father who appeared to be very successful but who was never really there for him while he was growing up. He asks the professor is it possible to be successful and still have a family life. They agreed to meet every Tuesday night and during these meetings the professor explains how this can be achieved through the application of the 7 laws.

Law 1 - “Don’t settle for being money rich and time poor”

There are so many people who work really long hours but do not have any time to enjoy the money they earn. These people have everything (in terms of material goods) and yet have nothing. As time goes on they begin to feel cheated. They realise that they have no time for relationships in their lives, whether this is with their wife, children or family.

Some companies have a long hours culture. Staff feel that they have to stay late. When they are asked how they are they often answer that they “are shattered”.

A former chairman of the US Chamber of Commerce once defined a well adjusted executive as “one who’s intake of PEP pills balances his consumption of tranquilisers just enough to give him sufficient energy for his weekly visit to his psychologist”

There are also many individuals in organisations who will work long hours irrespective of the need.

Lawyers were cited as some of the worst offenders. There are many instances of lawyers working 6/7 days a week for 25 years and then when they are burned out, with no family or other relationships in their lives, they are replaced by younger lawyers.

However companies are now realising that they must move away from long hours. Apart from the effect it has on people’s home lives they cannot work efficiently and effectively in these circumstances.

One American company made it a condition of their contract with the law firm they employed that, none of the law firm employees worked more than 50 hours per week. They didn’t want tired worn out individuals working on their files.

Although working long hours may be helpful for a short period of time, when you are looking to establish yourself within an organisation or for very specific busy periods, it is vital that this does not become simply a habit or a culture within an organization.



Law 2 – “Believe that the job you do makes a difference”

When St Paul’s cathedral was being built Christopher Wren went down to see the work being completed. He met a labourer and asked him what he was doing. He replied “carrying bricks”, to which Christopher replied “no son you are building a cathedral”

Every person’s job makes a real difference and you owe it to yourself, to do whatever job you have, as well as you can.

The author speaks about his own father being a postman after World War II. Although Rob felt that his father was capable of greater things his father saw things differently. He had great pride in his role of delivering the “Royal Mail”. He saw the difference his job made to people such as the person waiting to receive a letter from a son who had emigrated or to find out whether he had passed an important exam or had being offered a job or a place at university.

We should recognise that, although our jobs may not seem to be that important, they can make a difference in ways we never appreciated before.

Think for a moment about the person responsible for, say fixing the sinks in the toilets of an airplane. This might appear on the face of it to be a rather trivial role. However if the taps in the toilet do not work then people will begin to doubt the quality of the engine maintenance of that airline.

I know of an amazing car park attendant called Fred. Previous incumbents of his role considered the job to be boring and unfulfilling. As a result they spend a great deal of time asleep in the hut provided.

When Fred took on this job he saw it in a completely different light. Not only did he ensure that, it was the people with the correct car park permits that used the car park, he also helped people find spaces, informed them if they left their lights on, and even if any bulbs such as brake-lights needed replacement. And he directed them safely out of the car park in the evening. As a result he build up great relationships with the users of the car park. People really appreciated what he did and his own job satisfaction was very high. Fred never had any problems staying awake on the job.

About the Author



Rob Parsons was born and raised in Cardiff, England. The son of a postman and an office cleaner, he was raised in a home with no hot water or indoor plumbing.

On leaving college he taught English Literature but then retrained as a lawyer. By the 1980s, he was a successful legal consultant and senior partner at a big provincial law firm. In 1988, he left his firm to start “Care for the Family”, a charitable organization which aims to promote strong **family life** and to **help those hurting** because of family breakdown.

From humble beginnings, “Care for the Family” has grown to include 107 staff members and 40 different projects. Rob has penned many popular books on marriage, parenting and Christian living including the bestselling “Sixty Minute Father”, “Teenagers! What Every Parent Has to Know” and “The Money Secret”.



The Power of Trust

Before moving onto the next law the author talked about the importance and power of trust. Honesty and integrity can be your greatest asset. In a survey of top American Executives they were asked what were the characteristics of great leaders. Their top 8 were as follows:

1. Never compromise on matters of principles or standards of excellence even on matters of minor importance.
2. Be persistent and never give up.
3. Have a clear vision of where you are going and communicate it often.
4. Know what you stand for and set high standards – don't be afraid to tackle tough problems despite the risks.
5. Spend less time managing and more time leading – lead by example.
6. Bring out the best in others – hire the best people and delegate responsibility – but stay in touch.
7. Have confidence in yourself and those around you – trust others.
8. Accept blame for failures and credit others with success – possess integrity and personal courage.

Duplicity and manipulation can produce rewards but people who act this way must worry when will it happen to them. Also if they lose success they are on their own – the only thing they have is their success.



Law 3 Play to your strengths – find your factor X

The fastest way to succeed is to find what you are good at and find someone who will let you do it.



Factor X is that natural ability or strength that a person possesses that sets them apart from the pack – often people don't get to discover what their natural strength is. Companies should consider if people have talents that they could use. If so, they should consider changing the job to suit the individual.

There is no "i" in team – however great teams are made up of individuals who are allowed to play to their strengths. Great managers create team spirit, while allowing individual brilliance to shine. We must give people opportunities to use strengths. After all people are a companies' greatest strength.

It can be a tragedy if no one helps us find our factor X. The author describes an example of a girl being asked by a career guidance teacher what job she would like to do. She said Sales and got a reaction similar to the one she would have expected if she said a "Street Walker in the Bronx". So she immediately mentioned that she might also "teach drama to children". This received a much better reaction.

That evening she shared this story with her mother who specialised in running skill discovery programmes. She admitted that although she loved drama, she hated children. Her mother got her to complete a skills discovery programme which confirmed that the girl was born to sell. This saved her daughter from children (and saved the kids from her daughter).



Law 4 – Believe in the Power of Dreams

Problem with most people in business is that they have stopped dreaming – they are now administrators. We need to have dreams and believe in them.

Remember that dreams are contagious. Every organisation needs dreamers because, not only do they bring their own dreams to life, they can also envision others. When Roger Bannister dreamt of running the mile in under 4 minutes people said he was crazy. In fact some medical experts completed tests to show that the heart could almost explode in the attempt. However in May 1954 Roger Bannister achieved his dream. Although he did something never achieved up until that moment, by the end of 1957 16 other people had also run sub 4 minute miles.



It is also vital that we have “dream-catchers” – a person to share dreams, encourage them and sometimes point out the things that may not work. However the person you select must be open (CAN DO people) – don’t share dreams with the wrong negative people.

If you have a dream or vision think of it as a seed. First you have a seed. Then you have to plant it. Finally to have to remember to water it occasionally.

Even a journey of a 1,000 miles begins with a simple step. So few dreams ever get started. Usually we postpone them until we have more time. Of course whenever we free some time it gets eaten up. So few visions get a chance to fail, never mind succeed.

If you want to catch your dreams it will have to be done in the time you have already. Every person in the world has the exact number of minutes in each day. We often postpone the actions we need to take by doing trivial things instead. If you want to make your dreams come through start taking steps now.

Remember too that learning to live with failure is part of the stock and trade of the dreamer (it can take 15 years to become an overnight success). Dreamers may sometimes fail but, when they do, they will do so stretching.

**“It is a terrible thing to be able to see and have no vision”
Helen Keller**





Law 5 – Put your family before your career

Remember there is only 6570 days until a child reaches 18. Make the most of them. When it comes to your children, time flies. A child may ask you to read a story or bring him fishing and you tell them later. But the time comes very quickly when they simply stop asking. Before you know it they are not interested in bed-time stories or they will want to go fishing with their friends instead.

As many businessmen get older their regrets in life are never about how often they were promoted or the failure of a work project. Regrets are almost always in the area of relationships.

The author shares a variety of stories to explain the importance of this law. Here are some examples

A executive who comes home after a work trip away and asked his son “Did you miss me?” The son replied “No”. He wasn’t trying to be hurtful. To explain he added “You see Dad you are never here anyway”

The man who comes home late from the office. His wife is in bed and his son has grown up and left home. He notices a picture of his son and visualises images of seeing him play ball in the park and scoring goals for his team. But they are only images. The reality was that he was always too busy to attend. Of course he always managed to cheer his son up afterwards by the promise of a bike or other special treat but this disguised the damage he was really doing to the relationship with his son and he can never get that time back

A man who challenges the author on this theory at a conference. He argues that the reason he works so hard is for his family, so he is not going to feel guilty. He was then asked about possible bets

- Would he walk across a steel girder 4 inches wide on the ground for £50 – he replied “no problem”.
- Then for £50 would he walk across this girder if it was joining the top of the Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur. These towers are built to sway in the wind and on this day there is a wind blowing. He replies “no way”.



The amount was continuously increased until the person even refuses an offer of 10 million pounds. Then he is told that his son was being held by the hair and would be dropped if he didn’t walk across and he immediately said that he would do it.

This is a parable from Byron W. Smith in his 10 laws of successful time management and proves that you care about your child more than anything else in this world. So you should remember that, as you live your life and prioritise your activities.

We often ask someone what is the secret of their success. However often this success is achieved at the expense of a person’s health and, their most important asset, their relationships with their friends and family. Surveys are now revealing that young executives are rejecting very long working hours as a requirement to move up the ladder. They have no problem working late when a genuine need arises but it is no longer acceptable as a lifestyle. People want to enjoy the prize of their labours now and not at the end of 40 years.



The 60 Minute Father

A terrific book from the same author which explores law 5 in more detail.



Law No 6 - Keep the Common Touch

In one of the most popular poems of all time “If”, Rudyard Kipling talked about this virtue when he wrote **“If you can... walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch”**

It is important to treat staff at all levels with respect. This will mean that they will respect you and will be prepared to go that extra mile. Their goodwill is important.

Sir Kenneth Cork an expert in company insolvencies knew, more than anyone, what signs to look for when companies were in trouble. He estimated that 50% of companies fail because of a lack of communication. In many cases this was because the directors of the company were not communicating effectively with the staff below them (as well as with each other).

People at the bottom of an organisation are usually the people who have the best idea of what’s going on and spotting the problems that exist.

Senior Managers who cannot relate to these staff lose a very valuable asset when trying to build a successful organisation.

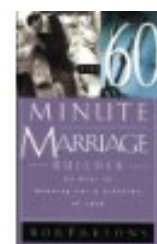
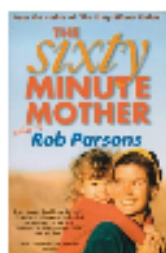
Being able to deal with staff at all levels will also mean that you will be open to finding talent – to spotting the factor X - an employee who has a wonderful talent that is not being utilised by the organisation.

Remember when you lose the common touch you lose touch completely.

Other Books by the Same Author

For those interested in other books from Rob Parsons we have included a small sample of his other works. We hope you enjoy them.

- **Sixty Minute Father:** This is an absolute must read for all fathers of young children. It reminds us of the short window of childhood in which we can carve out a strong relationship with our children. The title is related to the fact that ,despite being an incredibly powerful book, it can be read in just 60 minutes.
- **Sixty Minute Mother:** Similar to above, this book is written for mothers and draws on the experiences of other mothers, which convey a strong sense of sympathetic support. Sticky issues such as favouritism, feeling guilty, having raised expectations, or letting go of your kids are all interspersed with light-hearted comments and stories.
- **Teenagers! What Every Parent Has To Know.** One for any parents who are struggling through the teenager years. Like all Rob Parsons books it is very easy to read, full of humour, and also very moving.
- **The Sixty Minute Marriage:** Another quick and easy read which can help strengthen your marriage but also explores why marriages can break up.





Law No 7 – Don't settle for success, make a difference and strive for significance

The world has changed so much over the last 100 years. For example it took 3 weeks to reach Spain. Now it can be done in less than 2.5 hours. There have been more scientific discoveries in the last 30 years than in the whole of previous history put together. But one important thing remains unchanged. The death rate is still 100%.

Life is still very short and to decide what you want to achieve in your lifetime it helps to think about some years in the future and decide what will matter to you then.

When we do this we often realise that what we are really striving for is not success, but significance. We want to be able to say that we really have made a difference.

Often it takes dramatic events in your life to help you understand what it is you really want to achieve out of life. The author mentions a person who writes his life goals while on a plane journey and they include, the amount of money he will be earning, the position he will hold and the value of his house.

Then the plane runs into problems and looks like it could crash and when he thinks again about his life goals he realises that they are not what he has written down. They are more about being a better husband, father and to make a contribution to making the world a little better place to live in.

Although this person still went on to have a very successful career it didn't dominate his life in the same way. It was seen more in the context of his whole life.

Alfred Nobel once got to read his obituary because a newspaper mistook the death of his brother for his death.



It changed his life because the obituary focussed on his role in inventing dynamite and how he had made his fortune inventing new ways to kill or mutilate people. He vowed to live his life differently and that, his life from that point on was going to be significance rather than successful.

We shouldn't wait for dramatic events such as plane crashes to decide what our priorities really are. We need to think now about what really matters and take the appropriate actions based on these choices. Often finding time to think about these matters can be an issue.

We should give ourselves time to think more often. Take time to think whenever possible. Thinking gives us an opportunity to strategise and is a chance for our dreams to crystallise.

People who strive for significance can still remain ambitious, motivated and can contribute to the vision of any company.