

To a school leaver

Many receive advice, only the wise profit by it.

— *Publilius Syrus*

You have the world at your feet, although just at the moment you may not realise it. Think how lucky you are to be living in Australia in the 21st century. You could have been born in a Third World country or 200 years ago, before all today's luxuries were invented. Never in the history of the world have there been such opportunities waiting for somebody to take advantage of them. There's just one catch: they won't come to you; you will have to find them.

Think of your life as a farm. Somebody clears and ploughs some land. Then they add fertiliser, plant the right seed and the crops start to grow. Immediately, insects and diseases come to attack what is growing. If left unattended, the farm very quickly reverts back to its former state. At some time in life, before the crop is ready for harvest, a sudden hailstorm will come and destroy much of the farmer's work. All he can do is cut his losses and start again.

This is how life is — no matter how good a foundation you put down, or how diligently you work, everything you do will be constantly under attack from the “insects”

of this world. At some stage, you may meet some sort of disaster and be faced with starting from scratch again.

These facts are not very pleasant, but it is better to understand from the start that obstacles will happen. You can then be better prepared for them.

At the start of this book you read why only 8% of Australians reach financial independence. Make sure you are in that group. To do this you will have to acquire three habits that are simple but seem very difficult to most people.

1. Be disciplined.
2. Spend less than you earn and invest the balance wisely so you will always be in control of your finances.
3. Develop the habit of continuing education, so you will always be in the top 20% of people in your field.

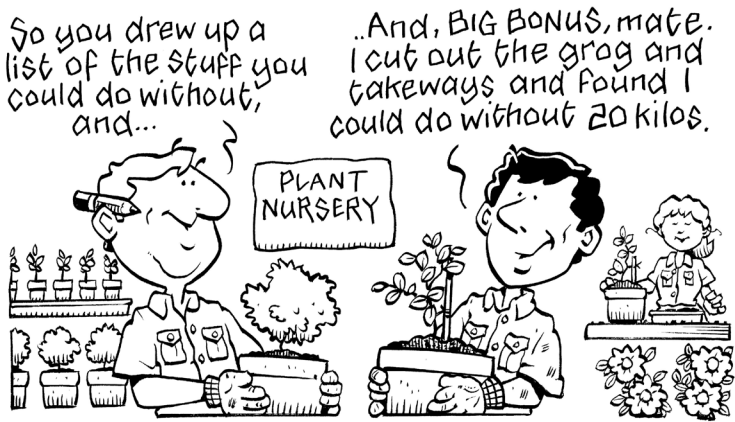
If you can acquire the habit of discipline, the rest will be easy. Discipline will give you the strength to study when your friends are out at a party, the will to refuse “one for the road” when you are driving, the ability to refuse a cigarette, and the resolve to save up for the things you want rather than borrowing at high rates of interest..

Life is made up of a lot of little actions (good or bad) that combine to produce a final gigantic result. If you practise discipline on the little things from the start, you will find it so much easier to cope with the bigger problems. You will slowly learn habits that will stand you in good stead for life.

Here are some ways to practise the habit of discipline.

- Get out of bed when the alarm clock goes off.
- Take up a sport that requires regular training.
- Turn off your device when the thing you want to see ends, rather than watching whatever comes on next.

- When you go shopping, take a list and stick to it.
- Refuse second helpings.



Once you have mastered little disciplines like these, you will have less trouble with the big ones. Resist the temptation to follow the crowd. You know that only 8% are going to make it financially so it follows that 92% of people will be making wrong financial decisions. Why follow them?

From the day you earn your first dollar you must acquire the habit of putting 10% of your gross earnings away. It won't seem much at first but, thanks to the miracle of compound interest, you will have nearly one year's salary invested by the time you have been working for seven or eight years.

Put the money in a bank, building society or credit union at first, but gradually try other areas such as cash management, equity, mortgage, and property trusts. This will not only multiply your savings; it will also give you experience in various investment areas. At a young age you can afford to experiment with your investments and even

if by some stroke of bad luck you lost all your savings, you would still be young enough to start again.

If you want to earn plenty of money remember that how much you get paid depends on the demand for what you do, how well you do it, how hard you are to replace, and how well you negotiate.

We are now in the information age, and many highly paid jobs are available in the fields of technology, information, and marketing. Growth areas include computers, accounting, finance, the media, and anything connected with recreation and travel. If possible, join an organisation that is going places and aim to learn as much about your job as you can. Then learn as much about everyone else's jobs as you can. I guarantee you will be rewarded, because if your company does not recognise your talents, you can be sure that its competitors will.

Volunteer for jobs: you will learn more skills and meet more people. My public speaking career started when I worked in the bank. I was in the international department and the staff member who lectured junior bank staff about foreign exchange was transferred. They called for volunteers to take his place and I was the only one who came forward. I won the job, plus the chance to learn a whole range of valuable skills that I still use today.

Finally, keep on learning. Change is coming faster and faster and those who do not keep up will be left behind. My son James and I wrote *The Beginners Guide to Wealth* especially for you. If you read it, and the other books suggested in the bonus chapter *Recommended Reading*, and apply the principles contained in them, success in life should be yours.