

# Opportunity doesn't knock!

**It just lies there, waiting to be picked up!**

Opportunities are all around us, and contrary to popular belief, recognizing them is not a matter of luck; it's a matter of looking intently at ourselves and our immediate surroundings, and then doing something creative with whatever we see.

That's what John Steinbeck did when he began writing about the people who lived in and around his home town of Salinas, California. His famous novel *The Grapes of Wrath* earned him the Pulitzer Prize.

Henry Ford did much the same thing. He looked for and found an opportunity on his father's farm near Dearborn, Michigan where he began experimenting with power driven machinery. He eventually helped put America on wheels by building his first automobile in nearby Detroit.

George Washington Carver, the son of a slave, also knew how to look for opportunities right where he was, and he found plenty of them. He won international acclaim as a scientist by finding over 300 practical uses for the peanut, ranging from instant coffee and soap to ink. He made 118 products from the sweet potato, and helped his fellow Alabamans develop new sources of income by growing peanuts and sweet potatoes instead of coffee.

How about the opportunity awareness of Fred Smith, then a young student at Yale University whose interest in flying helped revive the Yale Flying Club on campus? That club turned into an academic exercise when his term paper focused on an analysis of existing freight service and how flying could be combined with ground transportation.



Unfortunately for Fred, his professor wasn't impressed and graded him a "C." After Fred graduated from Yale, he joined the Marine Corp and served two tours of duty in Vietnam. When he returned, he got into the business world, and soon began spotting opportunities.

Using the very ideas from his old term paper, he founded Federal Express. The company quickly grew and became the first American corporation in history to generate over a billion dollars in sales in less than ten years!

In Germany, it was claimed by the experts that if trains went at the frightful speed of 15 miles an hour, blood would spurt from traveller's noses and passengers would suffocate going through tunnels.

In 1881, when the New York City YWCA announced that they were offering typing lessons for women, many people protested. They claimed the female constitution would break down under the strain of typing.

And in 1886, Mr. Roebuck sold out to his partner, Mr. Sears, for \$25,000, because he was sure the company would go nowhere.

Despite popular opinion, someone with opportunity awareness did eventually develop trains for transportation, and female typists not only typed, but became astronauts, politicians, pilots, and engineers. And Sears was soon generating \$25,000 every couple of seconds!

**Here's what you can do:** *To be worth pursuing, an opportunity doesn't need to be earthshaking. It only needs to be meaningful to you. Plenty of such opportunities exist, right where you are now! So take another look!*



Joel H. Weldon &  
Associates, Inc.  
[www.successcosmetics.com](http://www.successcosmetics.com)

## The Unlimited Unlimited Unlimited Unl Times

*"Dedicated to helping you tap your unlimited potential."*

# Brown & Bigelow

## Hiram and Herbert teamed up in 1896 to start a company

They would manufacture and sell calendars and other items specially designed for businesses. The company eventually became the largest of its kind in the world. That same year a seven-year-old boy, Charlie Ward, was shining shoes on the waterfront in Seattle. Two of these three men's paths crossed because of opportunity awareness.

Remember the principle here—opportunity doesn't knock—it just lies there waiting for someone to pick it up. Looking at the facts of young Charlie Ward's life, you wouldn't expect to see him accomplish much—not much of a positive nature showed on the surface—yet roots were being spread below.

But you know that Charlie Ward was a worker, because at seven he was shining shoes. At 14 he went to sea as a cabin boy and ended up in Alaska. Then back to Seattle to finish high school, and then off again to the gold fields of Alaska, with little success.

Next Charlie headed off to Mexico to fight with the army of Pancho Villa, where he became engulfed in a life of gambling and drinking, and eventually fell in with some soldiers of fortune, smugglers, fugitives, cattle thieves and drug runners. At age 34 it all came to an end. Charlie claimed he was framed, but the courts found him guilty of drug smuggling. Off he went to Leavenworth prison.

He entered prison with a negative, defensive attitude, claiming no prison could ever hold him—embittered, angry and feeling, that life wasn't fair. Well, by now you know something is about to happen, right? And it did—even though Charlie didn't really know exactly what it was.

It wasn't religion, it wasn't a book, a person or even a specific event. Charlie just got up one morning in his prison cell and simply **decided** to alter his attitude. It was the one thing Charlie Ward knew he had complete control over. Almost instantly he forgave the drug smuggler who framed him, the federal agents who arrested him, and the judge who sentenced him. One day he heard a rumor that a convict trustee who worked at the prison power plant would soon be released in about 3 months, and his job would be open.

Charlie got some books on electricity from the prison library and taught himself enough to convince the warden he could do the job. By this time wild, angry Charlie Ward was a model prisoner! He was made Superintendent of the prison power plant and had 150 men working under him.



His goal was to encourage each one of them to make the best of their situation, and to look for opportunities to improve themselves.

The year was now 1923. Charlie was 36 years old and word filtered through the prison that some big shot business guy had just been sentenced for income tax evasion. His name, Herbert Bigelow. He too entered prison with a negative, defensive and life isn't fair attitude. But Charlie made it a point to spend time with this new guy and help him see the opportunity he had—that he could improve himself, he could read, learn new skills and find strength within himself he never knew he had. And Mr. Bigelow not only listened, he followed Charlie Ward's example.

He served his time and before being released, told his friend, Charlie Ward, *"When you get out, come see me in Minnesota and I'll give you a job."*

Charlie too served his time, and sure enough, got the job promised to him at Brown & Bigelow, working in their factory for \$25 a week. Within five years he was promoted to Vice President.

Wow! Shoe shine boy—lost soul—prisoner and now an officer in a huge, successful company. What a great end of the story! But it's not. It's really just the beginning.

Because nine years after being hired as shop worker, his friend and boss, Mr. Bigelow, died suddenly in a boating accident in Canada.

In an emergency meeting on October 2, 1933, the Board of Directors met and unanimously elected Charles Allen Ward President of Brown & Bigelow. For the next 23 years he led that company and increased its sales from \$3 million to over \$50 million.

Cont'd -->

Charlie didn't stop in his efforts to spread opportunity awareness. At every chance he could, he encouraged his employees and those less fortunate, and in a most positive way, helped so many people to tap their amazing potential and then to keep improving continuously!

His efforts were so outstanding that President Theodore Roosevelt, in hearing of Charlie's amazing contributions, restored all his rights as a U.S. citizen that Charlie had lost as a convicted criminal in acknowledgment of his exemplary life.

Without the entire 70 years of his life on the score card, you wouldn't know the whole story. Well, now you do. Charlie Ward may be gone, but his message of finding the good where you are lives on. A wonderful example of how even in the depths of a prison opportunity can be found.

Throughout history great inspiring stories, examples for us all, exist. Unfortunately so often the media promotes the negative examples and not the positives. To find the positives, you need to seek them out — and they do exist!

# Show me the money

Way back in 1910 the insurance industry began studying young college graduates all at age 25, as they started their careers. They kept track of these young people up through age 65, because they wanted to find out how much money they would earn in their lifetime.

Here's what they learned. Out of 100 young college graduates who started on equal ground, one became rich, four became financially secure — meaning that money wasn't a problem for them. Five out of the original hundred were still working full-time, 35 were dead, and 55 were broke after working for 40 years—dependent on welfare, social security or family support. Now how could that be, in the richest land that has ever existed? How could only 5% make it financially, while 55% ended up penniless? Today with massive layoffs, home foreclosures and bankruptcies, those numbers could be even worse.

Throughout my career I've kept track of my annual income, starting with my first full-time job in 1961. That's something you might find helpful too. Show me your money and I'll show you mine!

Start by just pulling out your old income tax returns. You can go back at least seven years because you should be saving those returns that long. But if you don't have official numbers, just guess.

Write down as best as you can remember about how much you have earned each year since you began full time work. Now if you're in my age bracket, you might find it hard to equate today's dollars to those of the past.

I will tell you this... when Judy and I were engaged we discussed finances and what we might someday earn. I'll never forget looking at my then 19-year-old bride-to-be and asking her, "Do you think that someday together we could ever earn \$10,000 in one year?"



That seemed like such a tremendous amount of money. Both of us were working two jobs and together we were still so far from that \$10,000/yr amount. But I'm happy to report that yes, today we do earn \$10,000 a year! It's important to measure your performance in the money department.

Of course it's just one area of your life, but it's also the easiest to measure your improvement.

It's hard to put a pricetag on your faith and spirituality, your happiness, your love of family and friends, your emotional satisfaction, being a parent or a grandparent. But dollars can be counted!

And yes you can factor them in.

As a rule of thumb, here's how you can adjust 20th Century dollars to today's dollars—

\$10,000 in 1950 dollars = about \$70,000 today.

\$10,000 in 1975 dollars = about 3 1/2 times in today's dollars.

**Here's what you can do:** *Begin your financial score sheet now, and see how those tangible rewards are improving!*

# Positive thinking is not enough!



## Right now some things are not possible

A man leaps off the top of the Sears Tower in Chicago 1,482 feet above the street. People on the 50th floor look out their windows and see him coming down with a big smile on his face, saying, "I'm OK so far!" Is that what you call positive thinking? No, far from it. What that is is an unrealistic positive attitude — let's face it, barring a miracle, he's dead!

You've probably known unrealistic people like that, who just kid themselves. It's like attitude, attitude, attitude. I think positively. I have a good attitude. I can do anything. Nothing is impossible for me.

For many decades, so-called motivational gurus have been telling us at pep rallies, in books and on cassette tapes, that our success in life is determined by our attitude. But for too many people, this causes nothing but frustration. They say it just doesn't work for them. They say they have a good attitude, but things don't seem to improve. Maybe it's because they have been made to believe that just having a positive attitude is an easy way to succeed.

You and I both know that attitude is important. It's VERY important. But there's a lot more to it than people sometimes realize.

We do need positive, optimistic thinking, plus positive expectancy, or the conviction that it will happen. But we also need the triggering device, and that's ACTION. Inspiration needs perspiration! It needs to be backed up by action.

Experience teaches us that right now some things are not possible ... things like swimming underwater for an hour by just holding your breath, or jumping off the roof, or flapping your arms and flying, or beaming yourself to another planet and spending the afternoon there. It's simply not possible for us to do those kinds of things right now!

But little by little we are coming closer to doing them: Jacques Cousteau developed the first aqualung, Wilbur and Orville Wright built the first airplane, and Neil Armstrong walked on the moon.

So, amazing things are certainly possible. But not everything is realistic for us at this moment. And it's important to be realistic.

For example, I don't think all the positive thinking in the world could help me become an opera singer! For me that's totally unrealistic. In church, I feel like people are going to turn around and give me funny looks if they hear me singing the hymns.

Some good friends have even kidded me, saying, "Just move your lips Joel and keep quiet." They call me "one-note Weldon," because I'm always off key. But I know I could sing better than I do if I took lessons and I really wanted to improve. I know I have more singing potential in me than I'm now using.

And that's the point of this message: A positive, attitude, plus expectancy, plus ACTION, will result in measurable improvement.

So, can you and I agree on these three basic premises concerning attitude?

1. Positive thinking without positive action is not much help.

2. Expectant thinking is by definition action oriented.

3. It's not realistic to believe you can do everything right now, but you can improve measurably in almost anything.

Agreed? Good.



© JOEL H. WELDON & ASSOCIATES, INC.  
P.O. Box 6226 Scottsdale, AZ 85261  
All rights reserved.

Editor: Judy Weldon. Executive Assistant: Debbie Giebelhausen. Cartoons: Brad Hall.  
<http://www.SuccessComesInCans.com>