

# The winners are still winning

**You can prosper, regardless of the current economic situation.**

A management psychologist described a conversation he once had with his banker in which he was asked the following question:

“Jim, you get around behind the scenes in a lot of businesses. What do you make of the current economic situation?”

“The winners are still winning!” he answered, and went on to explain that, despite tough times, some people still pursue and achieve their goals. No matter how pessimistic the news may be, the winners continue to wring triumph out of adversity.

A refreshing and encouraging thought, isn't it? What is it that winners do to continue winning? Here are six common characteristics of winners:

1. Winners depend upon themselves above all else. They'll put any advantage they can acquire to work, but they primarily rely on their own talents. The economy and the government may affect business positively or negatively, but the winners know the only constants lie within themselves.

2. The winners also recognize the importance of other people. They know that human relations are even more crucial during hard times. But because they depend ultimately on themselves, winners don't seek scapegoats among the people they work with. They accept full responsibility for their actions and waste little time blaming.

3. Winners accept and cope realistically with their own faults. They feel no compulsion



to live up to the image of “big business executive,” no matter how popular that image may be.

4. Winners eagerly listen to and learn from almost anyone, but in the end, they act on their own convictions.

5. The tenacious pursuit of goals is another characteristic of winners. They'll change pace, tactics and priorities, but always with one goal in mind. For them, the goal is fixed; only the strategy changes.

6. And finally, winners care more about an accomplishment than about the ensuing rewards. They love the pursuit, the endeavor itself. Some winners may expect to be paid handsomely for their work, but they still see the work itself as a greater monument to their talents than any amount of money.

**Here's what you can do:** *Don't accept the idea that pessimistic news means you too must suffer. You can make headway, regardless of any economic situation. The winners are still winning and it's up to YOU, not the economy, whether you'll stay among them.*



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# Opportunity is nowhere!

## How and where to find opportunities

What is the title of this article? “*Opportunity is nowhere*” or “*Opportunity is now here?*”

That’s right. The second one is correct. But far more important than deciphering titles is the ability to recognize opportunities in life.

Contrary to popular belief, opportunities abound. And recognizing them is not a matter of genius or luck. It’s a matter of (1) looking intently at yourself and your immediate surroundings, and (2) doing something creative with whatever it is you see.

That’s what John Steinbeck did when he began writing about the farmers and laborers in and around his hometown of Salinas, California. His most famous novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, earned him the 1940 Pulitzer Prize.

Henry Ford did much the same thing. He looked for and found an opportunity on his father’s farm in 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. He won worldwide acclaim as a scientist by finding over 300 practical uses for the peanut, ranging from instant “coffee” to soap and ink. He made 118 products from the sweet potato, including flour, shoe blacking, and candy. He then helped his fellow Alabamans develop new sources of income by growing these crops instead of cotton.

But to be worth pursuing, an opportunity does not need to be earth-shaking. It merely needs to be meaningful and profitable for you. Plenty of such opportunities exist, right where you are now. So take another look, keeping in mind that *opportunity is nowhere!*

**Here’s what you can do:** *Begin compiling an opportunity list. Write down your abilities and strengths in one column, and next to that list the activities and items you see around you, in your work or at home, that could be improved upon. Continue adding to your list for two or three weeks. Then match up the items in each column and choose the one opportunity you feel will be most rewarding and easiest to implement. Go to work on it immediately. Opportunity is NOW HERE!*

# The most important words

What do you think the “most important” words are that you can say to another person? Would it be *I love you? You’re special? You’re wonderful? You can do it?* All of these could be. Of course, it would depend on the situation and the condition—right? It also depends on who you are and who that other person is.

A loved one or a close business associate of yours has lots of opportunities to hear your words of wisdom. Yet perhaps the person who could benefit most might be a stranger or distant acquaintance.

DeLinda McDaniels shares her story about the “most important words.” Please read on . . .

*The most important words you’ll ever say will be the kind words FELT, not just heard, by another person. I know this to be true because I still remember the most important words I ever heard. I was a seven year-old attending summer bible school at a church at the end of my street. One morning my bible school teacher looked down at me and told me she was happy I was able to attend, and that she thought I was SPECIAL. I tried*

to look away but her eyes were holding my heart. I didn't know what to say, because I'd never heard words like that before.

Her words were the first kind words I HAD EVER HEARD. I'll never know why she said those words.

Perhaps she spoke to me because I looked hungry and kind of thin or because my clothes didn't fit and I was dirty. Maybe it was the fear in my eyes or the bruises on my body.

All I know for sure is that her words CHANGED MY LIFE.

Because of her, I felt special. Forty five years later, I still see her face and know the feeling of her words.

I'm sure she had no idea how important her words were to me. But I know what it feels

like to be special, because a stranger took a few minutes out of her day to say something kind.

I never saw the woman again. I don't even know her name! But this I do know — I know the importance of a few kind words from a stranger, a woman who spoke to me once, when I was seven years old. Her face is burned in my mind and her words are cradled in my heart. Because of her, I know that the most important words we ever speak are the kind words felt by another person.

Joel, everyone who reads this has daily opportunities to speak encouraging words to those they love — those they know and even to strangers they may never see again. Please encourage them to say "The Most Important Words."

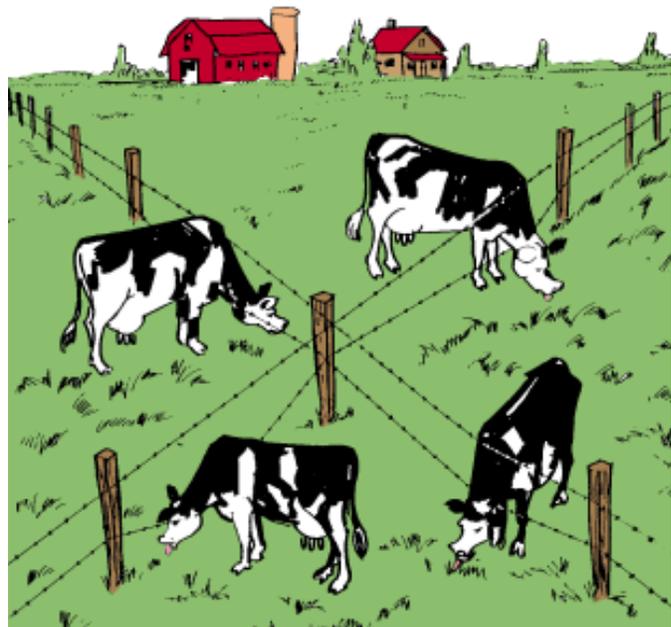
# Acres of diamonds

**Your greatest career opportunity is right where you are — prepare to find it**

Somewhere in your present job is the opportunity which will bring you everything you could possibly want. In his classic audio album titled *Lead the Field*, the late Earl Nightingale has explained how you can find that opportunity and take advantage of it.

The story that illustrates this message is called *Acres of Diamonds*, a true story that was originally told in the nineteenth century by a clergyman named Dr. Russell Conway. It's about a South African farmer who became so intoxicated with the news of other settlers discovering diamond mines, that he sold his farm and hurried away to begin his own search for diamonds. Driven by a vision of glittering riches, the farmer wandered throughout Africa for the rest of his life. But he never found a single diamond. Finally, he committed suicide by drowning himself in a river. Yet the man who had purchased that farmer's land did discover diamonds! Right on that same piece of property! It eventually became one of the world's largest diamond mines.

The farmer had sold literally acres of diamonds, just so he could search for them someplace else. Had he taken the time to study and prepare himself, to learn what diamonds look like in their rough state, to explore his own land, he would have found what he



wanted, right where he was.

You too can find the riches you seek, both financial and intangible, by exploring the ground on which you now stand.

**Here's what you can do:** Look at your "pasture" imaginatively, as would someone who stood outside thinking yours was greener than his. Remember that diamonds don't look like diamonds in their rough state!

# “It’s my daddy’s store!”

**Profits jump as employees feel more personally responsible.**

Many years ago, the legendary Marshall Field developed one of Chicago’s outstanding department stores. Much of his success has been attributed to the time he spent on the sales floor, among his employees and customers. Each day he would wander among the displays, observing and analyzing all that went on around him.

He once overheard a conversation between two young girls who were trailing along behind their mothers on a shopping trip. One of the girls was bragging to the other about how this was her “daddy’s store” and that was her “daddy’s department,” how smart “her daddy was,” and “what a beautiful store he had!” She would have continued if her mother had not cut her off abruptly upon recognizing Mr. Field, who stood listening nearby, fascinated by the child’s banter.

The mother assumed Mr. Field would disapprove, so she apologized to him and began scolding her daughter. Immediately Mr. Field interrupted.

“The little girl is right,” he said. “I want her father to feel that it is his store and his department. If every employee felt that way, I wouldn’t have to be concerned about the success of this business.”

Mr. Field understood that employees who feel personally responsible for their work will perform much better than those who don’t feel responsible at all. This attitude rewarded him well, just as it has other leaders who have adopted it in their organizations. For example, one office of a regional telephone company gave its phone installers, rather than supervisors, the responsibility of routing their own installations. Installations increased by 26 percent. A well-known air freight company gave all its employees the responsibility of evaluating their own job performances against established



goals. When performances increased, employees were given praise and recognition, and company profits jumped substantially that year.

How much would your profits increase, and how strong would the *esprit de corps* be in your organization if you allowed your people to feel more personally responsible for their work?

**Here’s what you can do:** *Within your organization, identify jobs where, traditionally, attitudes are poor and performance levels are low due to a lack of responsibility granted to employees. Make a list of all the ways you can think of to increase employee responsibility. Ask yourself these questions: How can I remove controls and restrictions from this job and yet retain accountability? What complete, natural unit of work could the person in this job be responsible for from start to finish? How could I grant additional authority to the person in this job? What specialized tasks can I assign to the person in this job, allowing him to become an expert? And when performance does increase, how can I provide recognition and reward?*



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