Discover the 3 Secrets for Getting What You Want Out of Life and Work

THE Payoff Principle

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About the Author
“I want to be happy. I want to be successful.” Ask people what they want from life and you are likely to hear these words, or a version thereof. Inquire further, and you’ll find that most people will have at least an idea of what reaching those goals would take.

But in order to achieve a greater degree of happiness and success, three elements must be present, and most people, unfortunately, overlook one or more of these key elements.

In *The Payoff Principle*, you’ll learn what these three elements are, and more important, how you can apply them to your life to increase your level of happiness and maximize your opportunities for success.

*The Payoff Principle* is not just another ordinary self-help or get-rich-quick book. Most books of this genre, while well intentioned, only touch on one, maybe two of the three key elements of success. I believe that The Payoff Principle is the first book to combine all three elements into a system that all but guarantees you greater happiness and success, if you apply its lessons to your life.

I was introduced to Dr. Alan Zimmerman many years ago through his newsletter, The Tuesday Tip. I was struck by Alan’s capacity to motivate people through his unique ability to break down success principles into plain language, illustrated by his many captivating anecdotes and observations on life.

But more than anything else, what kept me coming back again and again to Alan’s writing was the pervasive optimism that has become his hallmark. Alan believes there are seeds of greatness inside every individual, and he has dedicated his life mission to helping all those who follow his teachings to achieve their personal best. Alan’s optimism is simply contagious, and if you’re like me, you’ll be glued to The Payoff Principle once you start reading.
As a successful professional bodybuilder, *Inc.* 500 entrepreneur, and CEO of Labrada Nutrition, I have relied on the time-proven principles espoused in Alan’s book to make goals, work on them passionately, and reach them. During my adult life, I’ve been on a journey of self-discovery into what constitutes real success.

Years ago when I won the IFBB Mr. Universe title, I thought I had finally become a champion. Like many, I thought being a champion was just about winning. Not quite. A champion is not something you become by winning a major bodybuilding title, professional athletic event, or achieving business accolades. A champion is something you become through a process involving self-improvement, sacrifice, service, and yes, the attainment of goals normally out of reach of all except those willing to pay the price.

My dictionary contains three definitions for the word “champion.” The first is “one who wins first place or first prize in a competition.” Perhaps, in the broadest, most secular sense of the word, this is an accurate definition. But to limit the meaning of “champion” to these strict confines is to gut it of its essence. I disagree with this definition. To me this is the definition of a “winner.” Yes, to be a champion, you must achieve something of value. But the world is full of men and women who have achieved fame and fortune and yet are bankrupt as human beings.

The second definition of champion is “one that is clearly superior or has the attributes of a winner.” I like this definition better. This one emphasizes the attributes of a winner.

The third definition is “an ardent defender or supporter of a cause or another person.” In my view, a champion is that unusual human being who is an embodiment of these last two definitions.

So why all the talk about what defines a champion? Because in *The Payoff Principle*, Alan’s goal is to bring out the champion in you.

Alan makes the case that three things are necessary to be personally happy and professionally successful, and those three things are embodied in this formula:
Purpose + Passion + Process = Payoff

**Purpose** is all about the direction in which you’re going. Where do you hope to go with your life, your career, and your relationships?

**Passion** is all about the energy. How will you muster the energy to keep on keeping on . . . in the good times and the bad? How will you keep yourself motivated to move in the right direction?

**Process** is all about the skills. What skills do you have to learn . . . and then use . . . to make sure you get the **payoffs** you want in your professional life and your personal life?

The words and the concepts of purpose, passion, and process have been around for a long time. And you could easily dismiss them as common sense, but bringing them together in one book and one formula is not common practice. *The Payoff Principle* pulls purpose, passion, and process together, and presents them in a step-by-step plan that will help you master all three elements, so your payoffs will be extraordinary.

I wish I could say that I practiced all three principles at every point of my life, but that would be a falsehood. No, these are things I have learned over time, through my experiences. They require work and they are a process, not an end in themselves. Becoming a champion is a life-long path, not a destination.

As we’ve seen, being a winner does not make you a champion. There are many winners who are not champions . . . and many champions who have not experienced public victories. Here’s to all the future champions of the world and especially all those who toil quietly in their search for excellence . . . here’s to your success.

—Lee Labrada
 CHAPTER 1

What Do You Really, Really, REALLY Want?

The Most Important Question You’ll Ask Yourself

Do you know what you really, Really, REALLY want? This is the single most important question you could ever ask yourself . . . because your answer will affect every aspect of your work and your life . . . now and forever. Unfortunately, if you’re like a lot of people, you haven’t even bothered to ask the question. And, as a result, you may be working too hard, living too fast, and feeling like there’s got to be more to work and life than what you’ve been experiencing.

You’re right. There is more. You can be so much more than you already are, and you can have so much more than you already have. But you’re never going to get it if you don’t know what you really, Really, REALLY want.

The result? As Halper writes, “By sacrificing their values for status, placing more importance on appearances than happiness, and spending more time in empty or false relationships, these men found themselves saying, ‘I feel empty. I’m an impostor!’”

Unfortunately, if you’re like a lot of people, you haven’t even bothered to ask the question.
Continuing Education Strategy #3: Aggressively Pursue Ongoing Personal and Professional Development

The trouble is, many people don’t enjoy what they do or where they are in their life. The famous comedian George Burns, however, thoroughly enjoyed what he was doing on and off the stage. Perhaps that’s why he lived to be so old. When he was 99 and the city of Los Angeles was renaming two streets in honor of him and his wife Gracie Allen, he was asked how he felt. Burns answered, “It’s good to be here . . . At my age it’s nice to be anywhere.”

As psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross observed in her work with the dying:

There are dreams of love, life, and adventure in all of us. But we are also sadly filled with reasons why we shouldn’t try. These reasons seem to protect us, but in truth they imprison us. They hold life at a distance. Life will be over sooner than we think. If we have bikes to ride and people to love, now is the time.

Are You Satisfied with the Direction of Your Growth?

Are you continuing to read books, attend seminars, meet with mentors, listen to educational and motivational recordings, and engage in activities that will help you become a better person? Despite what you’ve heard, ignorance is not bliss. Ignorance leads to poverty, illness, poor jobs, and broken relationships.

In fact, when you implement The Payoff Principle, nothing can stop you. But if you don’t have purpose, passion, and process, nothing can help

**Despite what you’ve heard, ignorance is not bliss.**

**Ignorance leads to poverty, illness, poor jobs, and broken relationships.**
you . . . except finding the purpose, passion, and process that will give you the payoffs you want. In my mind, when you put it all together, it resembles Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. The Payoff Principle Illustrated

- Three ingredients for happiness and success . . . on the job and off
- When you master these three, you get payoffs that are:
  - Personal,
  - Professional, and
  - Permanent

Do you know what you really, Really, REALLY want? This is the single most important question you could ever ask yourself . . . because your answer will affect every aspect of your work and your life . . . now and forever. Unfortunately, if you’re like a lot of people, you haven’t even bothered to ask the question. And, as a result, you may be working too hard, living too fast, and feeling like there’s got to be more to work and life than what you’ve been experiencing.

In fact, when you implement *The Payoff Principle, nothing can stop you*. But if you don’t have purpose, passion, and process, *nothing can help you* . . . except finding the purpose, passion, and process that will give you the payoffs you want.
PART I

PURPOSE
CHAPTER 3

The Power of Purpose

Are You Enjoying What You Do?

Are you continuing to read books, attend seminars, meet with mentors, listen to educational and motivational recordings, and engage in activities that will help you become a better person? Despite what you’ve heard, ignorance is not bliss. Ignorance leads to poverty, illness, poor jobs, and broken relationships.

Life without a clearly defined purpose jeopardizes your emotional health. In his book, Halftime (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), CEO Bob Buford describes several signs of poor emotional health . . . signs that your life and work has lost its purpose . . . or never had a purpose in the first place. Three of them include:

• “The thrill of closing a major deal isn’t quite what it was ten years ago.

• You spend a lot of time thinking about what it might be like to start over or move ‘down’ to a less responsible position that gives you more control of your life.

• You have a secure position, yet you’re scanning the want ads and openings listed in professional journals.”

You’re right. There is more. You can be so much more than you already are, and you can have so much more than you already have. But
you’re never going to get it if you don’t know what you really, Really, REALLY want.

![Three-Legged Stool Diagram](image)

**Figure 4.1. Three-Legged Stool**

The result? As Halper writes, “By sacrificing their values for status, placing more importance on appearances than happiness, and spending more time in empty or false relationships, these men found themselves saying, ‘I feel empty. I’m an impostor!’”

The trouble is, many people don’t enjoy what they do or where they are in their life. The famous comedian George Burns, however, thoroughly enjoyed what he was doing on and off the stage. Perhaps that’s why he lived to be so old. When he was 99 and the city of Los Angeles was renaming two streets in honor of him and his wife Gracie Allen, he was asked how he felt. Burns answered, “It’s good to be here . . . At my age it’s nice to be anywhere.”

For a fire to burn . . . and produce meaningful payoffs . . . it needs **fuel**, something like wood, oil, or coal. It needs **oxygen** or it gets choked out.
And it needs *guidance* . . . something like a fire ring or a fireplace . . . or it can easily do damage (see Figure 5.1).

**Establish Some Rules of Engagement That Create Safety**

You encourage open communication when you create a welcoming climate. Producers, successful leaders, and even effective parents do five things:

1. They encourage other people to speak up by emphasizing the importance of doing so.
2. They ask for the opinions of others before they have totally formulated their own.
3. They hear people out by giving their full and undivided attention.
4. They refrain from immediately arguing or taking offense at ideas that are different from their own.
5. They show in their attitude and their actions that they value a person who speaks his or her mind.

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About the Author

Alan Zimmerman has spoken to more than one million people across the United States and around the world, giving them the tools they need to achieve their goals on and off the job. As a prominent, sought-after author and speaker, Dr. Zimmerman works with a variety of organizations and professional associations from Fortune 500 companies to small and medium-sized businesses, from state and federal government to education and health-care groups. His clients universally characterize him as genuine, down-to-earth, practical, and powerful.

Alan has received numerous awards and honors for his contributions in the fields of attitude, communication, leadership, and speaking. Most recently, the National Speakers Association awarded him its highest honor, the Council of Peers Award of Excellence.

Born in Wisconsin, Alan received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin and his master’s and PhD degrees from the University of Minnesota. He taught for several years at Emporia State University, the University of St. Thomas, the University of Minnesota, and Mankato State University. He continues to teach as one of the “Distinguished Faculty Members” for the Institute of Management Studies.

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