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By
Bob Proctor



You Were Born Rich

Chapter 8 The Razor's Edge

By Bob Proctor

**You are only one inch ... one step
...
one idea ... away from turning
onto the boulevard of beauty
in your own life.**

It has often been said the line which separates winning from losing is as fine as a razor's edge—and it is. (I am talking about winning in a big way and in all areas of your life.)

W. Somerset Maugham wrote an entire book entitled *The Razor's Edge*, and Daryl

F. Zanuck spent four million dollars producing a movie which had the same title. Both of these great men—author and movie maker alike—knew there wasn't a big difference among people; there was only a big difference in the things they accomplished. (That was the theme of the movie as well as the book.)

One person “just about” starts a project, the other person starts it. One individual “almost” completes a task, the other does complete it. One person sees an opportunity, the other acts on it. One student “nearly” passes the exam, the other does pass it—and although the difference in their marks may be only one percentage point out of a hundred, it's that one point that makes all the difference.

The annals of sport's history are rich with dramatic illustrations of the Razor's Edge concept. For example, at the 1976 Olympic games in Montreal, Canada, there were eight finalists competing in the one-hundred meter dash, but the runner who won the Olympic gold medal was only one-tenth

of a second faster than the runner who finished in last place.

In 1947, ARMED —the first race horse in the history of United States' racing to win over one million dollars in prize money over the duration of his career—had earnings of \$761,500. But the horse which finished second in earnings that same year—a horse which often lost races a mile long by only “a nose”—won only \$75,000. Now, if one were to look at their winnings alone, it would appear that ARMED was thirteen times better than his closest competitor. However, when you compare “the times” that were actually registered by those two horses in their races, you discover he really wasn't even four percent superior!

Now, you may have grown up with the idea that some people have it and some people don't. Or, because some people are much better than others, they enjoy much more of the abundance of life. But I want you to understand, right here and now, this idea is absolutely false! For you are every bit as good, or as powerful, as anyone you

see, know, or even hear about. Remember, since the difference between them and you is only in the area of accomplishments, and since there is something you can do that will vastly improve the results you are achieving presently, you have the potential to become even more successful than they are. You may already know how to do what others are doing (if you don't, you can learn), and since your potential power is unlimited, you can do even greater things than they are now doing.

The “something” that you must do to become more successful may not be what you think it is. But whatever it may be, rest assured, you are quite capable of doing it. Always bear in mind, however, that because each person's world is just a little bit different, the something which you must do is not necessarily the same thing the person you live with or work with, must do. Nevertheless, there is no question that you will eventually find out what it is that you must do. So make up your mind—immediately—when you do figure out what that Razor's Edge is for you, you will do it.

Heinz Daues' Story

As I was writing this chapter, a very dear friend of mine—Heinz Daues—telephoned to thank me for an idea I had given him. But before I let you in on what that idea was, permit me to give you some background information. Heinz Daues works for a large insurance company in Toronto and every October his company holds a contest which is referred to as, “A President’s Month.” All of the salespeople in the company “gear” themselves up for this contest and they each perform at their peak level of productivity. Their reward, if they should win the contest, is both fame and fortune. (The company always recognizes its proven leaders.)

As he does every year, Heinz had an exceptional “President’s Month.” But, in keeping with his practice of previous years, he was planning to “relax a bit” in November, or at least to revert to what he considered to be “normal production.” As I was talking to him one afternoon, however, I noticed that his usual high degree of enthusiasm had levelled off considerably. I

knew something was amiss, so I asked him what was bothering him. He then explained he was experiencing a “big let down,” now that his “big month” had come to an end. In an attempt to raise Heinz’s spirits, I asked him the following question: “Heinz, what would you do with the extra commission you would earn, if you were to repeat your October performance in November?” (He actually earned three times his usual monthly income in October.)

Seeing the true meaning behind my question, Heinz’s face brightened considerably and a broad smile appeared across his face. Then I quickly added, “We both know you are quite “capable” of repeating your October performance in November; there is absolutely no question about that.” By this time Heinz had become thoroughly convinced, that not only was he capable of repeating his performance, but he definitely would repeat it. He said, with his customary confidence and vigor fully restored, “All right Bob, I’m going to do it.”

The Razor’s Edge—he did it—Heinz

Daues beat his own record of October in November! Think of the difference this will make in his annual income, not to mention his standing in the company. You just know he will duplicate or better his performance next November, following “President’s Month.”

The “something” for Heinz Daues turned out to be nothing more sophisticated, than deciding to do the same thing in November, which he had already done in October. Perhaps you are saying to yourself, “anyone could have figured that out,” and you’re right—they could have. But there are a few thousand people selling for the same company that Heinz sells for and I’ll bet you “dollars to donuts,” there weren’t five others who did!

Vince Lombardi, former football coach of the outstanding Green Bay Packers football team, described the Razor’s Edge concept in football very well when he said, “Most games are won or lost in the last two minutes of the first and second half.” But what Lombardi is best remembered for—

with respect to football's Razor's Edge—is the “Second Effort” concept, which he introduced for the edification of his players. In a nutshell, the “Second Effort” concept simply meant, that when a player was initially stopped by the opposing team, he would always surge forward a second time, with the added thrust of a “second effort.”

Now, just consider the tremendous difference you could create in your own life if you were to adopt a similar mental attitude. For example, if you are a person who is working in sales and currently selling only three units a week, what would the consequences be for you if you were to decide to make one additional sale per week, through a conscientious application of the second effort concept? Well, on a weekly basis, it might not appear to be a major breakthrough. However, viewed over the time frame of an entire career, it would actually amount to well over two thousand extra sales. Moreover, from a monetary standpoint, it would mean you would actually receive an extra ten years' income over the span of a forty-year career. Yes,

that one sale would be the Razor's Edge difference, which could catapult you into "the big leagues" in your chosen career.

Milt Campbell's Triumph

One individual who discovered the Razor's Edge difference for himself, in his own life, is Milton Campbell. You see, Milt went to the Olympic Games in 1952, to compete in the decathlon event. He performed with distinction, finishing in second place in the world and as a result, brought home an Olympic silver medal. However, Milt's ambition has always been to win the Olympic gold medal. Therefore, when he returned home, he gave it that old second effort and he started his training program all over again. For the next four years, Milt Campbell dedicated himself singlemindedly to a training schedule, which would culminate with his winning the Olympic gold medal for his country at the 1956 Olympic games.

In the aftermath of that spectacular achievement, I had the pleasure of speaking

with Milt on numerous occasions. He often confided to me that many of the athletes against whom he competed in high school were far superior to him at that time. But at some point, they had made the decision to abandon a sports career and the Razor's Edge difference for Milt was that he kept training. The result—the day they pinned the gold medal on Milt, he was recognized as the best athlete in the entire world!

One of the most powerful illustrations of the fine line which separates winning from losing was revealed in the filming of the movie, *The Razor's Edge*. The cast for the movie was comprised of eight "principal actors," and eight "stand-ins." (That is to say, each "principal" had a "stand-in" to do the hard, gruelling and tiresome work for him, while the stars did "the rest!") After the film had been completed, *Life Magazine* published a story in which the pictures of the eight "principals" were exhibited on one page, and the eight "stand-ins" were shown on the opposite page.

The stand-in for "the star" of the film,

Tyrone Power, was a man by the name of Thomas Noonan. Noonan was a close associate of Power's and they had even attended the same high school at the same time. Both men were about the same size, they were equal in intelligence, they dressed almost identically, and they resembled one another very closely, even in their physical appearance. In point of fact, as close a resemblance as was humanly possible existed between each "principal actor" and his or her "stand-in." But in one way—and one way only—the "principal actors" and their "stand-ins" were completely dissimilar. For the combined salaries received by the eight "principals" for the picture amounted to, what was at that time, a staggering \$489,000. The combined salaries for the eight "stand-ins," on the other hand, amounted to a paltry \$6,534. The "principals" may only have been slightly more talented than their "understudies" were, but the monetary compensation which they received was seventy-five times greater!

As your awareness becomes increasingly

great with respect to “The Razor’s Edge” concept, you will be astounded by the number of such examples you encounter every day. As a case in point, just consider how much kindlier you feel towards a particular retail store, where the cashier smiles and “thanks you for your business,” and then asks you to come back “real soon”, as compared to one where you are greeted with a stern, “Well, are you going to buy anything or not,” attitude.

Or consider this illustration—approximately one year ago, a family attended one of my seminars in Toronto. They were a truly beautiful family, but they had a serious problem and they asked me if I could help them solve it. They informed me, to begin with, that they were the owners of an automobile repair shop. But they also explained their business had gone sour, so “sour,” in fact, they were seriously contemplating “closing their doors,” and going to work for someone else.

In an attempt to assist them, I visited them on the premises of their shop and I

asked them a series of related questions. Then, I “sat back” and listened very carefully to the answers which they provided me with. It wasn't long before I ascertained, that whenever I asked a question having to do with their ability as mechanics, they answered with great enthusiasm and literally overflowing with confidence. In fact, they soon had me convinced not only were they very skillful mechanics, but they were exceptionally hard workers as well.

On the other hand, however, I also discerned, that whenever I asked them a question which touched upon the public relation's side of their business, they exhibited absolutely no enthusiasm, whatsoever. In fact, an aura of pessimism and despondency actually came over them. It was fairly obvious to me, therefore, the only problem which this family really had was dealing with their own mental attitudes.

Once I had identified the exact nature of the problem, I was able to suggest corrective action. I told them they must begin to “visualize their shop full of cars which

needed to be repaired.” I suggested, moreover, that every time they visualized themselves doing work on a car, they also visualize themselves vacuuming the inside of the car, washing the outside, and making sure the windows were spotless. I pointed out to them, that because most people don’t really understand very much about the mechanical aspects of a car, the only thing which they would notice, was “how it looked,” and since almost everyone feels better driving a car that looks good, these little extra touches would soon start paying great dividends for them.

Approximately two weeks later, I received a phone call from one of the family members. She told me that none of them quite understood how “something so basic,” could make such a tremendous difference. But nevertheless, they had become so busy in the next two weeks since I had visited them, their only problem now was completing all of the work which they had attracted to themselves. The Razor’s Edge difference that changed their business from a loser into a winner, turned out to be

nothing more dramatic than a hospitable attitude and a few additional touches on each and every automobile. Was it worth it? Just ask the Jacob's family of Toronto, Canada!

Most educators will admit—with some coaxing—that the average individual reads at only about a grade six or seven level. The reason for this is we are taught to read by the time we reach grade six or seven, and then we never bother to improve our reading skills beyond that point. You should realize, moreover, that what is true about “reading,” is also true of most other skills which we acquire in life. Once people have become proficient in the basics in any particular field, they usually choose to stop learning, and of course, from that point forward they cease to improve. Since this is true of most people, it follows that it is only the small minority of people in any given field who will go on to become the acknowledged experts in their chosen vocation. Therefore, they are the people who can demand and who will receive the lion's share of the income in their field. (Just reflect upon the vast difference in the incomes of the actors

in the movie *The Razor's Edge*.)

Taking this information into account, consider the job you are doing presently and ask yourself the following questions: “How good am I at doing it?,” and “How much better could I be?” Realize, that if you would study your chosen field for one hour per day, in five years time you would have studied for 45 forty-hour weeks, which amounts to almost a full year of study. Moreover, since you would only be studying for one hour at any given time, you would be able to give the material your undivided attention. Therefore, it would actually be the equivalent of “a full year” of concentrated study. This means that by the end of the first year, you would already have put in nine forty-hour weeks of invaluable study time. Although this amounts to only one hour of study per day, if you were to follow this schedule rigorously, in a relatively short span of time you would stand among your peers like a giraffe in a herd of field mice.

In fact, when you really think about it, you will soon understand there isn't any

competition at all, because there are so few people in the race, that even the losers are winners. Therefore, you need not do a tremendous amount of studying to gain the understanding you require, because again, the difference between knowledge and ignorance, may be as fine as “the Razor’s Edge.”

Let’s get down to specifics again—as I have explained to audiences on numerous occasions, I do a great deal of studying by listening to educational tapes while I am driving my car. I’d like to suggest that you turn your radio off and your tape-recorder on when you get into your car, as it could make as big a difference for you, as it has for me. You should be aware that those people who drive twenty-five thousand miles per year spend thirteen forty-hour weeks sitting behind the wheel of their car. Therefore, they are in an excellent position to have a wealth of invaluable information deposited in their subconscious minds, while they are, otherwise, engaged in the routine activity of driving. Remember, it is virtually impossible to keep exposing your mind to

great ideas without having those ideas expressed in your physical world. Moreover, it is probably only one idea you need to make the difference in your life.

Consider this illustration—by merely moving an index finger a fraction of an inch, a person can transform a cold piece of metal into a deadly weapon. Or, by simply shouting the word “Fire,” a person can turn a room full of happy people into a screaming, panic-stricken mob. Obviously, these are both very negative examples. Nevertheless, they do graphically illustrate the important truth, that “the Razor’s Edge can cut both ways.” In other words, since the law of opposites is at work in every aspect of life, it follows, that if you are not consciously striving to move across that fine line to improve the quality of your life, you could be inadvertently moving in such a way, that your particular position in life is actually starting to backslide.

Let me elaborate. A couple of weeks ago, I was doing a talk show on the radio. A lady phoned in and she was in a fairly negative

frame of mind because the reality of her life, as she perceived it, was far different from what she had dreamed it would be when she was still a student in university. Apparently, at that time, she had dreamed of having an exciting career as a famous author. However, she felt her plans had been ruined because she married shortly after graduation and now had two young children to contend with. The children, she explained, were still quite young and they were, as she described it, “under my feet, most of the day.” She said that due to this circumstance of life, she was unable to go away by herself to write and this made her feel very resentful towards her family and towards life in general.

I suggested to her, however, it was not necessary to “go away” to write her book, even though it is quite true some writers do go off to some south sea island, just to write. But I assured her, these individuals were in the minority, and there are, in fact, very few authors who devote all their time to writing (or who even earn a major portion of their income, while engaged in this activity). Therefore, I continued, there was absolutely

nothing preventing her from writing at least one page per day—and if she followed this schedule religiously, in a year’s time she would have completed a good-sized book (365 pages), or possibly two or three smaller ones. Yes, just getting out of bed one hour earlier in the morning could be the Razor’s Edge difference which would permit her to realize her dream. Moreover, she would have the additional benefit of having her family near her to provide “moral support.”

First Artificial Heart

As I am writing this particular chapter, the media is literally inundating us with stories about the “first artificial heart,” ever to have been placed in the chest of a human patient. The *Toronto Daily Star*, for example, printed one story a few days ago, in which it quoted the chief surgeon for the operation, Dr. William DeVries. According to the newspaper, he said that his credo, with respect to surgery, had always been—“Rehearse ... rehearse ... and then rehearse some more! For if you ‘stick to’ this principle,” he continued, “when it comes

time to perform the actual operation, the procedure will have become almost routine for you.”

Dr. DeVries is an exemplary case of an individual who gave that little bit extra. For he took the time and effort to rehearse the operation on the screen of his own mind, before he actually performed it in the hospital operating room. (Incidentally, that Razor’s Edge difference has enabled Dr. DeVries to become a world renowned surgeon, who is destined to be “written up” in the annals of medical history, not to mention the fact that it enabled him to prolong the life of one Dr. Barney Clark!)

Another excellent illustration of “going that extra mile” by trying one more time, is offered in the same historic event. For Dr. Robert Jarvik—only 36 years of age—and the man who designed the world’s first artificial heart, is another prime Razor’s Edge candidate. For you see, Dr. Jarvik is also a man who was rejected, at least three times, by every medical school in the entire United States of America. In fact, he was

even advised by one teacher, whose course he was failing, to apply to dental school.

But Robert Jarvik was a man with a vision, and he would not be denied it. He intuitively grasped that he was the master of his fate, and he must have innately understood the Razor's Edge concept—for he would not accept defeat. As a result of his remarkable perseverance, he was finally accepted into the University of Utah School of Medicine, Salt Lake City, in 1972. A mere decade later, young Robert Jarvik achieved a medical breakthrough, the likes of which had never been seen before.

Speaking of her husband, Dr. Jarvik's wife Elaine said, "He has qualities which are very difficult to measure—he is creative, and that is something you cannot measure with a test." Clearly, young Robert Jarvik entered the fierce competition for a place in medical school, with none of the conventional assets—superior grades, a prestigious academic degree, and a high score on the medical entrance exam. Nevertheless, he did possess those all

important intangibles: namely, perseverance and a consuming passion to be successful.

Now, I am in no way suggesting that all of us will one day make medical history. Still, we might resemble Dr. Jarvik, in the sense that our particular talents and aptitudes, like his, may not translate well onto standardized tests of ability. Therefore, like Robert Jarvik, it may be necessary for us to bring our particular talents to bear, through tenacity, perseverance, and courage; and just “one more bite at the apple,” may be all that is required for us to succeed.

Napoleon Hill devoted an entire chapter in his classic book, *Think and Grow Rich*, to the subject of “persistence.” He said, “There may be no heroic connotation to the word persistence, but the quality is to the character of man, what carbon is to steel.”

In another part of that same chapter, he wrote, “I had the happy privilege of analyzing both Mr. Thomas Edison and Mr. Henry Ford, year by year, over a long period of years, and therefore the opportunity to

study them at close range. Therefore, I speak with actual knowledge when I say that I found no quality, save Persistence, in either of them, that even remotely suggested the major source of their stupendous achievements.”

Surely you would have to agree there was a tremendous difference in the accomplishments of these two men, as compared with the accomplishments of most other people. Yet by their own admission, neither of these men were intellectually superior—in fact, in terms of their I.Q.—they may actually have been inferior to many other people. Nevertheless, because both men possessed the vital quality of “persistence,” their results in life were invariably superior to those of the masses.

Therefore, perhaps the factor which will catapult you into the “big leagues,” which will multiply your income from a material, as well as a psychic point of view, will be your own ability to persist. So the next time you step out to do something, and “the going gets tough,” just remember that the Razor’s

Edge difference for you could well be your own ability to persevere. Just try one more time—with enthusiasm—and you could watch your accomplishments go from the very ordinary, to the very extraordinary!

Let me share a brief anecdote from my own experience. To complete this book, I am forming a new habit. Each morning I get up before everyone else at home, shower quickly and pour myself a cup of coffee (which I drink on my way to the office). I arrive at the office before seven a.m. and then I start writing. Since it is absolutely quiet at this hour in the morning—no telephones ringing, no interruption—I am able to write without any distractions and I really enjoy it. By the time the other people arrive to begin work, I have several pages already written, so I am then free to get busy with the other work which I have scheduled for the day.

Simulation

Now try to relate this story to your own situation, for just a moment. For example,

if you are employed in a “sales” capacity, consider the dynamic sales presentation which you could be delivering in a month or two, if you did a similar thing each morning. In other words, if, instead of writing as I do, try to simulate a sales presentation with an imaginary prospect, or possibly with one of your associates. (I used the word simulate rather than role play, because the latter usually turns out to be exactly what the word suggests—play, and the exercise often turns into a game. The word simulate, on the other hand, came into popular parlance when we learned how astronauts prepared for their space missions. When they were simulating, they were actually pre-living the in-space experience, as if it were already happening.) Therefore, I would suggest that if you practised your sales presentation in a similar manner, every morning—for one or two hours—you would witness an incredible improvement in your performance, in a relatively short span of time. With a year or two of diligent effort under your belt, you would become so proficient, you would rarely miss a sale. So remember, “If the need is there, and the

means are there and you still haven’t made the sale, it is probably because you are not good enough, yet!”

A guaranteed way to become “good enough,” is to do what Dr. DeVries prescribed: namely, “Rehearse, rehearse, and then rehearse some more.” For in this manner, you will attain the stature of a true professional, and of course, you will receive the compensation a true professional deserves. And, although I am only suggesting you set aside one hour per day for preparation, like the actors in Zanuck’s movie, you will probably be rewarded many times over.

Consider the following account. Several years ago, I was travelling through the southeastern United States with Rudy Michaud, the Senior Vice-President of one of the world’s largest insurance companies. Rudy had some papers out that he was working on, as we were flying from one city to the next, and I was also busy working on a project. Suddenly Rudy turned to me and showed me some figures he had written on

a sheet of paper. He then pointed out to me: there were actually individual salespeople, in his company, who were earning more money themselves, than the combined incomes of the thirty or forty people who constitute “a district sales operation.”

Do you think these individuals were really thirty or forty times better than their colleagues?— of course not! For like the race horse ARMED, they were probably only three or four percent more effective. But in terms of annual income, there was absolutely no comparison. What made the difference for them? Perhaps they planned their day, while others didn't; or maybe they practised for that one hour, while the others did not. Nevertheless, whatever it was that they did, you can be sure the difference was as fine as a Razor's Edge!

Now stop reading, sit back, relax, and think, really think—what is it in your life that will make the Razor's Edge difference for you? You know what it is?

Good—then do it now!