

Between Your Ears (Part III)

Using baseball as a metaphor, some guys were lucky enough to be born into this life standing on third base. I'm not one of them. Any success I've been blessed with in life I've had to earn with singles, occasional doubles, and frequent errors. Although I love my parents dearly, I've struggled for years to unlearn many of the early lessons they taught me about money, and then learn new ones that fit my personal goals.

Learning new lessons about money can be a complicated process since many of us were taught as children to obey and respect our parents. As a result, we might confuse respecting our parents with believing every lesson they taught us. So, sometimes the starting point in changing these learned patterns about money is acknowledging that just because we want to change the money lessons we learned from our parents, or just because we don't want to live our financial lives the way our parents did, that doesn't mean we don't love them or respect them, or that we love or respect them any less.

I now know that, contrary to what I was taught, lots of wealthy people *are* honest, happy people. And although I know that money doesn't grow on trees, I also know that the underlying message behind that saying is very restrictive and subjective.

What lessons did you learn about money while growing up? "Rich people can't be honest." "Rich people aren't happy." "It's better to give than to receive." "Money's not important." All of us grew up hearing platitudes about money. But, have you ever stopped to consider how these seemingly harmless sayings affect the way we are with money now?

There's an exercise I used to conduct at the beginning of a seminar where I would ask the attendees to write down on a piece of paper all the

restrictive beliefs they had about themselves and their businesses. What lessons did they learn from their parents, friends, or just life in general that they felt had a restrictive effect on them? Did they believe, “You have to *have* money to *make* money”? Or, “I wasn’t a good student in school, so how can I be successful in business?” I wanted them to question the sources and validity of those beliefs. Then, after they’d written it all down, I had them wad up the paper into a ball and throw it into a trash can that I passed around. I believed by removing these psychological barriers, these old ways of thinking, they’d feel freer to accept new ideas and grow throughout the program.

So, what are your restrictive beliefs? What comments do you find yourself making, or agreeing with when someone else makes them, about money? Where did you learn them? And are these beliefs valid?

If the profits in your company aren’t where you want them, and if you’re not earning the income you say you want, look no further than your closest mirror. The solution to your dilemma doesn’t reside with your employees, customers, competitors, products, or markets. It resides between your ears. And the good news is...you’re the one who can change that.