

Preface:

In 2008, I started a radio program called American Dreams. It airs weekly on an AM radio station throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. We also video our interviews and put them on YouTube.

The subject matter of the American Dreams show is just that, living the American dream. I've interviewed hundreds of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, CEOs, celebrities, artists, and other notable figures. We talked about how they got to where they are, the path they took in life, and what they really found to be important on their journey.

Hearing each of my guests' success stories and learning their wisdom and philosophies fascinated me and was the highlight of my week.

One interview stood out as being particularly memorable to me not because of the interview content (though the stories told were very fascinating), but what happened after the interview concluded.

In 2017, I had a guest by the name of Gary Rogers on my show. Gary had a very successful journey through life and excelled in many ventures, most notably, Dreyer's Ice Cream.

In 1977, after coming off a failed restaurant venture, Gary arranged a meeting with the then CEO of Dreyer's Ice Cream, Ken Cook to ask if they had a franchise program for ice cream dip shops. As Gary was entering the office, Ken was getting off of a frustrating phone call.

Seeing Ken get teary eyed from his phone call, Gary offered to excuse himself and reschedule the meeting. Ken told him that they could proceed and asked him to take a seat.

With tears in his eyes, Cook explained that the call he was just on was from his bank. He went on to say that they had turned him down for a loan he desperately needed to keep the company afloat.

The next seven words that came out of Gary's mouth changed his life forever.

“Have you ever considered selling the company?”

Two days later, Rogers was sent an option to buy the company for one million dollars.

At the time, Dreyer's was a small regional ice cream company servicing ice cream shops and grocery stores in northern California.

Gary set out and found investors that were willing to lend him money and bought Dryers for the full million dollars.

Over the next two decades, Gary built Dreyer's into the national ice cream brand we all know today and eventually sold the company to Nestle for \$3.2 billion.

His exit from Dreyer's was only the beginning of his story. He went on to serve as the chairman of Levi Strauss, the chairman of the San Francisco Federal Reserve, and the chairman of Safeway.

We continued throughout the interview to talk about all of Gary's successes and accomplishments in life.

At the conclusion of the interview, he left with some powerful advice.

“You only get one trip around this track of life. There are no mulligans. Let's make it as good as it can be.”

It was a good interview, and I enjoyed the time I spent with Gary.

A week later, the day that we were going to air the interview on the radio I got an email informing me that Gary had died. He passed away at his home doing what he loved, playing tennis.

The sudden unexpected death of Gary allowed me to reflect on how precious life is and how quickly and unexpectedly it can be taken away.

Going back and listening to the interview, it became clear to me that Gary was fulfilled in life; he had done what he set out to do. He lived every day to its fullest.

In our interview, he had told me that he was one of very few people at the time to have visited both the north and south poles. He told me that he had traveled to over 260 cities outside the United States throughout his life. He loved life, and he loved living.

Before the interview ended, he said his last words to us.

“Enjoy the journey, go for the gusto!”

I know that our interview that day was meant to be. He shared what he needed to share. Little did he know that it would be his last public declaration.

This book is meant to instruct and inspire you personally on how to build a life and chart a path that will give you fulfillment.

Each of us will travel down different paths through life. No two people will have the same mortal experience. It is up to us personally to chart our path and carve out our future.

Live your life to the fullest.

Ask yourself, what do you enjoy doing? Why aren't you doing it? How can you get to a point that allows you to do what you love every day?

For me, I love change. I love implementing new technology in order to do things more efficiently. I love people and building relationships. I love travel and adventure, whether it is exploring the ruins of Pompeii in Italy, fishing in Kamchatka, Russia, or snowmobiling in the Rocky Mountains. I enjoy everything from cheering at professional basketball games to playing with my grandkids.

My hope is that each of you will come away from reading this book with a plan in place on how you can live the life you would like to be living. That you may build a roadmap and chart your path.