

BE THE CEO OF YOUR OWN LIFE

by Will Marré

We live in a time of astonishing turmoil. The world's economy is confusing, and no one is sure what will happen next. But when you take control of your own future and help others do the same, you can live an extraordinary life.

Start by thinking of yourself as self-employed, even if your paycheck is signed by someone else. The only job security we really have is the security of our own ability, vision and will. What makes us valued economically is who we are, our *character*, and what we know, our *competence*. Once we understand that, we can begin to operate as the CEOs of our lives. With the right decisions, My Life Inc. will thrive regardless of the external circumstances.

To be the effective CEO of your life, it is essential to make a Promise, which is your life vision. It's not the vision of what you want to get out of life, but rather the vision of what you're willing to put into it.

MAKING YOUR PROMISE COUNT

People who wish to lead fulfilling lives make a Promise with three dimensions. The first is a public Promise, which involves a commitment to making the future better for the people you impact. When we commit ourselves to creating a world of more opportunity and less stress, people sit up and pay attention. This is how we create unique value.

Keeping our public Promise is the source of our integrity and power at home, at work and in our community. When we take the time to clarify and embrace what we stand for, we will find ways to persuade and inspire others to lift their gaze and see new possibilities. If we're unwilling to make such a Promise, we gradually become irrelevant.

The second dimension of your Promise is making a private commitment to do what's necessary to make your difference. To maximize the value of My Life Inc., you

*By embracing your unique character and competence,
you'll thrive regardless of external circumstances.*

must become an extreme expert on what drives your public Promise. Your extreme expertise will put you in the top 10% of your field, and such individuals are generally immune to economic cycles. For example, if you're a banker with extreme expertise in helping people become financially autonomous, you'll always be in high demand.

To become an extreme expert at anything, you must:

1. Read, attend seminars and keep up through trade-specific Web sites.
2. Recruit excellent mentors and mine their knowledge.
3. Practice, practice, and practice — and get constant, candid feedback on your progress.

When I began public speaking 25 years ago, I stunk. My first paying client demanded a refund. But my failure motivated me. I spoke for free whenever I could. I got a speaking coach. Now public speaking is an effortless joy, but it was a climb. If you

are willing to out-practice and outlearn others, you, too, will excel.

SEEK MEANING AND FULFILLMENT

The final dimension of your Promise is committing yourself to live your life in a meaningful, fulfilling way every day. It's about promising to nurture enduring relationships and follow your healthy passions. It's about focusing on things in your life that add value, and eliminating the filler. Achieve a healthy rhythm of living that integrates work, love and play into your daily life.

All of this requires committing to a promise to enjoy life as you are living it, showing up for every moment. You know your life has become an endless, breathless sprint when your mind is constantly preoccupied. When you're pretending to listen to your spouse but actually having a second internal conversation, you are in attention deficit.

There is no such thing as true multi-tasking, it's more accurately described as "ping-pong focus," which is an exhausting game to play that is never satisfying to the players.

But when your life is in rhythm, you will be naturally present for those whom you love. You will savor beauty, taste your food, and laugh easily. Being present also makes you wiser. You will have new options, more energy and greater alertness in meetings of every kind. None of this is unrealistic. In fact, it's the most realistic way to live. It all happens when what really matters in life matters most to you.

Your Promise is a sacred commitment. It is more than a wish or dream. Rather, it is a clear-eyed commitment to make your difference. By becoming an expert at giving your unique gift and living your unique life, your fears will evaporate. And the value of My Life Inc. will always be rising.



Will Marré is an acclaimed speaker and co-founder and former president of the Covey Leadership Center, where he translated the concepts of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People into leadership courses taught to millions of executives worldwide. He is currently CEO of the ReaLeadership Alliance, which helps organizations identify, adopt and communicate socially strategic business models for optimizing differentiation and value.

Marré recently received an Emmy Award® for his writing of the documentary, Reclaiming Your American Dream, aired on public television stations across the country. He is currently launching CitizenOne, an educational campaign designed to teach social entrepreneurship to high school and college students.

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