

Got a Dream? Here's How to Make It Happen

By Keith Ferrazzi

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A few years ago, I was in New York City to advise two large banks on the secret to success in business. On the way in from the airport, I struck up a conversation with my taxi driver.

Tony was from India. He had studied to be a marine biologist but could not get a decent job in that field here. He was doing okay driving a cab, he said, "but in coming all this way, I had hoped to do better than just get by."

The more we talked, the more I realized that the counseling I provide to corporate executives also applies to average people like Tony. Like too many of us, Tony thought that being self-reliant meant never asking for help. But we need to nurture relationships in order to achieve our goals.

Tony liked to chat with his customers, yet he didn't want to bother them. I urged him to give it a try.

And he did. Not only did his customers ask that he take them to the airport at the end of their trip, they recommended him to their friends. Soon he had a long list of regulars and was able to buy his own Town Car, then a second. He had to hire a friend to help with the overflow.

Each of us contains seeds of greatness, which can be expressed in myriad ways, from starting a business to giving back to our community to raising the next generation of leaders. Life is all about finding that seed and nurturing it to its full growth. I know it's possible, because I'm living proof.

I am the son of a steelworker and a cleaning woman. My dad would come home, his hands scraped and dirty, and say, "I don't want this for you, Keith. You need a great education."

Although my father didn't know the CEO of his company, he wasn't afraid to introduce himself and ask for his advice. The CEO liked my dad's moxie and used his influence to get me a scholarship at one of the best private schools in the country. I went on to Yale University and Harvard Business School. Soon I was the youngest chief marketing officer in the Fortune 500.

I learned at a young age that the secret to success lies in the power of relationships. Consider the people who've helped you along the way as coaches. Corporate execs, celebrities and athletic aces routinely hire "life coaches" to help them reach their goals or solve their problems.

But you don't need to hire a life coach. You can become your own. It won't cost you a penny, and it's easier than you think