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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

ACHIEVE YOUR *Dreams...* REALLY

Flying over the treetops of a lush rainforest, embarking on a road trip with a classmate from the second grade, and not being able to run with your fully functional legs are experiences that can (usually) only be encountered when you dream. Upon awakening, you rarely remember the dream in its entirety, and when you start explaining it to someone, it likely seems impractical, silly, or completely nonsensical. But what if you could remember every moment of your dreams—and control them at the same time? Well, with lucid dreaming, you can tell your friends how you flew over the Amazon with ease.

Lucid dreaming occurs when you're mid-dream and you realize you're dreaming, which can help you to control where you go, who you're with, and what you do—the options are limitless! As with many new skills, lucid dreaming takes practice, time, and work (not to mention, a whole lot of shut-eye).

The best time to have a lucid dream is when you're in the throes of REM, which occurs just before you wake up. It helps to set your alarm two hours before your normal wake-up time, or several times throughout the night—as interrupted dreams are the easiest to recall. Reality checks done throughout the day, like looking in a mirror, flipping a light switch, or pinching yourself (pinch me, I'm dreaming!) can help stabilize your dreams. Before you know it, you'll be doing these checks in your unconscious state—and experiencing some pretty unrealistic results; your mirror image will be distorted, the light switch won't work, and your finger will go right through you.

Are you ready to experience wakefulness in your dreams? Throughout the day, start asking yourself, "Am I dreaming?" If you repeat this often enough, you'll eventually start saying it in your dreams—promoting lucid dreaming. Most importantly, keep a dream journal to record your dreams in as much detail as possible. Keep at it, and eventually, you will not only remember your dreams, you'll control them!

AS SEEN IN » FAST COMPANY, NBC, FOX, CBS, abc

REAL ESTATE INSIDER
POWERFUL REAL ESTATE TIPS & STRATEGIES YOU CAN USE
March 2015

PLAN, PREPARE, PERFORM

"It is better to look ahead and prepare, than to look back and regret." - Jackie Joyner-Kersee
"If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend six hours sharpening my ax." - Abraham Lincoln

I recently returned from my annual winter getaway to South America, where I soak up the summer sun of the Southern Hemisphere and map out my plans for the coming year.

Like planning, preparation is a key driver of success. When you plan your day beforehand, you know what you need to do. Preparation, which is the next step, gets you ready to actually do the work. In general, the more you prepare the better you will perform.

Preparation normally requires more time, hard work and sacrifice than planning. The most successful professionals prepare before they perform—athletes, teachers, and trial lawyers to name a few. As a long-time musician myself, I've spent countless hours practicing and preparing before concerts and gigs. Preparation can and should extend to as many parts of your life as possible.

One of the amazing things about preparation is that it makes you more aware of potential opportunities—this is critical for us as real estate investors. As the Roman philosopher Seneca put it, "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity."

For real estate investors like you and me, more preparation normally translates into better results and higher profits. For example, in order to make a smart purchase offer, we have to do research and due diligence on the subject property. If we're dealing directly with a property seller, our preparation must include tactfully asking probing questions to understand the seller's individual circumstances, so we can craft a win-win transaction that satisfies her requirements as well as ours. Without that preparation, we're flying blind and are more prone to making costly mistakes.

I hope you'll join me when I reveal my most profitable real estate negotiation strategies at my **3-day real estate investing workshop, April 17th–19th at the Empire Meadowlands Hotel, located at 2 Harmon Plaza in Secaucus, NJ.**

So after you plan, how should you prepare?

The first thing you'll need is clarity—be crystal clear about what you are preparing for and what you are trying to accomplish. Focus during your preparation. Break bigger tasks down into smaller pieces and zero in on what you'll need to do to accomplish each sub-task. Work on these sub-tasks until you feel good about where you are—this progress will increase your personal confidence, which is key to performing at your best.

Although you should always do your best to move forward and avoid procrastination, preparation isn't all about seeing how fast you can complete a task so you can move on to another one. It's more important to focus on doing things well. This may mean going over one particular area many times in an effort to get it "right." That's okay, this is precisely what prep time is for—smoothing out the rough edges.

Keep in mind that preparation doesn't guarantee success, it just vastly improves your odds of being successful. During "the moment of truth," even if you've prepared, you may still be faced with a situation you hadn't anticipated. That's okay—do the best you can given what you know and how you've prepared. When you finish, look at your results and then go back and update your preparation routine. Incremental progress literally moves mountains—if you don't believe me, take a look at the Grand Canyon!

Your moment is now! Plan, prepare, and then perform—put it all out there. No regrets. This is your life and your time to be great. Good luck. Onward and upward!

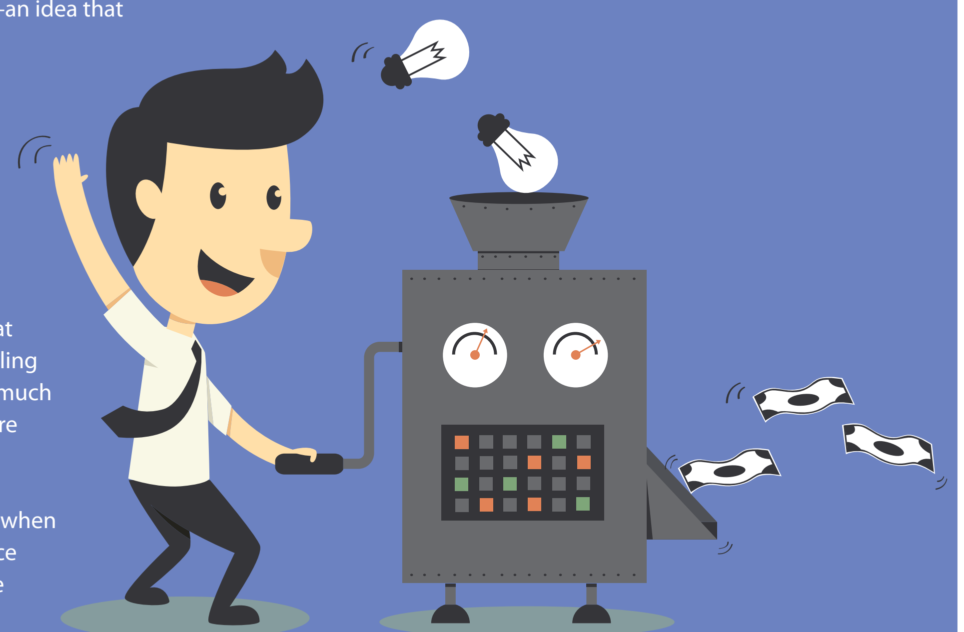
Gerald Lucas

GERALD LUCAS
Real Estate Expert & Best-Selling Author

BILLION DOLLAR IDEA

While it's easy to believe that all entrepreneurs are young, cocky guys who get the ideas for their billion-dollar enterprises in between frat parties and studying for their next math test, the truth is that you are never too old to start fresh with a new idea—an idea that could be the next "big one."

There are several examples of those who made it big late in life. After all, before Ray Kroc, founder of McDonald's, became owner of the world's largest fast food chain, he sold paper cups and milkshake mixers until he was 52. Mary Kay Ash, founder of Mary Kay (and worth an estimated $320 million), sold books and home goods door-to-door until the ripe age of 45. And can you even believe that J.K. Rowling, once worth $1 billion due to her bestselling books and films (now less than that because of how much she's donated to charity), was a single mom on welfare before the books took off?



The truth is, inspiration can strike at any time—even when you're long past being a spring chicken. The difference between those who've made their millions and those who go on to the retirement they've always planned is that some are brave enough to believe in their own ideas. Why don't you?

ASK GERALD
a Real Estate Question

Q: *How much of a down payment should you pay when you buy a property?*

—Heather, Babylon, NY

A: Heather, there are lots of people who say that when you buy a property you should put down as much of a down payment as possible—some people say 20%, 25%, even 50%. This is an example of "conventional wisdom" that I simply don't agree with. I understand why personal finance gurus like Suze Orman, for example, give that advice—it's because on average, your monthly mortgage payment will be lower if you pay a bigger down payment when you buy a property. That's very logical and makes sense. Unfortunately, everyone, particularly first-time home buyers, don't have a 20% down payment laying around to put down on a property, particularly in higher priced real estate markets. Another thing to consider is that money you pay a lender for a down payment is money that you generally can't get back if things don't work out or you fall on bad financial times. For this reason, and I know this is a little controversial, my suggestion is that you pay as small a down payment as possible when you buy a property, so long as you can comfortably afford the monthly payments—that last caveat is critical! If you cannot comfortably afford the fixed monthly payments, then do NOT buy the property. That said, I don't think it's a good idea to waste money unnecessarily on a down payment if you don't have to. Thanks again for your question, Heather—good luck. For more real estate tips and information, check out my blog at **geraldlucas.com.**

Money Myths - Busted!

Eating chocolate will give you acne. Cracking your knuckles will give you arthritis. It takes seven years to digest swallowed chewing gum. Eating ice cream before bed results in nightmares.

Actually, none of those things are true. They're old wives' tales—myths that have been passed from generation to generation, but hold no validity. Most of them are easy to spot (no, your face won't actually stick that way), but some aren't so obvious. Especially when it comes to money myths. So, here's three common money myths it's high time we busted:

1. Your Money is Safest in the Bank

True, in the sense that it isn't going anywhere. But if the majority of your cash is sitting in a savings account, you could actually be losing money due to today's low interest rates. The comfort of seeing a stable balance is nothing compared to the cost of inflation. Your money is better off being stored in a savings bond, your 401(k), or money market account—do your research or talk with a financial advisor to determine which route is best for you.

2. Carrying a Balance Will Improve Your Credit Score

False. Carrying a balance won't raise your credit score or save you any money— and paying interest only benefits the credit card company (not your bank account). Credit bureaus don't like to see a high debt-to-income ratio—in other words, if you're consistently carrying a balance that you can't pay off, you'd best be keeping that balance as low as possible. Despite popular belief, it's perfectly acceptable to have a zero balance on your card each month—as long as you're regularly using the card and paying it off. This shows that you're using your credit card responsibly, and your credit score will soar.

3. Pay Off Past Debts Before Saving for Retirement

True, I mean, false, I mean... it depends. In the end, it ultimately depends on how much debt and what kind. A lot of people assume they should pay off their student loans (or that credit card debt they accumulated in their 20s) before contributing to their 401(k) plan—but if your company offers a 401(k) contribution match, you're essentially passing up free money. The solution? Do both. Save for retirement and pay off your debts simultaneously—even if it means it will take longer to do.

Real Estate Insights

1. Eviction history is more important than personal credit score in determining whether a prospective tenant will pay their rent on time.

2. The break-even point for month's supply of housing inventory is about 6 months—if housing inventory is higher than 6 months, prices normally fall; when housing inventory is lower than 6 months, property prices normally increase.

3. In 2014, first-timers made up about 33 percent of home buyers—the lowest share in nearly three decades, and well below the historic average of about 40 percent. This is due in large measure to high student loan debt.

4. Homes that spend more time on the market usually sell for less money.

Real Estate Tips

1 *Never use a seller's asking price as a gauge of market value for a property. A property owner may request any price for his property—and it may or may not be anywhere near market value. The current market value of a residential property is based primarily on what a similar property has sold for in the last 6 months.*

2 *Get a thorough home inspection before you buy real estate and get one before you pay for an appraisal, just in case the inspection reveals something so major you decide against buying the property.*

3 *Shop for a mortgage before you shop for a home. By applying for and getting pre-approved for a home loan, you'll figure out the price range of homes you can afford to buy.*

4 *Get a great loan when you buy so you don't NEED to refinance; if rates improve and refinancing makes sense, aim to do so only once—serial refinancing can be expensive, wasteful, & financially destructive.*