

Editorial Note

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Sometimes people ask me, “What motivates you?” or “How can you do so much?” or “Don’t you ever sleep?” These questions require three separate answers.

What motivates me is an inner compulsion to always be busy doing something productive. I think it goes back to my Catholic school days. The nuns made us feel that if we weren’t always busy doing something productive, we were wasting our life. As a result, I didn’t want to waste a minute.

Actually, though, I waste a lot of time, in the sense that I don’t have anything productive to show for much of the time I am awake. I read a lot, but not always the things I should be reading. As an undergraduate student, I would go to the library between or after classes and try to finish as much of my homework as I could, but I would sit at a table next to a stack of books, glance at the book shelf and notice an interesting title. Rather than do my homework, I would take a book off the shelf and start reading. My homework got neglected on a regular basis. I was never a top student. I studied the things I needed to study just enough to get by with passing grades. I spent the rest of my intellectual time reading things that interested me.

The university where I earned my first degree had a curriculum that required everyone to take many courses in the social sciences and humanities even if we were business majors. Because of that wide exposure to a number of disciplines, I became interested in many things. My main interest at that time was economics, which was my major area of concentration, but I also managed to earn minor concentrations in history, philosophy and political science. Being a Catholic college, we also had to take courses in theology. I also tried to fit in as many business courses as I could so I would be able to get a job.

After graduation I entered the business world, but I continued to be curious about many things, so I continued my education on a part-time basis, earning a total of 23 academic degrees, of which 13 are doctorates in various fields such as accounting, taxation, history, several subfields of economics, philosophy, political science, finance, public finance, and ethics. I also earned both a JD and PhD in law. After my thirteenth doctorate, I did a cost-benefit analysis and decided it was time to drop out of school. Although I continue to read, it is now purely for pleasure, not to earn another degree.

One reason why I have been able to do so much is because of the belief that I am wasting my life if I don't keep busy, but also, and perhaps more importantly, I tend to do things that interest me, which makes just about everything I do seem like fun instead of work. There are days when everything I do is fun. I guess I am a success, based on Bob Dylan's definition.

“A man is a success if he gets up in the morning and gets to bed at night, and in between he does what he wants to do.” – Bob Dylan

It's always easier being productive if you like what you're doing. In recent years my interests have shifted. Although I continue to write [59 nonfiction books, more than 700 articles and 200+ conference papers], I am spending more time these days writing fiction and practicing martial arts. Somehow I managed to win 5 world championships in three different martial arts – karate, taekwondo and kung-fu, and a world silver medal in tai chi. As of this writing, my career medal count is 247 gold, 121 silver, and 85 bronze.

My novels are political thrillers. The views of the protagonists closely mirror my own views. They fight against injustice in both the political and business realms. I really can't stand it when some individual is harassed or harmed by some government or corrupt business person. My protagonists see that justice is done.

People sometimes ask me how I have been able to be successful in several different fields. I am not the best at anything. I have met many people who are smarter, richer, better writers. I don't let the successes of other people bother me or interfere with what I am doing. I just plod along, trying to do the best I can do without thinking about whether someone else is better. Ultimately, I am competing against myself, even when I am in the ring competing. I don't feel bad when I lose, as long as I know I have done my best. I think the one factor that has made a difference over the years is persistence. Everything else is secondary. Perhaps Calvin Coolidge, a former U.S. president, said it best.

“Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not: nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not: the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.” – Calvin Coolidge