



## CHAPTER ONE

# The journey begins ...

*A journey of a thousand miles must begin  
with a single step.*

~ LAU TZU

It was that groggy kind of feeling. A simple, but awful, feeling of discontent. A depth of emotion so discomfoting that it consumes nearly every thought. Nothing appears right. Possibilities have vanished, and only obstacles remain. Abundance has reshaped itself into burden. And where previously there was opportunity, now only limitations and despair remain.

Such was the morning of February 17, 1997, for Joe Delmonico. The day was just one more awakening for him that brought with it that gnawing feeling of despair. And the feeling was just like the one yesterday ... and the day before ... and the day before that.

Joe's trusted running partner, Gunner the German

shepherd, sensed that something, again, wasn't right. Joe hadn't realized what was happening, but man's best friend instinctively knew.

Joe was simply going through the motions yet again, and if he were truly honest with himself, he would have admitted that he had given up some six months earlier when this struggle started. Before the difficulty came into his life, his eyes would pop open minutes before the alarm blared. He was full of energy, and the excitement of a new day drove him.

He and Gunner would bolt out the door long before the sun breached the skyline. But lately the snooze alarm was in constant use and only the noise of Joe's son and daughter, that penetrated both layers of the stacked-up pillows on Joe's head, was enough to jostle him into the fray of another day. The blinding sun that sneaked through the custom blinds only spotlighted his complacency.

But what was causing this emotion?

This particular day was one that Joe always looked forward to with great enthusiasm. Today at the real estate firm where he spends nearly all of his time, the key players would be getting together to revel in their success. Upper management. Sales teams. Support staff. They all would be there, and all eyes would be on Joe.

The previous two years had meant much acknowledgement for him. He won the firm's rookie of the year a couple years prior, and he was labeled as the can't-miss kid. The owners told him he had a

lot of “potential.” He wore the label like a badge of honor, and his confident strut became very familiar to his co-workers and clients.

Today was awards day at the company. And Joe was about to win the awards. In fact, he will win more awards than last year. But Joe had lost momentum. He lost it about six months ago. Only his efforts over the first seven months of the year saved his final numbers. Joe’s recent work ethic was like that of an agent that had been in the business for about three months but most assuredly would be churned out by one of the toughest industries in the world. On this day, Joe’s internal judgment wouldn’t accept the praise. He was successful, but something was missing, and he didn’t know what.



When someone first decides to become a sales person, it’s an exciting day. The excitement comes from the potential of a new opportunity and a sense of pride. The excitement also comes with a sense of freedom. As the world knows, a good, or borderline great, salesman can make their mark. No product ever hits the market until a sales person sells it. There have been countless inventions that the world has never known because the product never

reached the right motivated sales person.

Most of the time, Joe was the right salesman. He was committed, and many would say gifted. But as Joe knew, he didn't have to be gifted to be successful. He just had to be the most committed person in line for a sale. He knew hard work could carry the day, but as he soon would find out, hard—not smart—work could take a person only so far.

For Joe, mediocrity was of no interest. He became a salesperson because he knew he could make an impact—and a load of money—and early on in his career he was proving himself right. He had left a secure, well-paying job in the restaurant industry, and thrust himself into a world of unlimited opportunity. He chose sales because he liked the sound of those two words: unlimited opportunity.

For the first two years of his sales career, energy carried him. He outworked just about everyone, and the money and accolades proved it. For awhile, he believed the hype and thought he had it all, but most importantly, knew it all.

Competition was limited, and the opportunities were like he expected: limitless. The harder he worked, the more sales and deals he closed. It was tough work, but it seemed second nature for Joe to put in the time and effort. Hard work was common place in his world. His father was a tough and diligent New York mechanic, and other family members were the models of hard work. Joe mirrored their efforts in everything he did. Work, work, work was the mantra of his youth. That was all anyone had

time to do.

Joe was no different. His effort brought with it huge financial success. But it wasn't long before Joe became a victim of the trappings of success. Acquisitions were made at every turn. He went from his small rental apartment to a nice home and mortgage. It wasn't a mansion, but it sure was a step up from his previous living arrangement that was more paradise alley than paradise. He spent with as much abandon as his commissions would allow, and he flaunted his success as much as he could. It wasn't that he wanted people to envy him, but he wanted people to think he was The Man and knew it all. Looking back, it would become clear to him that he flaunted his success because deep down he knew he wasn't the man that many thought he was.

Joe was close to living his dream, but now his reality wasn't what he envisioned it would be. His steps in his newly-travertined hallways screamed of overindulgence and now echoed with transparency.

When momentum stops, if the foundation isn't right, that which was built upon it will crumble.