

Don't work so hard says local author

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FAIRFIELD - Work hard all your life and you'll find success?

Fred Gratzon begs to differ. He's written "The Lazy Way to Success."

The cover shows a man in a hammock, and the hammock is the symbol Gratzon uses in the book to proclaim that successful people are lazy, not hard-working.

Gratzon wrote the book because, "I was doing professional speaking on entrepreneurship along with other motivational speakers. I listened to the other speakers, and it was obvious to me that no one had anything to say. It was all fluff - nothing nutritious. Nothing deep was being transmitted, nothing you could take home. I wanted to give profound insights that people could use, that would make a contribution to their lives."

But why question hard work as the foundation of success?

"I am clearly smacking the beehive of conventional thinking with a baseball bat, but all the people who talk about working hard are wrong: at best they're misleading and at worst they're harmful when saying that hard work is the basis of success."

If hard work doesn't bring success, what does?

"Passion, love, joy, gaining insight, finding a way to accomplish more by doing less," he said.

What about all the success stories by people who claim they got there with hard work?

"Anyone involved in this process would only say it was hard work because society demands that they must say they worked hard in order to justify their existence. In their quiet-moments they would never say their success was either hard or that it was work," Gratzon explained.

What about Thomas Edison slaving away at thousands of attempts to make a light bulb?

"Edison was not driven by hard work — it was passion: making him not do it would have been hard work," Gratzon said.

What about paying the bills?

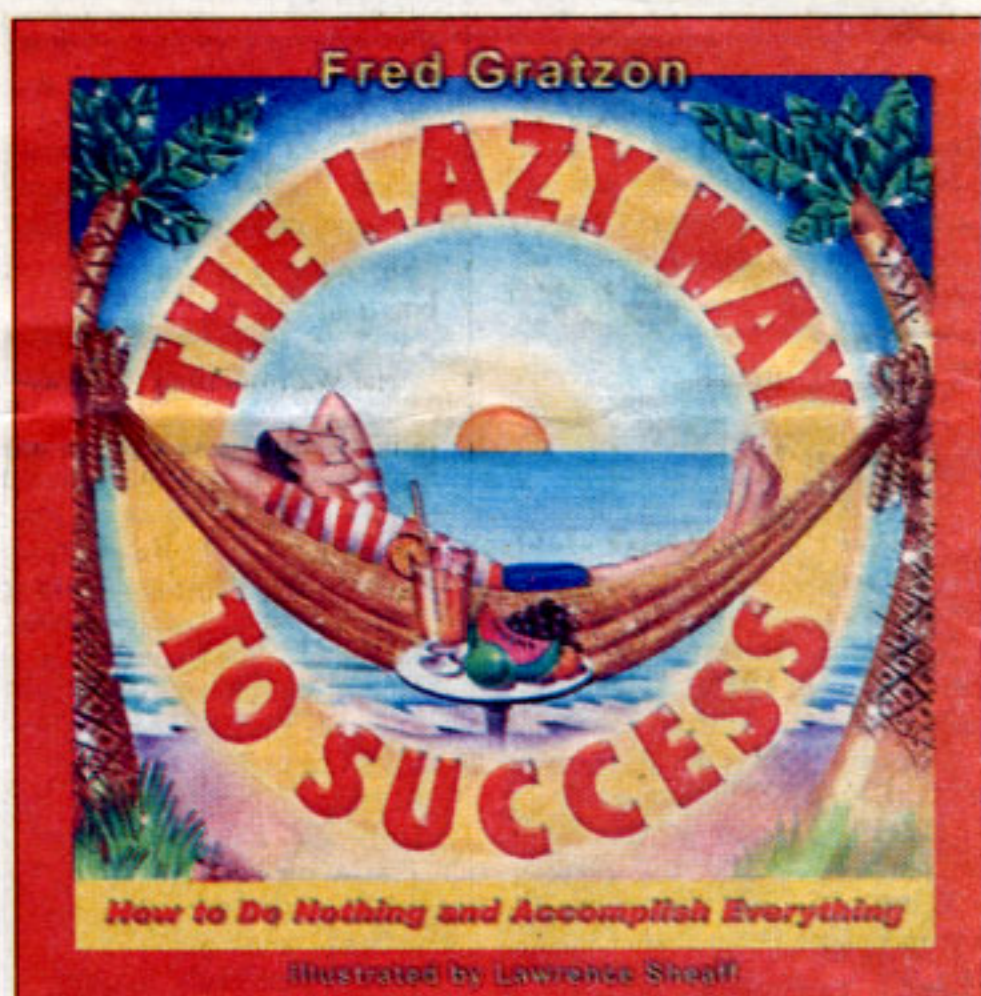
"If you need to pay the rent or the mortgage or the car loan, you can work. If that's your definition of success, then fine. But if you want to be successful, if you want mental and spiritual success, you're not going to find it with your nose to the grindstone. You'll get a flat, bloody nose," he said.

This sounds like a call for everyone to stop working.

"I'm all for building and making things. I'm not suggesting we tear down society, I'm not suggesting that we all become hippies. I'm suggesting that if you're motivated to be successful, you have to learn the lever that does the work of many," Gratzon said.

The work of many?

"The universe is built in layers



Submitted Photo

Fred Gratzon's new book "The Lazy Way to Success" looks at ways to achieve success without all of the hard work. The book is available at several locations in Fairfield, Ottumwa, Iowa City and Coralville.

— the surface is built on inner, more subtle values. Understanding that and learning to work on that level, you can have greater power," the new author explained. "Look at David and Goliath - hand-to-hand combat would have been stupid for David. Goliath was bigger, stronger and more athletic. It didn't make sense to try to beat him directly. So David worked on a subtler level: centrifugal force, delicacy of aim — it wasn't muscle, sweat and nose-to-the-grindstone, it was a flick of the wrist. The subtle was more powerful than the gross."

Still, laziness seems like a poor value to encourage.

"There are two kinds of laziness - unmotivated laziness, those who don't care if they're successful (in this case laziness is its own reward), and motivated laziness - a desire for success has to be there if you want to accomplish something," Gratzon said.

So, define hard work.

"It's doing what we don't want to do. It's doing things with maximum effort and minimum results. Gaining success and solving problems isn't through hard work and effort: it's in trying to find easier, more effortless ways to do things. I'm not against hard work — it's just not the way to success. You have to multiply your effort. It's finding the levers, finding better ways to accomplish things."

How many successful people can this world hold, then?

"Six billion or so. How many people are on Earth now? Success is many-layered. People think of success as accumulating wealth, but a greater wealth than money is health," Gratzon replies. "What's even more important than the outer things is the inner state —

one that is happy, fulfilled and filled with joy. Fulfilling activity, activity that one loves to do—just having that experience is success."

Gratzon has started two companies in Fairfield: Great Midwestern Ice Cream and Telegroup. Both companies have since gone out of business. How can those be seen as successes?

"With Great Midwestern, it was a success because it was really fun. Creativity was unrestricted. When it became serious (for a lot of reasons), it wasn't fun; it just died," the new author said.

"Telegroup was wonderful; to be a NASDAQ company for a few years, to be growing, the lesson on that had to be learned, and it was. With Telegroup, there were times when I couldn't wait to get up in the morning. But the venture capitalists and the greed for money brought a workaholic disease and sucked the fun right out of the business."

"The real purpose of life is not to make a huge, great company or a lot of money — it is to grow in creativity, to grow in the capacity to love, to grow in service to fellow man, it is to grow in devotion, in fulfillment. My next enterprise will be more successful still," he said.

"The Lazy Way to Success" is available in Fairfield at 21st Century Bookstore, Revelations and Thymely Solutions. In Ottumwa, Riddles Books and Coffee. In Iowa City, Prairie Lights Bookstore and Iowa Book and Supply. In Coralville, Barnes and Noble in the Coral Ridge Mall, where Gratzon has a book signing the day after Thanksgiving. Or online at www.lazyway.net, or 800-472-8066.