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JIM NATICHIONI, PATH GUIDE



I am Jim Natichioni of RightLivelihood.com and I have written the inspirational book: **Finding Your Path, Tales of Right Livelihood**. This excerpt is from Chapter Thirteen: “The Nature of Success and Failure in Business and Life” and relates to the principal of balancing and achieving your goals with a humble approach. To read more please visit RightLivelihood.com.

**Finding your path and right livelihood:** Right livelihood is also about income exceeding expenses. Besides painting the financial picture the value of a business plan is to provide a clear picture of who you are and in what direction you are headed. If you chose to go into business it is the way of nature to be fruitful and multiply. Find a path that balances your physical needs with your metaphysical needs and balances your desire to accomplish your goal with restraint in forcing the issue. The second half of the chapter deals with the positive attitude necessary to overcome obstacles to success. If all else fails don't worry be happy; that too can be the right path.

## **Operating from the principal of intentional action without force:**

**Wu-wei or inaction:** Regardless of the circumstances, great businessmen like Charlie are goal oriented and tend to push the envelope until they obtain the object of their ambition. By forcing the issue to make everything happen, they do not necessarily listen to the natural rhythms of cause and effect. My formula is similar to Charlie's except for the twist at the end: (1) Describe what the good life looks like to you (2) Know that you can have it (3) Describe your approach to getting it (4) Pursue it utilizing wu-wei; here is where we differ.

You have heard it stated that it's all about the journey; well just as happiness is all about the pursuit, so it is with the 'right livelihood.' Pursue your path like a creek that relentlessly runs toward the ocean yet always takes the lower, more humble course; yield like the mountains yield to the river; be patient like spring flowers and generous like the sun; in expansion follow the way of nature and seek always harmony and your own true nature. Most entrepreneurs are like Charlie and go after what they want like a bulldog goes after a bone; this is not the way of Tao.

Master Ni Hua Ching says: “Tao means realizing your goal in the process of each moment of living.” There is no problem having as a goal 'to become rich' but making *it* more important than the process of living effectively is an unworthy exchange. Don't sacrifice your life just to become rich without looking into whether that is a worthy exchange for you or not; allow the process to work and the richness of ones self-nature will naturally bring material richness.

Wu-wei, or the doctrine of inaction, is the Taoist's cardinal principal. The superior human in that tradition, like nature, knows when not to act. Coach Red Auerbach of the Boston Celtics became famous for not micro-managing his players and simply letting them play, for keeping his players together like a family and not selling them off

like cattle to the highest bidder. After Red became the general manager and people asked about all the great trades he had made, he would say: “Yeah, but the best trades I ever made were the ones I didn’t make.”

### **The Gourd Immortal and accomplishing your goal without strain:**

One day, a thirty-year-old, distraught, and impatient scholar named Pai arrived at the mountain retreat of the Gourd Immortal. The stoop of his back and the dullness of his gaze made it clear that he was suffering from excessive ardor. ‘I come to you as a very last resort,’ he cried, “either you must show me the face of truth or I shall drown myself. All my life I’ve been pouring over classics and listening to Confucian scholars. A brilliant official career lay before me until, all of a sudden, I realized that all that talk of propriety is so much air.’ “I cannot describe to you the indescribable, but I can teach you several arts,” said the Taoist. Pai decided to stay on.

“The first lesson is in weightlessness,” said the Gourd Immortal, “to accomplish this you must throw things away.” Pai had discarded greed and ambition prior to coming to the mountain but still had some cumbersome baggage to be disposed of, including his over-eagerness to succeed and over-anxiety about failure. The Gourd Immortal taught him to lose all sense of hurry, to subdue his tendency to strain and force a conclusion.

### **The secret to finding your path:**

Taoists admire water more than other natural elements because it does not attack impregnable obstacles, but peacefully finds its way around them. Wise action deals with what insists on being dealt with, and goes no further as that might stir up the need for excessive action, or involvement in things better left alone. Swimming in water does not mean floating, it means moving with intention. Trust does not mean sitting around waiting for something to happen, it means that in your action you flow with and do not fight against the current. This is the secret to finding your path.

Activity itself does not cause harm as long as it arises as an instinctive response to an immediate need. Taoists refrain from all calculated action, and avoid action that does not arise spontaneously from present circumstances. This does not mean that they sit in meditation all day long--quite the contrary; they are artists and craftsman who create landscape design, organic gardening, feng-shui, calligraphy, and herbal medicines. But they also make time for contemplation. If you listen to the inner promptings of your spirit, you will act appropriately and spontaneously.

Spontaneity arises from activity with no involvement and *no complex motives to stain your response*. For example: “to buy wheat at harvest time and sell it at a higher price when stocks are low, as merchants do, has no parallel in nature.” To go along with nature effortlessly means swimming with the current, eschewing each action that stems from a profit-motive. In this way, calculation or self-interested forethought does not enter your mind. But do not confuse the theory of inaction with the fear of taking action or complacency. Anything that dulls the spirit is harmful, anything that enhances your ‘can do spirit’ is beneficial.

### **The trailer queen: Throw away the stereotypes and go sell yourself:**

**Cold Calls:** Regardless of how much time we spent jockeying for position, hemming and hawing over strategy, or shuffling transmittals, the truth remained clear;

prospects will not magically appear just because we think we deserved that. No matter how good a businessman I thought of myself as, or how good a salesperson Chris actually was, until we did the hard work nothing of financial substance happened. If you cannot find the will to do the *hard thing* in your life, you may be in for a big headache.

**Will Rogers:** If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.

**Crissy V. aka The trailer queen:** Crissy V. arrives disheveled and out of sorts as usual. She skirts by a handful of us, a hearty smile overshadowing her smudged lipstick and running mascara. She looks like an unkempt mess, with sweaty clothes drooping over her slouching, poorly kept figure. The woman obviously shopped for her polyester attire exclusively at the Thrift store. Within seconds, she was at entertaining our little group.” I’m fixin’ to get me a lawyer after that son of a ...Allen Tate agent what stole my deal, don’t be tellin’ me what they done was awright.” Her foul mouth perfectly complements her foul temper. Then words faster than speeding bullets spew from her mouth as she boasts of Friday’s drunken stupor and Saturday’s hangover. Crissy’s favorite radio program is Charlotte’s own “John Boy and Billy Show,” where as the good old’ boys say, many of their listeners “tend to wade in the shallow end of the gene pool.”

Before she tried her hand at real estate Crissy had worked for just over minimum wage making just under what her husband brought home from the factory. The self proclaimed ‘Queen of Trailer Trash’ lived in a mobile home community and drove a large American-made clunker. As the weeks turned into months, I wondered what Crissy was doing in a business of snappy dressers and college-educated professionals. One thing was certain: Crissy V. was not afraid to speak her mind, I was often shocked at the words that came out of her mouth, but she simply did not care about my or anyone else’s opinion.

She would throw these tacky neighborhood parties and talk real estate to every stranger she met. She canvassed communities, hosted booths at trade shows, and relentlessly marketed to get listings on the highest priced homes. Within a year and a half, Crissy V. had become the number one producer in our office of two hundred. Her secret was simple; she mastered the essential art of circulation. At the same time that Crissy joined us, a slick Duke University grad right out of GQ magazine joined, driving to work in a new BMW. He impressed everyone with his superior background and attitude. In the same period, despite enlisting *the* fanciest high-tech marketing available, he had blown through over \$100,000 and was nowhere to be found. The reason was simple; he spent an inordinate amount of his time sitting in his office instead of doing ‘the hard thing.’

**Quotes and Works Cited; Works Chapter Thirteen:** “The first lesson is in weightlessness,” said the Gourd Immortal, “to accomplish this you must throw things away.” Blofield, John. Taoist Mysteries and Magic: “to buy wheat at harvest time and sell it at a higher price when stocks are low, as merchants do, has no parallel in nature.” Gibran, Kahlil: The Treasured Writings of Kahlil Gibran