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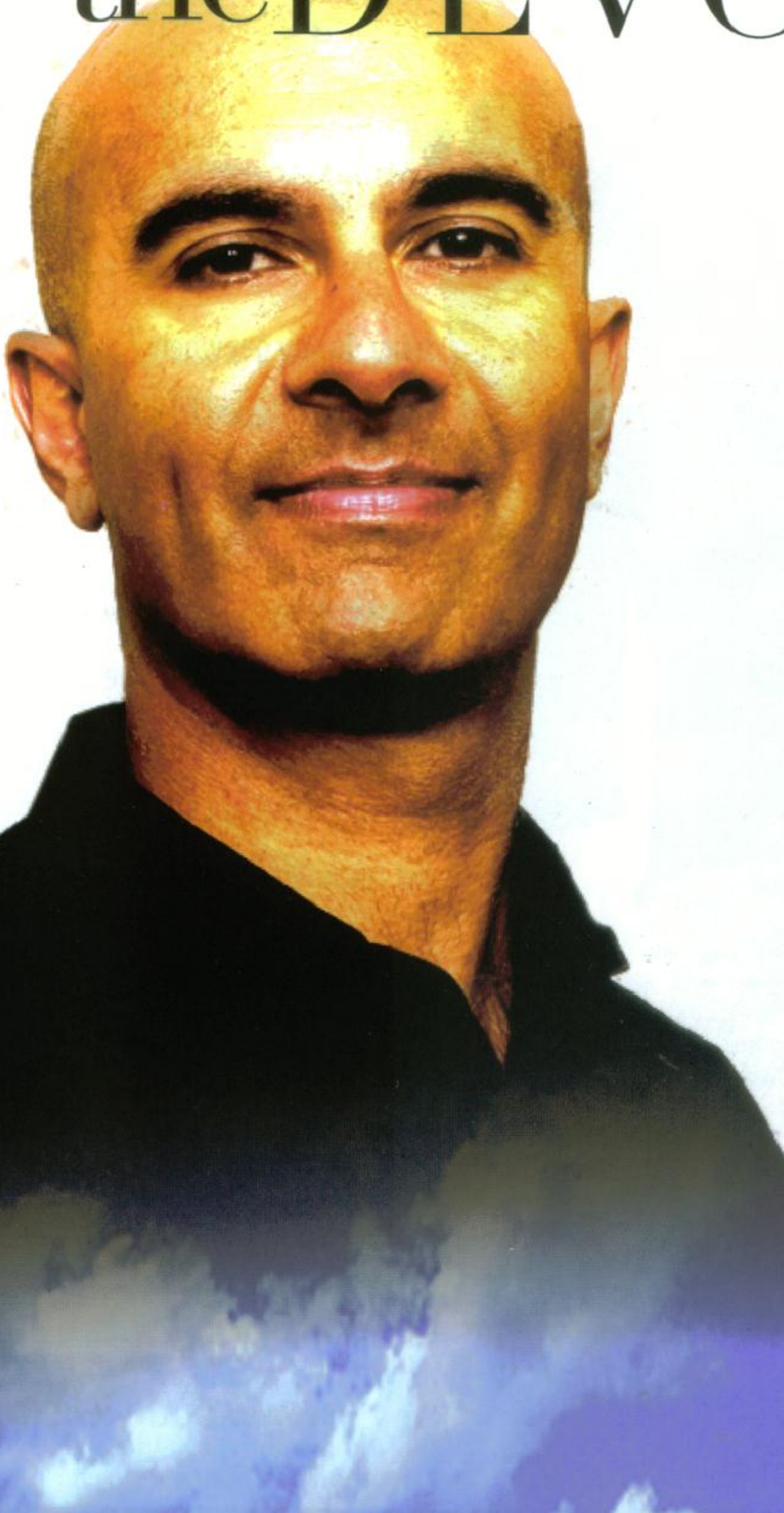
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SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS SHARE THE BEST ADVICE THEY EVER GOT

SUCCESS FEAGVCOUERS the DEVOTED



By Sheila Reesor

After completing his B.A. and Masters of Law in Halifax, Robin Sharma moved to Toronto to practice law on Bay Street, and was well on his way to happiness and success. So why wasn't it working? "I was a hollow man," says Robin. "Outside I was successful, but inside I had this dull ache in the pit of my stomach every morning as I went to work."

Robin's discomfort compelled him to start asking some big questions: Who am I? What are my true values? How do I want to be remembered? "I started reading some of the wise books out there and studying biographies of extraordinary humans," he says.

Some common threads began to emerge: live life on your own terms, run your own race, and stay true to your dreams. Everything Robin absorbed led him to take a hard look at what wasn't working in his life. It was an arduous journey, yet within a short time he experienced some profound transformations.

"I changed the way I saw the world," says Robin. "I changed my values and I reconnected to that childlike sense of wonder that I had lost."

The more Robin's inner world changed, the more at odds he was with his outer world. He felt that each day spent doing something he wasn't meant to do, was a day taken away from what he was meant to do. It was like a gradual shifting of sands. When it hit critical mass, he had no choice but to let go. "Once you know what you want to stand for there's no turning back," says Robin. "When you connect with your passions, doing what you're meant to do, it's very hard to live the life you once lived."

Robin had a family to support and responsibilities to uphold, but that did not supersede the fact that he had made a tremendous discovery. He found himself and, as a result, was experiencing a greater sense of fulfillment, happiness and vitality in life. "If an ordinary person like me can do it," he thought, "then maybe I should share this message with other people."

With this in mind, Robin sat down and wrote a mystical fable called *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*. Once written, his mother edited the book and he took it to the local copy shop. Ten cases of books were stored in the family kitchen while he and his father sold them to Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs.

Robin faced constant rejection, but persevered, believing that the only failure is the failure to try—you can't win a game that you don't even play. Still practicing law by day, and self-publishing by night, he often started work at 4:00 a.m. in order to be at the office by 8:00 a.m.

Robin found an independent distributor, and the big break came the day they got into the Chapters/Indigo chain. One day, Robin went to his local Chapters and asked the manager if he could sign his books. A bystander said, "Wow, that's a great title, I love the cover. Tell me a bit about your story." Robin did,

and then learned that he was talking to the President of HarperCollins Publishing.

ONCE THIS MEGA- PUBLISHER PICKED UP THE BOOK, ROBIN RESIGNED FROM LAW.

People thought he was crazy but he had the self-faith to persevere, and the sense to ignore the chatter of critics. "I just didn't give up," says Robin, "I felt something inside me that I could do this and that things would work out okay."

Ten years later, things have worked out more than okay. Robin Sharma is the author of seven international bestsellers that topped the charts at number one. In the past five years, his books have sold over 1.5 million copies. His website states that his book *The Saint, The Surfer and The CEO* was the number one selling book in the world at amazon.com, and his other books are on the bestseller lists in over 20 countries.

Robin is said to be one of the world's top experts on personal and organizational leadership. As CEO of Sharma Leadership International Inc., he has provided leadership, life coaching and professional development to millions of people in 35 countries, and to major corporations including IBM, FedEx, Microsoft, Nike and Panasonic. These days, he shares platforms with celebrity entrepreneurs, sports figures and insightful minds like Shimon Peres, Deepak Chopra, Bill Clinton and Jack Welch.

With all this success Robin does not sit around thinking he's special. "I'm an ordinary guy, raising two kids, who happens to write books, give speeches and do workshops for

a living," he says.

For him, the top of one mountain is the bottom of the next. "I am no guru," says Robin. "I'm not perfect. I have my own struggles and my own fears and challenges just like everyone."

Being true to himself, taking risks, and making an impact, is what it's all about for Robin. He sees nothing wrong with making money and pursuing material things. But if it's your only priority, he suggests you might get to the top of the mountain and feel unfulfilled. For him, leading without title and doing his part to uplift and elevate people are paramount. His greatest rewards are the e-mails and letters he receives every day from people whose lives have been transformed as a result of his message. "When I write my last word," he says, "I want to know that I've spent my life well. No one on their death bed ever wished they had made more money."

With the support of his family, team, mentors, publishers, readers and clients, Robin has emerged a healthier, more loving and authentic man. "I think I've become a stronger person," he adds. "Life has knocked me down a bunch of times, in some significant ways. When you come out stronger, you realize what you're made of, and who you are. I believe that difficulties introduce us to our best self."

Thinking that someone's accomplishments look easy is what Robin calls the "swan effect." You see the ease with which they move through life, but you don't see the paddling that's going on beneath the surface. Simply put, success favours the devoted. It requires the ability to sacrifice what's convenient and easy in pursuit of what's right and important. "I was devoted to realizing my goals. You cannot be denied your dream if you choose not to give up."

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