

Robert Kiyosaki Why the Rich Get Richer



Keeping Your Business Ideas Fresh

by *Robert Kiyosaki*

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Sometimes life just isn't fair.

When I was growing up in the 1960s, my parents said to me, "Listen to your elders. You need to learn to respect their wisdom. Someday when you're older, young people will listen to you." So I listened to my parents and grew up respecting the wisdom of those older than I was.

But that notion has been turned upside down: Nowadays, people my age need to listen to and respect the wisdom of people who are younger than we are.

Ideas from an Earlier Age

In business, success often depends upon the relative age of your ideas. And today, people of all ages are in trouble because their ideas aren't just old, they're obsolete.

One example of an old idea is that of the traditional job. Jobs are a centuries-old concept created during the industrial revolution. Despite the reality that we're now deep in the Information Age, many people are studying for, or working at, or clinging to the Industrial Age idea of a safe, secure job.

Now people aren't just losing their jobs -- their jobs are migrating to foreign countries or disappearing altogether. As Alan Blinder, an economist and former vice chairman of the [Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System](#), says, "A new industrial revolution -- communication technology that allows services to be delivered electronically from afar -- will put as many as 40 million American jobs at risk of being shipped out of this country in the next decade or two." That's double the number of U.S. workers in manufacturing today.

In spite of such alarming figures, our schools still program kids to look for jobs. Advising people to go to school to learn to be an employee is as obsolete as advising young people to become peasants and work for a landlord. People need to be trained to be investors and entrepreneurs, not employees.

Obsolete Every 18 Months

My point is this: In a rapidly changing world, nothing is more dangerous than an idea whose time has come and gone. Just look at how [Amazon.com](#) has changed the world of brick-and-mortar booksellers such as Borders and [Barnes & Noble](#), or how Skype is tearing down monster corporations like [AT&T](#), or how [Napster](#) shot a torpedo into the record industry. Where do you think the people who work for those Industrial Age employers will be in 10 years?

As I said, people aren't losing their jobs -- jobs and companies are disappearing. I'm glad I listened to my rich dad and became an entrepreneur rather than the employee my poor dad wanted me to be.

Most people today realize that knowledge is doubling every 18 months. Does that mean that we now become obsolete every 18 months? Maybe so. Personally, it makes me feel like I need to assign an expiration date to my ideas, and update them regularly.

Many people my age are in serious financial trouble because they have old, Industrial Age ideas that they never update -- wanting job security, counting on a pension for life, relying on Social Security and Medicare -- while attempting to survive in the Information Age.

That's a mistake. Much of my company's revenue comes from the web, even though I remain a technophobe. My company survives because I've learned to respect the ideas of people younger than me, and recognize when my wisdom is obsolete.

Timeless Business Ideas

Although many business ideas go out of date every day, there are some that are timeless and essential regardless of the era we're in. Here are a few:

- Be passionate about your products and what your brand stands for. Brands die if the leader's passion dies, or if the leader's passion is simply to make money.
- Build a community. Good entrepreneurs are community builders, actively involved with their communities and dedicated to the community's well being. If you're dedicated to your community, it will be dedicated to you.
- Communicate clearly. Speak in the language of your customers. Don't attempt to baffle them with jargon in an attempt to appear smarter than they are.
- Tell it like it is, and don't be a phony. In business, there are too many people who will say anything to get their hands on your money.
- Be human. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know" or "Can you help me?" If you're a good leader, people will be more than happy to help you build your business.

Now more than ever, we all need to be careful about whom we listen to. Just because someone is older than you no longer means they're wiser. Their ideas may have been good yesterday, but tomorrow they might be obsolete.

280 COMMENTS

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Yahoo! Finance User - Sunday, June 3, 2007, 2:45PM ET

Overall:

I agree with the 1-stars...this guy is a hack. I actually just read his articles now simply out of morbid fascination - wondering if this trainwreck will be worse than the last one - and to then read the comments of the people that also see him for the poseur that he is. Yahoo Finance's credibility is taking a hit by keeping this guy on as an "expert". The only reason he's rich is because he has a following of financial idiots that don't have the knowledge to understand that what they're reading is vague fluff at best, and outright irresponsible bad advice at worst. I would love to see a net-worth comparison of the 1-stars vs the 5-stars, even though I already know how it would look.

shaneboone2003 - Sunday, June 3, 2007, 1:44PM ET

Overall:

Some of the best advice anyone could give! The question is who will take action and change the way they were taught?

firth5th - Sunday, June 3, 2007, 12:01PM ET

Overall:

Garbage.

mikeheavylight - Sunday, June 3, 2007, 11:18AM ET

Overall:

Napster, Skype and Amazon all have employees -- from 5500 filings approx 8000. If I remember correctly there are only 8 people maximum from that group that qualify as entrepreneurs. The rest are employees. AT&T still exists as well as the recording industry and Barnes and Nobles. It would appear as if any job loss left one institution and migrated to another, but the "job" still exists. There is some "truthiness" to the concept that manufacturing is migrating, but people go to school to work in the service, not manufacturing sector. Perhaps this is where your "old" model of thinking of what education is today has become antiquated.

opnorwoods - Sunday, June 3, 2007, 10:00AM ET

Overall:

It's facile to say that one should become an entrepreneur, but if everyone did, everyone would starve. Economies run on the backs of billions of worker-bees. Those who fail at this and who stumble upon one of life's winning lotto tickets become "entrepreneurs".

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