

"I've read countless books on business. No business author has touched me as deeply as Michael Gerber has."

—JACK CANFIELD

Awakening the **E**ntrepreneur Within

*How Ordinary People Can Create
Extraordinary Companies*

MICHAEL E. GERBER

Bestselling author of *The E-Myth Revisited* and *E-Myth Mastery*

Foreword by Ken Blanchard

PRAISE FOR MICHAEL GERBER
AND
AWAKENING THE ENTREPRENEUR WITHIN



Michael Gerber's *E-Myth* is one of only four books I recommend as required reading. **For those looking to start and build a business of their own, this is the man who has coached more successful entrepreneurs than the next ten gurus combined.**

—Timothy Ferriss, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The 4-Hour Work Week*

Michael Gerber's *Awakening the Entrepreneur Within* is thought provoking and revolutionary. It will make you laugh and cry, become angry, uncomfortable, challenged, energized, elated, and inspired to bring new meaning and purpose to your life and your business. **If you want to imagine and pursue a business and a life that transforms the world, then this book should be your bible.** You'll read his empowering words time and time again. **There is no other business book of its kind** and no other dreamer like Michael Gerber. I am confident it will change your life.

—Susan Wilson Solovic, CEO, SBTv.com, and author of
The Girls' Guide to Building a Million-Dollar Business

Everyone needs a mentor, someone who tells it like it is, holds you accountable, and shows you your good, bad, and ugly. For millions of small business owners Michael Gerber is that person. **Let Michael be your mentor and you are in for a kick in the pants, the ride of a lifetime.**

—John Jantsch, author of *Duct Tape Marketing*

Since the groundbreaking *E-Myth* series, the business world has been waiting for the next paradigm-shattering offering from business

legend Michael Gerber. Now finally it is here, and it is called *Awakening the Entrepreneur Within*. Based on his remarkable Dreaming Room programs, this book will show you exactly how to awaken and reenergize the entrepreneur within you. **When Michael Gerber talks every business person should listen. Get this book!**

—Mitch Meyerson, author of *Mastering Online Marketing*
and founder of Guerrilla Marketing Coaching

Only read this book if you want to do big things in the world. By the time you finish the first chapter you won't have a choice anymore. **Michael Gerber and this book hold the keys to making your dreams come true.**

—Michael Port, author of *Book Yourself Solid* and *Beyond Booked Solid*

Michael Gerber has transformed my life through the powerful message of *Awakening the Entrepreneur Within*. By following Michael's advice, I have taken my entrepreneurial goals to a much higher level. Michael is the world's leading voice in entrepreneurship and **this book is a must read for anyone serious about taking control of their life.**

—Kevin Pringles, president, Chill Factor Clothing Co.

Michael Gerber's *E-Myth* books redefined what true business and entrepreneurship is all about, freeing business owners everywhere from the prison of their own making. Now, in his new book, he has taken the next bold step of showing people how to tap into their true sense of purpose and live it through enlightened entrepreneurship, resulting in a much better world for all. ***Awakening the Entrepreneur Within* could easily become one of the most important business and sociological books of our time.**

—Michael J. Russer, author of *The Obsolete Employee: How Businesses Succeed Without Employees—And Love It!*

My shelves are crammed with thirty years of accumulated business books—all of them telling me how to do this-or-that, more, better, or differently. I'm going to put most of them in a yard sale so that *Awakening the Entrepreneur Within* can have its rightful place of prominence. **If you want to create an extraordinary business or are wondering where to start, *Awakening the Entrepreneur Within* is the road map you've been seeking, but never knew you were missing—until now.**

—Steve Gottry, author of *Common Sense Business* and co-author
(with Ken Blanchard) of *The On-Time, On-Target Manager*

Michael Gerber is a master instructor and a leader's leader. As a combat F15 fighter pilot, I had to navigate complex missions with life-and-death consequences, but until I read *The E-Myth* and met Michael Gerber, my transition to the world of small business was a nightmare with no real flight plan. **The hands-on, practical magic of Michael's turnkey systems magnified by the raw power of his keen insight and wisdom have changed my life forever.** Michael's Dreaming Room led me to create my business with a clear vision, compelling purpose and meaningful mission. Michael, thank you for writing this book and challenging us to get in the game, to passionately pursue our dream, and to never, ever give up.

—Steve Olds, CEO, Stratworx.com

Michael Gerber's strategies in *The E-Myth* were instrumental in building my company from two employees to a global organization; I can't wait to see how applying the strategies from *Awakening the Entrepreneur Within* will affect its growth!

—Dr. Ivan Misner, founder and chairman of BNI, and author of *Masters of Sales*

Michael Gerber's gift to isolate the issues and present simple, direct, business changing solutions shines bright with *Awakening the Entre-*

preneur Within. **If you're interested in developing an entrepreneurial vision and plan that inspires others to action, buy this book, read it, and apply the processes Gerber brilliantly defines.**

—Tim Templeton, author of *The Referral of a Lifetime*

Michael Gerber truly, truly understands what it takes to be a successful practicing entrepreneur and business owner. He has demonstrated to me over six years of working with him that for those who stay the course and learn much more than just “how to work on their business and not in it” then they will reap rich rewards. I finally franchised my business and the key to unlocking this kind of potential in any business idea is in the teachings of Michael’s work.

—Chris Owen, marketing director, Royal Armouries (International) plc

My wife, Colleen, and I spent twenty-five years flying in the United States Air Force and with commercial airlines. When we changed our career focus and decided to open our own business, we read dozens of books and attended countless seminars. Nothing came close to the quality and precision of the environment that we had lived in for all those years—until we read Michael Gerber’s books. His insightful writings finally gave us the flight plan that we had been missing. **We carry copies of his books in our car and share them with other entrepreneurs, because we know that their lives and businesses can be changed in a profound way by the wisdom of Michael Gerber.**

—Bill and Colleen Hensley, founders of Hensley Properties, Inc.,
authors of the upcoming book, *The Pilot-Learning Leadership*

Michael’s work has been an inspiration to us. His books have helped us get free from the out-of-control life that we once had. His no-nonsense approach kept us focused on our ultimate aim rather than day-to-day stresses. He has helped take our business to levels we couldn’t have imagined possible. In the Dreaming Room made us

totally reevaluate how we thought about our business and our life. **We have now redesigned our life so we can manifest the dreams we unearthed in Michael's Dreaming Room.**

—Jo and Steve Davison, founders of The Spinal Health Clinic
Chiropractic Group and www.your-dream-life.com

I have been a Michael Gerber fan since the E-Myth transformed my business and my life. Recently, I attended the Dreaming Room. I was feeling stuck and limited by my own fears. **Through intentional dreaming, Michael gave me a new horizon as an entrepreneur.** I experienced the power of vision. This shift in thinking has sparked energy and given me the courage to take risks. I have become a leader with focus and I can see all the possibilities.

—Elena Rivera MacGregor, Rivera Design Group Ltd., riveradesign.com

If you're looking for inspiration, information, or simply real world methods to take your entrepreneurial business to the next level, then your search is over! Michael Gerber will help you realize your dreams, steer you past the obstacles, and guide you to achievement. Why would I say this? Simple! **That's what he's done (and still does) for me.**

—Peter Thomson, Peter Thomson International plc

Michael Gerber made us realize that conscious dreaming was possible and that we could do it deliberately. We're constantly aware of opportunities we could be dreaming about and how to improve services and products for people that would make their life better and bring profit to us. Thank you, Michael!

—Pam and Phil Reed, owners, The Reed Team,
Willis Allen Real Estate, La Jolla, CA

Rarely—maybe once in a lifetime—is there a message that transforms us, that inspires us to create the vision that describes the grandest version of ourselves, and then act upon it. Several years ago, we heard

such a message, Michael Gerber's message. Since then, our journey with Michael has truly awakened the entrepreneur within us! **We can't wait to take our lives and the lives of our clients to the next level through this book!**

—Robert and Susan Clements, principals, E-Myth Iowa

Because of Michael Gerber, I transformed my twenty-four-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week job (also called a small business) into a multimillion turnkey business. This in turn set the foundation for my worldwide training firm. I am living my dream because of Michael Gerber.

—Howard Partridge, Phenomenal Products, Inc.

Michael Gerber is an outrageous revolutionary who is changing the way the world does business. He dares you to commit to your grandest dreams and then shows you how to make the impossible a reality. If you let him, this man will change your life.

—Fiona Fallon, founder of Divine and the Bottom Line

Michael Gerber is a genius. **Every successful business person I meet has read Michael Gerber, refers to Michael Gerber and lives by his words.** You just can't get enough of Michael Gerber. He has the innate (and rare) ability to tap into one's soul, look deeply, and tell you what you need to hear. And then, he inspires you, equips you with the tools to get it done.

—Pauline O'Malley, CEO, TheRevenueBuilder

When asked "Who was the most influential person in your life?" I am one of thousands who don't hesitate to say "Michael E. Gerber." Michael helped transform me from someone dreaming of retirement to someone dreaming of working until age one hundred. This awakening is the predictable outcome of anyone reading Michael's new book.

—Thomas O. Bardeen

Michael Gerber is an incredible business philosopher, guru, perhaps even a seer. He has an amazing intuition which allows him to see in an instant what everybody else is missing: he sees opportunity everywhere. While in the Dreaming Room, Michael gave me the gift of seeing through the eyes of an awakened entrepreneur, and instantly my business changed from a regional success to serving clients on four continents.

—Keith G. Schiehl, president, Rent-a-Geek Computer Services

Michael Gerber is among the very few who truly understand entrepreneurship and small business. While others talk about these topics in the form of theories, methodologies, processes, and so on, Michael goes to the heart of the issues. Whenever Michael writes about entrepreneurship, soak it in as it is not only good for your business, but great for your soul. His words will help you to keep your passion and balance while sailing through the uncertain sea of entrepreneuring.

—Raymond Yeh, co-author, *The Art of Business*

***Awakening the Entrepreneur Within* is a must-read for every entrepreneur.** Michael Gerber's insight, wisdom, caring, and straightforward approach helped me reinvent myself and my business while doubling my revenues in less than one year. Crack open this book and let him do the same for you, too.

—Christine Kloser, author, *The Freedom Formula* and *Conscious Entrepreneurs*

Michael Gerber forced me to think big, think real, and gave me the support network to make it happen. A new wave of entrepreneurs is rising, much in thanks to his amazing efforts and very practical approach to doing business.

—Christian Kessner, Higher Ground Retreats and Events

Michael's understanding of entrepreneurship and small business management has been a difference maker for countless businesses,

including Infusion Software. His insights into the entrepreneurial process of building a business are a must read for every small business owner. The vision, clarity, and leadership that came out of our Dreaming Room experience were just what our company needed to recognize our potential and motivate the whole company to achieve it.

—Clate Mask, president and CEO, Infusion Software

Michael Gerber is a truly remarkable man. His steady openness of mind and ability to get to the deeper level continues to be an inspiration and encouragement to me. He seems to always ask that one question that forces the new perspective to break open and he approaches the new coming method in a fearless way.

—Rabbi Levi Cunin, Chabad of Malibu

The Dreaming Room experience was literally life changing for us. Within months, we were able to start our Foundation and make several television appearances owing to his teachings. He has an incredible charisma which is priceless, but above all **Michael Gerber awakens passion from within enabling you to take action with dramatic results . . . starting today!**

—Shona and Shaun Carcary, Trinity Property Investments Inc.—

Home Vestors franchisees

I thought *E-Myth* was an awkward name! What could this book do for me? But when I finally got to reading it . . . it was what I was looking for all along. Then, to top it off, I took a twenty-seven-hour trip to San Diego just to attend the Dreaming Room, where Michael touched my heart, my mind, and my soul.

—Helmi Natto, president, Eye 2 Eye Optics, Saudi Arabia

I attended *In the Dreaming Room* and was challenged by Michael Gerber to “Go out and do what’s impossible.” So I did: I became an

author and international speaker and used Michael's principles to create a world-class company that will change and save lives all over the world.

—Dr. Don Kennedy, MBA, author, *5AM & Already Behind*,

www.bahabits.com

This book should carry a health warning. If you have only experienced success and fortune in your business, it might not appeal to you; unless you have stared in the eyes of the abyss—laughed and roared because you were too scared to do anything else—some of this will not relate to you. Sometimes you concluding what is the truth—is just you not having to look hard enough. And when you have, **read Michael Gerber's excellent work and you can start becoming a true human being who in a commercial way wants to change the world, with heart.**

—Jan Eskildsen, managing director, Paper4u Ltd

Entrepreneurs are a strange breed. We work crazy hours, take risks that others would never consider and work for nothing till our business grows. When we succeed people say that we are “lucky” or “in the right place at the right time.” **The truth is we have a great coach and an incredible mentor who has awakened our entrepreneur within: Michael Gerber, the entrepreneur's secret weapon.**

—Patrick W. J. Davies, owner of Town & Country Tree Service,
and awakened entrepreneur

Michael Gerber leads you on a journey to discover your greatest desire and helps you gather the confidence to pursue those dreams. All you need is the courage to stay the course.

—Lisa Salt, The Salt Team, Re/Max Vernon

As an entrepreneur and a person, Michael Gerber has given me a life lesson that I will never forget. His words invigorate, empower, and enchant me every time I hear them. I cherish the time I get to

spend with him. His E-Myth and Dreaming Room are the beacons of my journey to fulfilling my dreams.

—Merlin U. Ward

The experience of Michael Gerber's *Awakening the Entrepreneur Within* is what realigned and saved my life. Michael's extraordinary wisdom about human nature and his vast knowledge of small business became my pivots for defining, designing, and creating the future, for building the desired life and not just a business that works better. In less than two years I was transformed from a person who avoided business at all costs (an ultimate technician) to a person with two present businesses, four more in the making and many more opportunities to consider.

—Dr. Kayvon Khalilzadeh, evolutionist, Chief Creator,
Interface, Parascope Technology, Inc.

In *Awakening the Entrepreneur Within*, Michael Gerber answers the question, "What's beyond the E-Myth?" Once again his insights are so obvious they stare us in the face every day, and it's pure genius!

—Mike Doughty, managing director, The Knowledge Gym

From the moment that Michael Gerber crossed my path . . . everything changed for me. Setting my foot into the Dreaming Room was the first step on my path to success.

—Yvonne Hoogeveen, C.I.T., president, Global Infrared Diagnostics, Ltd.

Michael Gerber is unlike anyone you know, and his biting honesty and tremendous passion enables him to transform your life. ***Awakening the Entrepreneur Within* is a triumph, the absolute pinnacle of entrepreneurial empowerment!** It should have been impossible for a book to accomplish what *Awakening* did for me, but Michael Gerber found a way.

—Peter Leeds, Penny Stock Professional, PeterLeeds.com

Michael Gerber's *E-Myth* changed and radically challenged everything I thought I knew about business. In further pursuing his life's mission of entrepreneurial innovation, Michael has now extended the lessons conveyed in the *E-Myth* to address a new and poignant observation about entrepreneurs and the companies that they envision . . . a process known as Intentional Dreaming. In response to the desperate burn-out, confusion, and pain he has witnessed in the thousands of business leaders he's worked with, **Michael has in a singular stroke provided us with a process that we can engage with to define and refine our dream.**

—Elizabeth Allen, principal, Marketsmartz, Inc.

Michael Gerber takes us along a journey to the dreams which create businesses that change the world! Read if, and only if, you wish to create a dream and a meaningful business that serves you with the intention of changing the world.

—Jim Aamodt, president and CEO, JDA Enterprises

Throughout my professional career, before reading *Awakening the Entrepreneur Within*, I had never picked up a book that touched me in such a personal way and managed to equally inspire and empower me with ideas and strategies that I could take into my own businesses. **This is a must read and one of the best business books I have ever read.**

—Ingrid V. Vanderveldt, Vanderveldt & Co., CEO, The Club E Network,
host CNBC's *American Made*

Michael has never ceased to amaze me! He is by far the most brilliant speaker, author, and business consultant I've ever met. His many years of business experience, combined with a strong intuitive nature, and truly loving intentions, combine to make a very thought-provoking, and emotionally moving message that is sure to revolutionize our world.

—Lloyd Minthorne, owner, Synoptic Sounds

Michael has an amazing way of awakening not only the entrepreneur within but the spirit so many of us lose along the way. In *The E-Myth*, Michael took a systematic approach to business success. Now he reminds us that a system without passion and soul is not worth creating. It is combining the two approaches that allows anyone to live their dreams.

—Shay Pausa, founder, ChiKiiTV and www.chikii.com

By enabling you to look closely at your business and focus on the things that matter, Gerber reminds us that life is about pursuing meaning in everything you do, personally and professionally. **You will be forever changed.**

—Kathy Sacks, founder, Sacks Public Relations

I can easily say that Michael Gerber has been the single most influential force in the life of my business. This is the world's opportunity to get inside the head of one the most thought-provoking business leaders the world has ever known. **Read this book. It will change your business. It will change your life.**

—Corey Blake, chairman of the dream, Writers of the Round Table, Inc.

Michael Gerber and his In the Dreaming Room concept has honestly revolutionized the way I see entrepreneurial business. **Michael will leave you energized, inspired, and prepared to make waves.**

—David Cohen, chief executive maestro, Writers of the Round Table, Inc.

I went to the Dreaming Room to have Michael Gerber fix my business. He talked about Dreaming. What was this Dreaming? I was too busy working! Too busy being miserable, angry, frustrated, behind in what I was trying to accomplish. And losing everything I was working for. Then **Michael Gerber woke up the dreamer in me and remade my life and my business.**

—Pat Doorn, president, Mountain View Electric Ltd.

Michael Gerber is brilliant. Whether you are just starting a business, or have been in business for years, **Michael has the ability to free up your thinking, explode your self-imposed limitations, then provide a razor-sharp reality check and true clarity.** Michael is a true blessing to the entrepreneur in all of us!

—Betsi Bixby, president, Meridian Associates, Inc.

I take Michael's vision of the purpose-driven entrepreneur very seriously. The journey is just beginning and I am now focused on becoming a strong entrepreneur and creating extraordinary companies. **Michael Gerber helps people understand who they are currently, and who they can become if only they dream. The results are amazing.**

—Bob Walker, co-founder, Postalcenter.com

Michael Gerber is masterful in challenging the human senses as he works to awaken the entrepreneurs within us. **Be prepared to be torn from your comfort zone and open to the flow of new ideas.**

—Larry Cooper, founder, Meetings and Events, LLC

The E-Myth Revisited literally changed my life by reinventing my business. Now, attending In the Dreaming Room has taken me full circle by clarifying and articulating my Dream, Vision, Purpose, and Mission for my business with amazing precision and energy!

—Ed Herbert, chairman and CEO, Real Estate Only

Michael Gerber is, beyond any doubt, one of the most influential people I have ever met. Attending one of his Dreaming Rooms literally put my life on a brand new course. I am in the process of accomplishing a lifelong dream of starting my own business due to that event. It's a battle at times, but everything worthwhile in this life is a battle. Very soon my business will be online, and that will only be the first chapter in the business I intend to create.

—Charlie Lorange, DreamCarDriver.com

Michael Gerber's approach to life is not just measurable and sustainable, it is dignified. Like most businesses, most charities, even with the best of intents, will continue to fail, unless they have such a system as this. Where else can this be applied in your life? Come to the Dreaming Room to find out.

—Lawrence Keenan, Rose Charities Micro-Lending Project,
Vancouver, British Columbia

Michael Gerber can captivate a room full of entrepreneurs and take them to a place where they can focus on the essentials that are the underpinning of every successful business. He gently leads them from where they are to where they need to be in order to change the world.

—Francine Hardaway, CEO, Stealthmode Partners and founder
of the Arizona Entrepreneurship Conferences



Photograph by Jeff Kassebaum

About the Author

MICHAEL E. GERBER is the legend behind the E-Myth series of books, which includes *The E-Myth Revisited*, *E-Myth Mystery*, *Awakening the Entrepreneur Within*, *The E-Myth Manager*, *The E-Myth Physician*, and *The E-Myth Contractor*. His titles have collectively sold millions of copies worldwide. He is an entrepreneur and an in-demand speaker and consultant. Gerber is also the founder of E-Myth Worldwide, Chief Dreamer Enterprises, In the Dreaming Room LLC, Certified Capital Advisors, the Entrepreneur Capital Cooperation, and the Michael E. Gerber Club.

Awakening

the

Entrepreneur Within



ALSO BY MICHAEL E. GERBER

The E-Myth Revisited

E-Myth Mastery

The E-Myth Manager

The E-Myth Contractor

The E-Myth Physician

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*How Ordinary People
Can Create
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MICHAEL E. GERBER

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A hardcover edition of this book was published in 2008 by Collins.

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FIRST HARPER BUSINESS PAPERBACK PUBLISHED 2009.

Designed by Jaime Putorti

The Library of Congress has catalogued the hardcover edition as follows:
Gerber, Michael E.

Awakening the entrepreneur within : how ordinary people can create
extraordinary companies / Michael E. Gerber.—1st ed.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-06-156814-5

1. Entrepreneurship. 2. Businesspeople. 3. Creative ability in business.
4. Leadership. 5. Success in business. I. Title.

HB615.G467 2008

658.1'1—dc22

2007048755

ISBN 978-0-06-156815-2 (pbk.)

To Luz Delia . . . my wife, my lover, my partner, my friend . . .

Your heart is the fuel that feeds my mind.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my mother, Helen, whose heart, beauty and grace are unquestionably divinely inspired.

To Steve Hanselman, my agent and friend, for listening to me when you didn't want to.

To Steve Gottry, my editor and ally, for doing even more than you promised you would.

To Ethan Friedman, my "guy at Harper," for believing in this book as much as I did.

And to Steve Ross for recognizing that Harper and I were destined to work together.

To Mark Ehrlich, my friend and chief negotiator, whose determination, love, and zealous intent it is to bring *The Dreaming Room* to everyone in the world.

To you dear Intentional Dreamers (you know who you are!), for staying the course when you least understood why.

To you E-Myth fanatics, wherever you are, for believing in me even when I had stopped believing in me, and for passing the word.

To you, all my faithful readers, who have stayed with me through all the ups and downs, the challenges and the doubts, the dire threats and the exuberances . . . how could any of us have succeeded at all without God, the Sublime, and His Universal Laws?

And, to my children: Axel, Kim, Hillary, Sam, and Alyx; I'm sure there will be a time either in this life or the next when all of our dis-

agreements will disappear to be seen for what they are: shifting shadows on the sublime light of God.

And to my newest children, Amethyst, Lynnez, and LuVenus, isn't this journey the strangest one of all?

And, finally, to my dear sparkling warriors of Chabad, whose spirit is never ending, whose force is to be reckoned with, whose utter joy is a constant amazement, and whose Dream of Moshiach is, as always, here and now, my Love, my commitment, my ever arising awe at your everlasting courage . . . L'Chaim.

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FOREWORD

In 1976, my wife Margie and I came to California on a sabbatical leave. I had just been promoted to full professor with tenure at the University of Massachusetts and Margie had just completed her Ph.D. there. Our intention was to stay in California for one year. That was more than thirty years ago. What happened? We caught the entrepreneurial bug. We decided to start our own leadership training and development company to pursue our dream of working with people we loved, making a difference in the world, and having fun. At that time we couldn't even spell the word "entrepreneur," and now we are ones! With offices in Escondido, California, Toronto, and London, plus partnerships in thirty nations, we have three hundred people working with us. By all standards we have been successful but, boy, has it been a bumpy ride.

It wasn't until the 1980s that we began getting on top of our finances. Our accountant told us we had probably been out of business several times but didn't know it. Three different times we brought in top managers from the outside, only to be disappointed and forced to take over leadership again. It would have been so helpful if Michael Gerber had been an ongoing consultant to us. It would have been a much smoother ride.

Michael Gerber has been widely regarded as "the world's number-one small business guru." That could appear to be an exaggeration, but I'm here to tell you it's not! Michael's bestselling *E-Myth* books

have helped countless readers transform dreams into workable ideas, ideas into empires, and even failing companies into resounding successes. Now, in *Awakening the Entrepreneur Within*, he grabs your heart, mind, and entire psyche all at once to show you how you can enter the Dreaming Room and create the previously unimaginable. I had so many “Aha!” moments while reading this book that I simply could not set it aside until I had absorbed every word. It could—no, it *will*—be your personal awakening; your life changer. If you are already an entrepreneur, it will help you be better. If you are thinking of pursuing an entrepreneurial dream, it will help you not fail. Enjoy the ride with Michael Gerber as your conductor.

—Ken Blanchard,
co-author of *The One Minute Manager*®
and *The One Minute Entrepreneur*™

PREFACE

If man knew that he never ceases creating even for an instant, he would realize through the Presence of God within himself, he could purify his miscreations and thus be free from his own limitations.

—Godfre Ray King, *Unveiled Mysteries*

Books are born just like a business is born. In the imagination. Books are sired by the Imagination, mothered by the Heart, then nurtured by the Intellect. In the end, the book is born, not created.

The book that follows is just such a birth.

It has come into being to live its life among you. But, truth be told, it has been alive in me for many, many months; indeed, for years. It contains a secret that each of you must discover for yourself—what it feels like to come alive in someone else’s mind, in someone else’s heart. A secret I, the author of this book, intend to share with you as it has been shared with me: the secret of dreaming a new life into the world.

Whether that life is a book, or a business, or a new relationship doesn’t really matter.

Whatever it becomes is a product of your imagination and your heart and your willingness to let go. Once you’ve done your part, you can settle back and wait to see what happens.

Oh, and did I mention love?

This book is a product of love. It is my gift to you, worthy reader, if you wish to know the truth about starting your own business. That

you are doing it for the right reason does not have to be true. (It rarely is true!) Your desire is enough. Reading this book will be fueled by your desire, just as writing it was fueled by mine.

As you read this book, it will begin to pick up heat from your imagination, and it will become a Story you don't dare put down until you've finished it. This book is a Great Story! And now you are reading it, and my work is done. Your desire is enough, just as my desire was. This is a book about desire. The love of what you are feeling right now, *deep* down in your heart.

There is a secret waiting for you in this book. It's called "the Dreaming Room!"

Enjoy it! Savor it! Eat it up for breakfast, lunch, and dinner!

Good Dreaming!

Michael E. Gerber
Chief Dreamer
In the Dreaming Room
Carlsbad, California
January 1, 2008

INTRODUCTION

For once you are going to hear a dream, a dream that I
have made sound . . . I dreamt all this: never could my
poor head have invented such a thing purposely.

—Richard Wagner

Over the past thirty years, I have worked intensively on the subject of entrepreneurship with tens of thousands of owners of small, medium, and large companies around the world trying to discover why people start companies, why so few succeed, what those that do succeed have in common, and what lessons others can learn from the dialogue I've been engaged in with these owners.

During that time I have recorded my findings in seven *E-Myth* books, all of which speak about the general conclusion I have reached in the process. That people who start a business are not the entrepreneurs we all believe them to be, but are what I have come to call “technicians suffering from an entrepreneurial seizure.”

Thus, in the titles of my books, such as *The E-Myth: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*, *E-Myth* stands for the “entrepreneurial myth,” the end product of which is most often a business and life disaster.

The E-Myth says that technicians suffering from an entrepreneurial seizure believe that because they understand how to do the work of the business they intend to start, they are automatically gifted with an understanding about how to build and grow a business that does that work.

In my *E-Myth* books, I call that “the Fatal Assumption.”

Fatal, because most small businesses that start that way, fail that way.

By believing that running a business is all about work, most small businesses don’t work; the people who start, run, and attempt to succeed in them, do work hard but fail.

And, as the E-Myth says, most businesses and the people who start them fail because they are doing the wrong work. I call this work “doing it, doing it, doing it.” The work of *being* the business, rather than *building* a business.

After teaching, coaching, training, and mentoring over 60,000 small business clients in the E-Myth methods, mind-set, and E-Myth process for changing that condition into one that works, I have discovered that everything we have taught our clients at E-Myth, while essential for growing a business once you’ve begun it, isn’t nearly essential enough. What happens in a small and growing business *after* it’s been started is only one small piece of the puzzle. It’s what happens *before* one starts a business that’s the key, and most essential, ingredient to business success.

The realization that I’ve come to is that the true start-up of a business is what happens before you start up.

It’s what I have come to call, in this book and in the work I am currently doing in the Dreaming Room, “the Start-Up Is You.”

THE START-UP IS YOU

Yes, the start-up is you and nothing but you. For you to be successful at creating an entrepreneurial company, something quintessential has to occur inside of you before you open your business’s doors, something I call the Moment of Inspiration, or that “sudden seeing.”

The sudden seeing is the epiphany that happens when in

one inscrutable, revelatory instant, the world reveals its secrets to you.

That is a rare and indelible moment indeed. It is there in that lucid moment of clarity that the entrepreneur is provided with a rare glimpse inside a mystery, which is what a business is. It is a mystery in which people, processes, systems, ideas and facts, customers, investors, technology, and an overriding single-minded purpose come together to produce an original result that people love to produce inside the company and that people love to buy outside of the company. The result is both economic and experiential—both emotionally and pragmatically compelling. It is a result worthy of having spent a lot of time, money, imagination, and energy to produce.

All of this is begun in the mind, heart, and imagination of an entrepreneur before anything else happens. All of this is begun through a process that usually comes about through an accident, an interaction, a confluence of forces no one intended, but that moved the momentum of the entrepreneur's fertile imagination to pick up and take notice, and then to pursue whatever impression came to his or her attention to discover where that momentum was going.

All of that and more is what this book is about.

It's about awakening the entrepreneur in you. It's about stimulating a clear understanding in you about what truly artful, effective, dedicated entrepreneurs do that moves them and the business products they invent beyond all the rest of us.

Ultimately, though, it's about being personally invited into the Dreaming Room, where new businesses, much like books, are born.



The first step in the Dreaming Room is the Introduction. You are there now. The sign at the entrance says, "Welcome to the Dreaming Room."

I hope you have your wits about you. I hope that your shirt is sweatproof, that you're not afraid of being denied entry, or of being let out should you somehow be allowed in. I hope you have a good sense of humor and that your inner child doesn't feel too threatened by someone like me, who most often doesn't have one.

I hope you're really serious about this adventure we're about to go on together, and that you won't hold me responsible if you come out burned, if you lose your nerve, if you give up on becoming an entrepreneur entirely, and are glad you've still got a job and a loving wife or husband to go home to. I hope all that and more, dear reader, because this is going to be hard work. Sometimes you'll enjoy it. You'll have fun. Other times you won't enjoy it—it simply won't be fun.

However, even when you're not having fun, I can promise you that you will be making progress toward a significant goal.

I can promise you something else, too: This book will not insult your intelligence with stories about little engines that could. It won't provide you with cute little metaphors about losing and winning. Nor will it stimulate you with success stories that never really happened except in the minds of the ones who created them.

You are not a child, so you and I should have some strange sort of fun as we lock the door behind us and beat the imaginary drum together, calling forth the wizards, the angels, the shamans who make magic seem like no difficult thing even though, for the rest of us, it is still magic after all. And it is one huge mother of a difficult thing when you don't know where your next meal is coming from.

At least that's what it has been like for me over the seventy years of my life, as I found it difficult oftentimes just to breathe, let alone create miracles called *businesses*.

Are you still with me? Do you want to hear more?

Then hear this: To create a miracle company, or a miracle life, takes a magnificent sense of the surreal. You have to be ready to see

things that fly away faster than a thought, and capture them in your lens without skipping a beat.

The Dreaming Room is serious, serious work.

It's a challenge to you, the reader, and a promise, if you accept my challenge . . . that we will tussle and wrestle and hammerlock each other, we will move into it with the most forceful language I can muster, to engage the mind in the electricity of what happens when serious, serious folks take on the serious, serious challenge of creating an enormous, mind-boggling Idea, a stunningly original company, that looks like nothing you or anyone else you know has ever seen or done before.

And especially because the treacherously depressing fact is that most will fail.

Yes, that's the humbling fact of it all. That entrepreneurs, even the very best of us, will rise up, be possessed by some strange delirium of inspired thought, rise up some more, and then start running, thinking all the time, "This is it! By God, this is it!" only to discover as we're rounding the corner, that we're about to run into a wall! There's no denying it. It's a wall, and *smack*, too late! It's a hit!

That's where the Dreaming Room begins, and stops, and begins again—in the face of the wall. *Pow!* You're down for the count, and you've started to get up. Now what? What happens when you've dusted yourself off? That's the question the Dreaming Room poses: Now what? Now where do we go? Now what's the next Big Idea waiting in the hopper of your suddenly humbled imagination? Are you ready to do that once more? Are you? Are you seriously ready to try again?

Well, let's go at it.

Welcome to the Dreaming Room.

Come Dream with me.

P A R T O N E



THE
PREPARATION

1

A Conversation with My Mother Leads to the Dreaming Room

All the influences were lined up waiting for me.
I was born and there they were to form me,
which is why I tell you more of them than of myself.

—Saul Bellow, *The Adventures of Augie March*

My mother is ninety-six, lives an active life, looks to be no more than sixty, and has a wonderful sense of humor about it all. “One day I won’t be here,” she says with a twinkle in her eye, “but don’t give me up for dead yet!”

My mother loves to talk, and she loves it even more when I talk. She loves it when I visit her and share my life with her. She eats up all my stories when I tell them, which I usually don’t because I can’t bear to hear them since I’m living them. She has read every one of my seven books, which amazes me since she has no interest in business.

She puts it this way: “Your books are you, Michael, and I get to experience you when I read what you’ve written. I love your books,”

she says, her eyes going deep when she says it, “because I love *you*. You’re a remarkable man, Michael. I know I’m your mother, and that’s what mothers are supposed to say and feel, but, please know that I mean it; even if I weren’t your mother, you are a remarkable man.” It’s always difficult for me to hear that when my mother says that because I don’t feel like a remarkable man. I just feel like me, which is not remarkable. But don’t we all feel that way?

So, in 2005, my mother asked me, “So, what’s going on in your life, Michael?”

“I’m feeling lost, Mom,” I said. “I’m sixty-nine years old and I’m feeling like I used to feel when I was a kid. I don’t know who I am anymore, or where I’m going. I feel disconnected from my company and disconnected from myself. I want to do something new but I don’t know what. I feel at a loss, disconnected from the past and the future, and not doing very well in the present, either. I don’t even know how to say it.”

My mother smiled, “Michael, if there’s one thing I know about you, you’re never at a loss for words! Tell me what you would tell me if you *did* know how to say it.” She sat there with that lovely enigmatic smile of hers.

“It’s just that, for the past twenty-nine years, I have been so immersed in creating my life, my books, my company, the world I live in, the speaking—all of it. It’s been my passion. And while it’s been difficult at times, it’s also been extraordinary beyond belief. I have been someone, have done something that few people have ever done, have come to this place in my life knowing that I’ve had a positive impact on millions of people in the world, and yet . . .”

I paused, feeling that I was missing the point somehow, but continued to push through it.

“Oh, God, that’s not really it, Mom; it’s something much less obvious. It’s that, yes, all that is true, but at the heart of it something

is missing in all of it. I have been so consumed with the path I was on I stopped looking at where it was taking me. It's like the path became the purpose. But the path I was on . . . still am on . . . is simply that, one path among many. And it could have been a million different paths, had I paid attention somewhere along the way; it could have been anything. I could have done anything, other than what I have done. And I'm feeling the loss of the many paths not chosen because of the one I did take. I have committed myself to becoming 'Mr. E-Myth' and I don't know how to disengage from him now that he's become such a reality to so many people, and to me. I guess what I'm saying is that I need to find a new path, and, at sixty-nine, I feel foolish and lost because I don't know how, or even why, I want to do it."

My mother said, "Michael, pardon me if I don't take what you've said seriously. You've never been at a loss for ideas. You're one of the most imaginative people I know. So, we both know it's not that you can't figure out what to do. It's that somehow you're not really dealing with the problem. Somehow you're avoiding what's really eating at you. What is it? What's making you feel so off?"

I suddenly knew what it was. It came to me so quickly, so immediately, so sharply, and clearly, that I was amazed I hadn't seen it until that minute.

"I'm afraid, Mom. I'm afraid to start something brand-new. I'm afraid that I won't have what it took me to start E-Myth all those years ago. That I could actually create something new that is as powerful as E-Myth has been. I'm afraid I'm too old, too used up, too stuck in my E-Myth rut. And, at the same time, I'm afraid to let go of E-Myth for fear that all the work I've done, all the life I've put in it, will simply lose force and die a slow and ugly death. I'm afraid that the people I've left it to won't cherish it as I do. Won't respect it as I respect it. Won't honor it the way it deserves to be honored. And, if that hap-

pens, then none of what I've done will really matter. It will end up being just a book. One book among millions of books, but what it has done for tens of thousands of people will stop. And I would hate that."

My mother had not stopped smiling during my rant, but her smile softened to a sadness, which was reflected in her pale eyes as she looked at me.

"Michael, I feel your pain. I do. I can only imagine how difficult it would be to have to start all over again. But, of course, you don't have to. You could do anything you wish to do now. The only reason you feel so conflicted is because you're coming awake to energy in you, the same energy that has been bubbling and bursting and playing inside of you ever since you were a little boy. Just let it, Michael. Stop thinking. Just let it bubble and burst and play inside you, and see what happens. It's telling you something. It's telling you that that little boy I love so much is just aching to come out. He's the one who is making such a ruckus in you. He's the one who created the E-Myth when everyone told you that you were crazy. He's the one who still wants to play, no matter what time it is, no matter what anybody has to say. Michael, you've always been like that. Let go, and let it do what it does. I have a feeling everything will change. It feels like it's time for something new to come into your life, Michael," my beautiful mother said. "Isn't that exciting?"

It was exactly at that moment when "In the Dreaming Room" was born in earnest: when an entirely new phase of my life began; when my inner entrepreneur was awakened, and a flood of new impressions catapulted me out of my lethargy and drew me to places I had never been before; when the inventor in me woke up and thought, "I'm awake!"

This was really good! It had been so many years since I had felt like this. As the entrepreneur within me began to see and feel and

think. As the entrepreneur within me began to say, “What if?” and “Why not?” and “Why doesn’t anyone know about that?”

All of that happened in the few weeks following my conversation with my mother, and it was more intensive work than I had done in the previous thirty years. But, in the thirty years prior to this epiphany—this moment of seeing clearly, this awakening of the entrepreneur within me—I had done everything I needed to do to prepare me to write this book. I was now ready to take millions of people—those who want to wake up the entrepreneur within them and discover an independent life—closer to their dreams than I had ever believed I could.

That is what this book is about. It’s that process, the awakening, that I want to describe to you.

Before I do that, let me set the rules of the game straight. The rules for playing the Game of the New Entrepreneur. The rules for inventing a new life out of nothing other than the most delightful, most remarkable and miraculous thing of all . . . your imagination.

Let’s look at the Five Realities of the Entrepreneur.

2

The Five Realities of the Entrepreneur

I believe there are two ways to look at a blank sheet of paper. The first way is that the blank sheet is the most frightening thing in the world because you have to put down the first mark and figure out what to do with it. The other way is to look at it and say, “Wow, I’ve got another blank piece of paper. This is the greatest opportunity in the world because I can now let my imagination fly in any direction and I can create whole new things.” I have spent a good part of my life convincing people that the blank sheet is the greatest opportunity in the world and is not frightening at all.

—Marty Sklar, Executive Vice President/Imagineering
Ambassador, Walt Disney Imagineering

REALITY #1

An entrepreneur is an inventor, although few inventors are entrepreneurs. An inventor sees the world through alert, wide-open eyes. An inventor lives asking the question, “What’s missing in this picture?” and then answers it by inventing the missing piece that makes the picture whole. He can’t help himself, it’s just what he is called to do. What an entrepreneur does next, however, is what makes the difference between him and all other inventors.

An entrepreneur invents new businesses. All other inventors invent new products. To the entrepreneur, the business he or she invents *is* a product, a unique product that stands out in a world of ordinary business products and, through its uniqueness, captures the attention and imagination of the people for whom it was invented: its customer, its employees, its suppliers, and its lenders and investors.

To the degree a business does not achieve that uniqueness, that originality, from the very beginning, it is not an invention. To the degree a business is not an invention, it is not an entrepreneurial business. While being an entrepreneurial business is not a guarantee of success, failing to be an entrepreneurial business is a guarantee of failure.

REALITY #2

Entrepreneurs do not *buy* business opportunities; they *create* them. While business opportunities such as franchises are more likely to guarantee the success of the person who buys them, they are only successful to the degree the buyer suppresses his or her inclination to invent—suppresses his or her entrepreneurial passion. Therefore, entrepreneurs who buy business opportunities are doomed to disappointment, no matter how successful the business is. The passion of the entrepreneur is not to run a successful business—not to run a business someone else invented—but to invent a unique business that becomes successful.

Business opportunities are invented for technicians or managers to run who have no aspiration to be entrepreneurs—who have no aspiration to create anything of their own other than a successful job. Ninety-nine percent of business opportunities are actually jobs for the people who buy them. They may be better jobs (most actually aren't!) than the ones the buyers had before, but they are still jobs,

not true business opportunities. A true business opportunity is the one that an entrepreneur invents to grow him or herself. Not to work in, but to work on. That's the work of an entrepreneur.

REALITY #3

Invention is contagious. People love to experience an original business idea that has been successfully manifested in the world. So, the entrepreneur's passion comes not only from inventing a new business but also from basking in the delight of other people as they gladly experience his or her invention. The entrepreneur, in this sense, is no different from a performer whose love for what he or she does is dramatically increased by the enthusiastic response from the audience.

For the entrepreneur, there is nothing more satisfying than when the audience applauds the performance. Every customer who buys from the entrepreneur's business and then comes back for more is applauding the entrepreneur's originality, brilliance, and successful performance. The entrepreneur loves accolades, lives for the successful manifestation of the invention, and finds joy only when the audience and the business truly come together as originally envisioned.

Once the business has achieved that level of success, sustaining it becomes the primary focus of the entrepreneur. The more significant the invention, the easier it is to sustain its success. The less significant the invention, the more difficult it is to sustain its success.

REALITY #4

To an entrepreneur, the success of the invention—the business—is measured by growth. The faster the business grows, the more successful is the invention. The slower the business grows, the less successful is the invention. To an entrepreneur, *slow* growth or *no* growth

is death. To be caught up in a slow- or no-growth business is to be doomed to show up every day to perform in a show nobody enjoys.

On Broadway, shows that nobody enjoys close quickly. Businesses that nobody enjoys should close quickly so that everyone can go out looking for an experience they love.

Unfortunately, most businesses don't close soon enough. They just linger on and on and on, surviving as best they can. Entrepreneurs should never create a business simply because it can survive. To do so would be to commit oneself to daily dying. Entrepreneurs create businesses that thrive. To the entrepreneur, "There's no business like show business!" It's always, "Let's get on with the show!"

REALITY #5

Everyone possesses the ability to be an entrepreneur—to invent, to conceive of a great idea for a new business, and to create an original business based upon a simple but explosive idea. For some of us it may take longer to develop that ability, it may take more work. For others it may take little more than the awareness of what differentiates the entrepreneur from the manager and the technician to set off a flood of entrepreneurial excitement. In either case, however, it is necessary for each of us to know that learning to invent, to create, to conceive of an original business is both a process of discovery and the development of the patience necessary to sustain one's interest while developing one's skill.

Developing one's entrepreneurial skill calls for practice. That does not mean that you have to start a business to develop that skill—not at first, in any case. It simply means you have to develop the practice of creating new ideas for a business, again and again, just as all inventors do. All that's required is a blank piece of paper and beginner's mind. All that's required is the interest to begin.

Entrepreneurs are made, not born. There is no corner on creativity. There is simply the desire to express it. Once that desire appears, you can be assured that you have awakened the entrepreneur within. The very presence of that desire means that the entrepreneur is up and dreaming.

Before we can begin the process in earnest, you must understand that these five realities are defined and expressed by four dimensions of the entrepreneurial personality: the Dreamer, the Thinker, the Storyteller, and the Leader. Because it is the way entrepreneurs function in the real world that enables them to pursue untold business opportunities and then manifest their abilities to create a successful venture or successful ventures.