

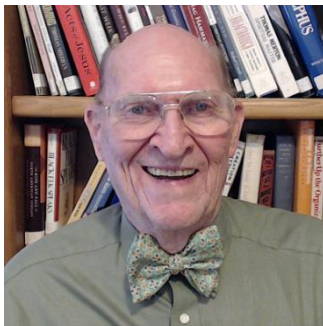


50+Living our best lives now and in the future!

Success and The Seventh Stage According to “Story Gordon”

Even though Gordon “Story Gordon” Hill had earned a degree in electrical engineering, his wife encouraged him to continue taking classes. About a year ago, Hill lost the love of his life, his wife of 63 years.

After she was gone, he enrolled in graduate school to “fill a void” in his life. His goal is to earn an MA in English—a course of study he believes will offer valuable skills to fulfill his purpose.



At 83, Hill has already completed half of his required coursework for his MA. Knowing that his wife had always encouraged his pursuit of education has been “reinforcing” for Hill.

Each morning, Hill starts his day with a “cuppa” coffee and a writing meditation—something he has done for thirty years. Then, he checks his social media accounts. Recently, he also started writing a weekly column called “Successfulness” for a local newspaper.

Hill embraces his best life as an original—someone who finds his greatest success in being true to who he really is. “Living as the original is my preference because an original is more valuable than a copy.”

“I am in the seventh stage of living. I believe we all move through the first three: childhood, adolescence, and ‘individuation’ (a Jungian term). After that, we may have one more. I have experienced four more, each marked by a different quest.”

Hill believes that in the seventh stage of life, we reach our philosophical plateau” and can become advocates.” He sees himself as an advocate or an “ambassador for success—an original encouraging originality.” He speaks and writes to offer his thoughts about success for others to consider.

A Quest That Began with Some Failures

Gordon “Story Gordon” Hill began his quest for success in the eighth grade. That’s when his first love dumped him because he was “being a jerk.” After experiencing this break-up, Hill realized that he had an opportunity to reevaluate his actions. “Who wants to succeed at being a jerk?” Fortunately, he learned from his early relationship ‘failure’ and married the love of his life a few years later.

“If success—accomplishing an aim or purpose—is our living premise, failures are gut checks worth evaluating in reforming our mission and vision. In simple terms, it’s about answering the question, ‘Whadda ya want?’ and then deciding how to achieve it.”

“My failures have been understandable.” For example, “I failed at college the first time because I wasn’t committed.” Hill then joined the Air Force and trained as a radar technician; because he was “committed to achieving competence,” he excelled in this area and became a technical instructor.

Following His Own Path

When Hill returned to college, he earned his degree in electrical engineering and worked in the field for a year. But when he was strongly encouraged to become a manager, he quit. Instead, he followed a course that rang true for him—he began working with technology. He accepted a position as a sales engineer giving presentations on “scientific computers” and on modem technology. He also sold products to engineering departments. His work with technology and sales led to a next step—he started a seminar company developing and delivering multi-day seminars on computer networks and the Internet. “Success is simple, but it’s not easy—it flows from a belief that living as who we are and who we keep becoming is our core goal.”

Small Successes Matter

“For me, too many are focused on the big successes which flow from the hundreds or thousands or millions of small successes. When I awake in the morning, success. If that coffee pot works, success. I’m seeking an MA in English; every lesson and paper are successes.”

Becoming Story Gordon

In the early 1990s, Hill acquired his first website, Explainer(dot)com, to support the high-tech Internet

seminars that he was offering. “It was my hallmark as Gordon Hill, Explainer.”

When he retired in 2001, Hill’s website went dormant as he began spending his time doing volunteer work—including work as a tour guide at Gila Cliff Dwellings. In about 2005, a New York Internet attorney asked to buy Hill’s domain name. After initially declining, the attorney offered him more money and then more until Hill’s wife said, “Sell it!” He did. “The Washington Post



became the new owner. It is now owned by The Slate Group but dormant.” When creating a new website, “I decided on storygordon.com because I see stories as the lifeblood of living and success.”



For Relaxation

“Writing is relaxing. I drink coffee during my writing meditation first thing every morning. It sets the initial condition (a simulation engineering term) for the day. I also like to watch a movie several times a week. Most recently, I watched *Stand and Deliver*, *Secretariat*, and *The Big Sleep*. Note that they are all about people facing tough situations they then resolve.”

Advice to Others

As the Irish poet Oscar Wilde once said, “Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.”

“There’s an evolving original, a singularity in each of us. Attend to it with two provisos:”

(1) “Be more helpful to self, others, and the rest more than not,” and (2) “What others think of you is none of your business unless you are being hurtful.”

Authenticity

Writing for [Mindbodygreen](#), psychiatrist, Samantha Boardman, M.D. suggests that when people act in ways that are consistent with their values, they are more likely to feel like they are being true to themselves—or authentic.

As indicated in a post on the [Ethics Sage](#) website, our values help guide and motivate our actions, and “provide general guidelines for conduct.”

What do you truly value? How do your values help guide your behaviors?

No More File Drawers Crammed with Statements and “Do We Need to Keep?” Documents

We used to have several statements and documents of all sorts crammed into three or four file cabinet drawers. Because we learned about the Playbook process, my husband and I have all our essential documents in a single binder. We also learned what we didn’t need to save.

Because we have necessary statements and documents in a single, organized binder, we can quickly get a holistic view of our financial goals and legal affairs (wills, trusts, real estate, etc.). We can also identify any holes in our plan and organize everything for the family member(s) who will eventually need to handle our affairs.



Ben James, CFA, CFP, and founder of Elevate Wealth Management, explains the Playbook process in his book, [The Playbook: 7 Fundamentals of Financial Planning](#). This easy-to-understand guide will walk you through the basics.

My husband and I felt pretty good about having put together our Playbook. But after we watched a Vimeo video of Ben’s recent Playbook webinar, [Advisor Reveals Playbook on Vimeo](#), we got a good overview of what an ideal Playbook could look like. We also learned why having summary pages could make life a lot easier for whoever ends up taking over our affairs when we’re gone.

If you want to learn more, you can access the free video by clicking the Vimeo link above.

Lifelong Learning Institutes

Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes offer noncredit courses for adult learners 50+ without grades or assignments. Currently, there are 120 Osher Institutes located at universities and colleges throughout the United States.

For more information on Osher Institute locations in your area, costs, and how they work, check out The Bernard Osher Foundation [website](#).

Women and Essential Financial Decisions

By Cindy Eastman



Twenty years ago, I worked as a financial advisor, and nearly all of my clients were women. I really enjoyed that career, but I’ve since dropped my securities license and now work as an insurance agent specializing in health insurance.

A lifetime of experience has taught me a lot, and if I could help even one person with their decision-making by giving my perspective, that would please me. I’ve made my own mistakes as well.

The Value of Good Advice

First, I'd really encourage people to find the right financial advisor or insurance agent to help them make good decisions. Some people might think that financial advisors will cost too much, but trust me, they're not nearly as costly as the mistakes people make!

As for my business, there are absolutely no costs to use my services as a health insurance advisor. The insurance companies pay out the same whether a person found their own insurance or not. Whether it's figuring out the marketplace plans or Medicare plans, it's very helpful to have professional help walking through the complex maze of health insurance, Medicare, and supplemental plans. I've seen people make no decisions or bad decisions simply because they didn't understand that they have options. Sometimes, the outcomes are devastating, either to their health or to their finances, or both. Most bankruptcies started with a medical event.

What Every Woman Needs to Understand

Second, everyone should at least understand the basics of their finances and investments. Years ago, I'd meet women who often said that their husbands "handled all of that" and gave it no more thought. Mistake! Not all men necessarily have the skills to invest wisely, and women should not assume that all is well. Women often have to spend many years alone, living with the consequences of how their finances were handled; it's not wise to simply leave it to chance. Some of the poorest people in our communities are older women who may only live on social security.

Learn the Facts Before It's Too Late

Finally, learn the facts before it's too late to do anything about it. Medicare doesn't pay for long-term care insurance, for example. Understandably, people sometimes prefer to put their heads in the sand and not think about it until it's too late. Many

more solutions are available today that were not available twenty years ago, so get to know the facts. You can always choose not to take action, but it's best to understand the possible pitfalls and the possible options before you choose.

Serving As an Advocate

As for me, as an advisor, I care about all people, but I certainly have seen much more suffering among older women. I view myself as an advocate for the people I serve. In summary, it's best to find an advisor you like and trust; it's very important that women take control of their money and get the facts so they can plan for the future.

Cindy Eastman is a health insurance at HealthMarkets. Cindy can be contacted at her website: ealthMarkets.com/ceastman or ceastman@healthmarkets.com or 541-733-8383.

Women's Equality Day

Each year on August 26th, we celebrate Women's Equality Day. This day "commemorates the passage of women's suffrage in the U.S. and reminds us of the hurdles overcome by the heroic women who faced violence and discrimination to propel the women's movement forward. One of those women was Susan B. Anthony. It has been said that she did some of her best work leading the fight for the ballot in her fifties and beyond. She was still advocating for access to the ballot until her mid-eighties.

The Unfinished Business of Wally Funk

(This article was [first published in Booming Encore](#) and is being reprinted with permission from the author.)

By Mike Drak

I love reading and writing stories about retirement rebels who are shattering the limits of how people their age should act and look like. It's even better when the story is about a woman.

Wally Funk Should Have Been in Space by Now

In 1961, she was the youngest member of the “Mercury 13,” a group of 13 women tested and trained for NASA’s astronaut program at the height of the space race. But she was denied a spot four times because of the discriminatory policies preventing women from becoming astronauts even though she had passed the same grueling physical and psychological tests as her male counterparts.

“They told me that I had done better and completed the work faster than any of the guys,” Ms. Funk said. They said, “Well, you’re a girl, you can’t do that,” she recalled, “I said – guess what? Doesn’t matter what you are, you can still do it if you want to do it, and I like to do things that nobody’s ever done.”

Writing this post reminded me of the time when women were denied the right to run the marathon. But things changed when [Kathrine Switzer](#) managed to sneak on the Boston marathon course in 1967 and showed that women had the “right stuff.”

Because of women like Katherine, the women’s marathon was added to the Olympics in 1984, almost ninety years after the men’s event.

Retirement rebels like Funk are changing how people are thinking about longevity and retirement. A woman flying into space at age 82 isn’t supposed to be happening, but it is.

Retirement Rebels like Funk make us all feel fearless. They are changing the social fabric by breaking down limitations and showing us what is possible in retirement.

We have been brainwashed into believing that people aren’t supposed to be celebrating their 100th birthday by going skydiving, or going into space at age 82, or attempting an Ironman in their 80’s or starting a new business in their 70’s or going back

and finishing that degree they never finished in their 90’s. Still, they are, and they are the people having fun in retirement.

Retirement Rebels like Funk remain kids at heart, living on the edge, exploring their potential, traveling to new places, meeting new people, learning new technology, entering marathons in different countries, and posting all about it on social media.

On July 20th, 2021, Funk, at age 82, [fulfilled her lifelong dream of flying to space](#) aboard Jeff Bezos’s “Blue Origin,” which was launched on the anniversary of Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin’s Apollo 11 moon landing in 1969. Funk was the oldest person to go into space, beating the record held by John Glen, who went on a space shuttle flight at age 77.

About the author

Mike Drak is the Author of the best-selling book Victory Lap Retirement and Retirement Heaven or Hell - Which Will You Choose. Along with being an Author, Mike is also an award-winning blogger, retirement coach, and public speaker and has made appearances on BNN, CBC Radio, and iHeart radio. He is a thirty-eight-year veteran of the financial services industry and lives with his wife Melina in Toronto, Canada. You can contact Mike through [LinkedIn](#).

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