

BE PERSISTENT AND WORK HARD

Seize Those Long Shots

5 Opportunity might knock. More often, it's a faint tap. How go-getters turn small openings into big breaks:

■ Be a go-getter. "Nothing in this world is going to be handed to you." So says ex-pro football running back Vernon Turner.

In his book, "The Next Level," Turner recounts how he converted a troubled childhood into a six-year career in the National Football League — highlighted by his 80-yard punt return for a touchdown for the Tampa Bay Bucs in 1993. How to achieve pro-level success? "I always focused on the things I had the hardest time doing," Turner told IBD. "You can't cut corners."

■ Respect authority. Years earlier, facing turmoil at home, Turner stopped showing up for practice with his youth football team.

His coach wouldn't have it. "He tracked me down at the park and he said: 'Young man, you never quit,'" Turner said. "I had good enough sense to listen to people who tried to guide me the right way."

■ Aim higher. Turner set his sights on an NFL career — not for fame, but for the paycheck.

His mother, a drug addict, died during his sophomore year in high school, and his stepfather passed away just as Turner began college.

Four younger siblings needed financial support. So Turner pushed his athletic limits to get noticed at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn. — not a frequent stop for NFL scouts.

"I had to work twice as hard, if not three times as hard," Turner said. "I had driving forces."

■ Deal with ancient history. Some people slam the door on success due to fear of failure. Others let baggage like dysfunctional up-brings get in the way. "They carry that into their adult life," said Eldonna Lewis-Fernandez, motivational speaker and career coach.

It can show up as negative self-

talk, like: I'm not good enough.

"Thoughts are things," Lewis-Fernandez said. "What you think about, you bring about."

Do the personal work, she advises, to let go of painful pasts.

■ Rub solid shoulders. Positive people help push you forward, so surround yourself with good influences. "You can pick your friends and people you associate with," Lewis-Fernandez said.

■ Use your resources. A devastating 2001 drought in Kenya presented a challenge for Philip Leakey, son of famed paleontologists Louis and Mary Leakey. Local tribesmen — Phillip's neighbors — had to travel long distances to find grazing land for their cattle. "Some of them were gone for two years," Leakey said. "We were feeding over 100 families at our own expense."

Leakey wanted to give them something more dignified — work. But how to make money on the African plain? He and his artist wife, Katy, decided to teach the Maasai women to make beaded jewelry from native grass — stuff that's too tough for cattle to eat.

Sold globally, the jewelry helps the Leakey Collection employ 1,200 Kenyans.

"I get a lot of satisfaction helping people be self-sufficient and self-sustaining," Leakey said.

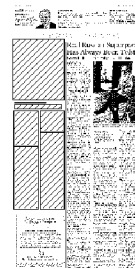
■ Flesh out ideas. The tent Leakey lives in is shadowed by a marula tree. His inkling to make use of marula nuts turned — after considerable trial and error — into a lotion recently recognized by the New York International Gift Fair as one of the year's best products.

Inquisitiveness pays off.

"I grew up being taught to pursue my interests and curiosity in things," Leakey said.

■ Be a pioneer. Self-reliance is the rule for doing business in Africa. "We like to start from square one, hands-on and figure it out ourselves," Leakey said.

Sonja Carberry



IBD'S 10 SECRETS TO SUCCESS

Investor's Business Daily has spent years analyzing leaders and successful people in all walks of life. Most have 10 traits that, when combined, can turn dreams into reality. Each day, we highlight one.

HOW YOU THINK IS EVERYTHING: Always be positive. Think success, not failure. Beware of a negative environment.

DECIDE UPON YOUR TRUE DREAMS AND GOALS: Write down your specific goals and develop a plan to reach them.

TAKE ACTION: Goals are nothing without action. Don't be afraid to get started. Just do it.

NEVER STOP LEARNING: Go back to school or read books. Get training and acquire skills.

5 BE PERSISTENT AND WORK HARD: Success is a marathon, not a sprint. Never give up.

LEARN TO ANALYZE DETAILS: Get all the facts, all the input. Learn from your mistakes.

FOCUS YOUR TIME AND MONEY: Don't let other people or things distract you.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO INNOVATE; BE DIFFERENT: Following the herd is a sure way to mediocrity.

DEAL AND COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE EFFECTIVELY: No person is an island. Learn to understand and motivate others.

BE HONEST AND DEPENDABLE; TAKE RESPONSIBILITY: Otherwise, Nos. 1-9 won't matter.