

5 Habits That Propelled Rockefeller to Fame and Fortune

For many, the name John D. Rockefeller conjures up images of a wealthy but monopolizing oil tycoon. But while many might have an unfavorable opinion of Rockefeller, they would likely be eager to know how to follow in his steps, particularly in regard to money-making.

In his work entitled [*Random Reminiscences of Men and Events*](#), Rockefeller gives a glimpse of the elements which led to his success. Five of these are summarized below:

1. He Kept Careful Financial Records

As a small boy, Rockefeller's father taught him the value of money by training him to keep track of every transaction. Rockefeller wrote:

"I kept a little book which I remember I called Ledger A – and this little volume is still preserved – containing my receipts and expenditures as well as an account of the small sums that I was taught to give away regularly."

2. He Used Every Opportunity to Learn

In his late teens, Rockefeller entered a bookkeeping apprenticeship with a local business. He gradually worked his way up in the company because he kept his eyes and ears open.

“[M]y work was done in the office of the firm itself. I was almost always present when they talked of their affairs, laid out their plans, and decided upon a course of action. I thus had an advantage over other boys of my age, who were quicker and who could figure and write better than I. The firm conducted a business with so many ramifications that this education was quite extensive.”

3. He Was a Good Employee

Rather than get by with a minimal amount of work or effort, Rockefeller treated his employer's time and money with utmost respect, making sure to never waste his employer's resources.

*“I was studying the same plumber's bills in great detail, checking every item, if only for a few cents, and finding it to be greatly to the firm's interest to do so... I had trained myself ... that my check on a bill was the executive act which released my employer's money from the till and **was attended with more responsibility than the spending of my own funds.**”*

4. He Stuck to His Principles

Rockefeller early on established how he wanted to run his business. He stuck to his principles even during an incident which angered his partner and threatened to cost them their best customer. Because of his resolve, he and his partner not only retained their customer, but also gained a name as a trustworthy and reliable company.

5. He Practiced Humility

The great and early success that Rockefeller experienced gave him easy cause for boasting. Instead, he daily cautioned himself against growing prideful:

“‘Now a little success, soon you will fall down, soon you will be overthrown. Because you have got a start, you think you are quite a merchant; look out, or you will lose your head – go steady.’ These intimate conversations with myself, I am sure, had a great influence on my life. I was afraid I could not stand my prosperity, and tried to teach myself not to get puffed up with any foolish notions.”

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