

Joel Contartese Shares 5 Lessons On The American Dream

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America has long been a hub for prosperity and the American Dream has served as a symbol for the endless possibilities offered to those who have the conviction to work hard.

5 Ranging from John D. Rockefeller to Bill Gates, countless individuals with grit and vision have conquered the business world to reach the pinnacle of success. These luminaries litter the history of American business. As the world becomes increasingly digital and other nations offer opportunity rivaling ours, many wonder if the American Dream is dying.

10 However, Joel Contartese, an American immigrant entrepreneur, can attest that the American Dream is still alive and well. His experience of coming to the United States and working diligently to better himself and his family is another inspirational tale of the American Dream offering success to those who work for it.

Throughout his struggles and successes, Contartese has learned a number of lessons about how the American Dream has changed over the years and what it means to live this dream.

1. Focus On The People

As Contartese says, “The American Dream means the ability to do what I want, when I want, with whoever I want.”

He adds a particular emphasis on the “whoever” since American society, equipped with social networks, means that even an impoverished immigrant is able to talk to and work with the most successful members. Contartese notes many people overlook the importance of who they surround themselves with and merely buy into the flawed visions of the circumstances around them.

Maybe their friend next door becomes their business partner, despite a lack of qualifications. Or maybe a relative urges them into a field about which they initially were not very passionate. But embrace the American Dream and allow yourselves to live and work with people who will best empower your personal success.

2. Fight For Your Aspirations

One of the biggest components of the American Dream is that no one will give you success. You need to fight for your aspirations. Know what you want and why, and if you are willing to work harder than everyone else, then you can attain it. As Contartese told me, “America provides plenty of tools to help you achieve your dreams, you just have to fight for it.” While many people will say you are unable to tackle your lofty ambitions, you just need to dig down and be willing to get gritty.

3. Take Unconventional Paths

Contartese dropped out of college partly because he could not afford it but also because he felt it was not the right path for him. One of the great parts of the American Dream is that it is set upon the belief that your background or journey does not matter; all that matters is if you want your dream bad enough. Rather than force yourself into “conventional” paths that are not the right fit for you or might not be worth the costs, take unconventional paths that will provide the most benefits in the long run.

4. Roll With The Punches

Throughout Contartese’s journey, he has had moments he wished never happened and

45 moments he wished had never ended. But regardless of what transpired, he regrets
nothing. As he states, every good and bad incident in his life offered him a lesson and
contributed to the person he is today.

50 While navigating the sometimes treacherous waters of the American business world, it is
important to always maintain a view of the bigger picture and never let any one thing
affect your overall focus. Roll with the punches and always know what your larger goal
is in life.

5. There Is No Underdog

Too often people buy into the idea that society is rigged for some and against
others. While some may have certain benefits from birth, ultimately Contartese says
that there are no underdogs. Just those who work hard and those who do not.
55 No matter the amount of wealth in your parents' bank or the "leg up" you have from
your family, a willingness to work will bring you success and an unwillingness will lead to
struggle. Money is fleeting and connections are reliant on results, so ultimately work
ethic is all that matters in modern America.

60 The American Dream stands as a beacon of hope for those without plentiful resources
but with plenty of passion to change their lives for the better. Regardless of where you
began or what you want, if you come to America and work hard enough, you can achieve
your dream. Contartese has had personal experiences with this and has witnessed just
how little status means in the short run, as long as you are committed to bettering
yourself and those around you; success will follow.

Brian is an international speaker and branding expert.