

Why People Fail

A series of No B.S. Articles from Dan Kennedy

Will "The Secret Millionaire" Arrive At Your Door? Not If You're Sitting Around Waiting For Him



Dan Kennedy, The
"Millionaire Maker"

A new TV program, loosely swiped from a TV show of long ago, debuts tonight on Fox. As I understand it, in "The Secret Millionaire" we will see millionaires go undercover, work for a week in some poorly paid job and live as the oppressed workers and economically troubled live. The millionaires will find one of the downtrodden they meet especially worthy and, revealing themselves as "secret millionaires," will whip out their checkbooks and give the deserving individual big bundles of money. It's sort of a privatized bailout.

It'll be exciting, like Oprah gifting cars. People will cry, just like on the home make-over show, where they give people remodeling jobs or entire homes for free. On the surface, there's nothing seriously wrong with it, and its clever television, especially now. It does, as I said, borrow from a TV show of decades back, when a millionaire arrived as a surprise on a doorstep.

"Secret Millionaire" even borrows a bit from the ancient "Queen For a Day" show – because that's all it is: like lottery winnings, most entirely unearned windfalls disappear "in a day," leaving behind more harm done than good. "Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish" – and require that he go fish – "feed him for life."

Therein is the problem. In "Secret Millionaire" we can see TV reflecting and reinforcing societal and political trends that put us all in peril.

This is basically a game show with no game. Most game shows still require some skill, and contestants actually prepare by drilling in advance for 'Jeopardy,' or getting into fit shape for 'Survivor,' or rehearsing for 'American Idol.' The tireless 'Wheel Of Fortune' requires you know the difference between vowel and consonant. On NBC's wildly popular "Deal or No Deal," they wisely eliminated all requirements of knowing *anything* or having *any* skills; you need only guess the right suitcase and be able to tolerate Howie Mandel to win a million dollars.

But "Secret Millionaire" goes a step further. It asks nothing and hands out money for free. It asks for no special preparation, effort, skill or talent in advance. And of course, it asks for nothing in return.

As such, the show reinforces the dangerous idea so harmful to the working poor that simply because they are working poor, they deserve to have somebody hand them a bunch of money. They need only and hope for such an occurrence. Even better, the money is transferred to them from the rich, who have too much of it.

Fox missed something here that would have made the show much more popular. The secret millionaires should be ripped from their mansions and office penthouses by force and compelled to play, their money taken from them involuntarily. But even as is, we shouldn't miss the point that it could be called 'The Re-Distribution Of Wealth Show.'

Now, here's what you *won't* see on any major network: A show where "The Secret Millionaire" rewards people based on their productivity and investment of time and effort. Nobody doles out cash to those who have worked hard, educated themselves, scrimped and saved, responsibly bought homes and cars they could afford, started and built businesses, and created employment opportunities for others.

Nor will you see a show called "The Self-Made Main Street Millionaire" about people who have started with nothing or less than nothing and made fortunes through relatively ordinary small businesses and prudent financial behavior over time. There are far, far more of those than there are Paris Hiltons, A-Rods and Wall Street types.

You won't see this not just because no one would watch, but because it's reality TV that would contradict the philosophical belief the media folks hold dear and the ideas they wish to sell: Pulling oneself up by bootstraps is passé and freakish and no longer practical in today's America. The Have's only have by luck and theft and have too much. And the Have-Nots can only be helped by hand-outs.

*The WHY PEOPLE FAIL articles are provided by Dan S. Kennedy, serial entrepreneur, from-scratch multi-millionaire, speaker, consultant, coach, author of 13 books including the No B.S. series (www.NoBSBooks.com), and editor of The No B.S. Marketing Letter. **WE HAVE ARRANGED A SPECIAL FREE GIFT FROM DAN FOR YOU** including a 2-Month Free Membership in Glazer-Kennedy Insider's Circle, newsletters, audio CD's and more.*

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