

当幸福 来敲门

〔英文版〕

The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS

(美) 克里斯·加德纳 (Chris Gardner) 著

*A poignant journey was from
homeless single fatherhood to the
pinnacle of Wall Street.*



清华大学出版社

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by Chirs Gardner with Quincy Troupe and Mim Eichler Rivas

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Praise for

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

“An inspiring story of how an incredibly determined man made it to the big-time boardroom, and stayed there. It serves as a tremendous lesson in tenacity. It’s a great story.”

—Donald Trump

“An incredible journey of overcoming the impossible.”

— The Three Doctors, authors of the *New York Times* bestsellers *The Pact* and *We Beat the Street*

“Gardner chronicles his long, painful, ultimately rewarding journey from inner city Milwaukee to the pinnacle of Wall Street.”

— *Publishers Weekly*

“You can come from nowhere and still end up somewhere great. You could find yourself homeless and feel helpless and yet still become a visionary leader and supercharitable philanthropist. Chris Gardner did it and his book will inspire you to do the same or more.”

—Mark Victor Hansen and Robert G. Allen, coauthors of *The One Minute Millionaire* and *Cracking the Millionaire Code*

“Real, exciting, courageous, this story is universal and just might provide us with a new understanding of the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. A page-turner, *The Pursuit of Happiness* will keep you up at night.”

—Reverend Cecil Williams, Glide United Methodist

“The Pursuit of Happyness unblinkingly focuses on universal topics like domestic abuse, illiteracy, mental illness, child molestation, alcoholism, poverty and homelessness—while serving as a roadside assistance for all the ‘babby daddies’ in need of help on the path to fatherhood.”

—*Jet*

“This success story is a peek into the grit and truth of a life without compromise.”

—*Upscale*

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on . . .

—“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes

Acknowledgments

My mother always stressed to me that the most important words in the English language are *please* and *thank you*. With that in mind I would like to thank some of the folks that I have been blessed to have in my life and also helped me with the most challenging task of attempting to write this book.

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Mim Eichler Rivas helped me to open up my soul. Quincy put down what happened—Mim put down how what happened *felt*. If there is any sense of feeling, passion, or dreams here, it is all due to Mim.

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the godfather, the Original Big Will, Willie L. Brown; and my godmother Charlene Mitchell.

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Author's Note

This is a work of nonfiction. I have rendered the events faithfully and truthfully just as I have recalled them. Some names and descriptions of individuals have been changed in order to respect their privacy. To anyone whose name I did not recall or omitted, I offer sincere apologies. While circumstances and conversations depicted herein come from my keen recollection of them, they are not meant to represent precise time lines of events or exact word-for-word reenactments of my life. They are told in a way that evokes the real feeling and meaning of what was said and my view of what happened to me, in keeping with the true essence of the mood and spirit of those moments that shaped my life.

PROLOGUE

Go Forward

Whenever I'm asked what exactly it was that helped guide me through my darkest days not only to survive but to move past those circumstances and to ultimately attain a level of success and fulfillment that once sounded impossible, what comes to mind are two events.

One of them took place in the early 1980s, when I was twenty-seven years old, on an unusually hot, sunny day in the Bay Area. In the terminally overcrowded parking lot outside of San Francisco General Hospital, just as I exited the building, a flash of the sun's glare temporarily blocked my vision. As I refocused, what I saw changed the world as I knew it. At any other point in my life it wouldn't have struck me so powerfully, but there was something about that moment in time and the gorgeous, red convertible Ferrari 308 that I saw slowly circling the lot—driven by a guy obviously in search of a parking spot—that compelled me to go and have a life-changing conversation with him.

Some years before, fresh out of the Navy, I had first arrived in San Francisco—lured to the West Coast by a prestigious research job and the opportunity to work for one of the top young heart surgeons in the country. For a kid like me who'd barely stepped foot outside the six-block square of the 'hood in Milwaukee—not counting my three-year stint as a Navy medic in North Carolina—San Francisco was the be-all and end-all. The city was the Land of Milk and Honey and the Emerald City of Oz rolled into one. Rising up out of the bay into golden glowing mists of possibility, she seduced me from the start, showing off her studded hills and plunging valleys as she laid herself out with arms open. At night the town was an aphrodisiac—with city lights like rare jewels sparkling down from Nob

Hill and Pacific Heights, through the better neighborhoods and along the rougher streets of the Mission and the Tenderloin (my new 'hood), spilling out of the towers of the Financial District and reflecting into the bay by Fisherman's Wharf and the Marina.

In the early days, no matter how many times I drove west over the Bay Bridge from Oakland, or north from Daly City heading toward the Golden Gate Bridge, which stretches right up to the horizon before dropping down into Marin County, those views of San Francisco were like falling in love all over again. Even as time went by and I got hip to the weather—the periods of gray foggy skies alternating with days of bone-chilling rain—I'd wake up to one of those glorious, perfect San Francisco days and the beauty wiped away all memory of the gloom. San Francisco remains in my mind to this day the Paris of the Pacific.

Of course, back then, it didn't take long to discover that she was also deceptive, not necessarily easy, sometimes coldhearted, and definitely not cheap. Between steep rents and the chronic car repairs caused by the toll the hills took on transmissions and brakes—not to mention that pile of unpaid parking tickets all too familiar to most San Franciscans—staying afloat could be a challenge. But that wasn't going to mar my belief that I'd make it. Besides, I knew enough about challenge. I knew how to work hard, and in fact, over the next years, challenges helped me to reshape my dreams, to reach further, and to pursue goals with an increased sense of urgency.

In early 1981, when I became a first-time father, overjoyed as I was, that sense of urgency kicked up another notch. As the first months of my son's life flew by, I not only tried to move ahead faster but also began to question the path that I'd chosen, wondering if somehow in all my efforts I wasn't trying to run up the down escalator. Or at least that was my state of mind on that day in the parking lot outside San Francisco General Hospital as I approached the driver of the red Ferrari.

This encounter would crystallize in my memory—almost into a mythological moment that I could return to and visit in the present tense whenever I wanted or needed its

message. I see the sports car in front of me just as if it's today, circling in slow motion, with the whirring sound of that unbelievably powerful engine as it idles, waiting and purring like a lion about to pounce. In my mind's ear, I'm hearing the cool calling of a horn blown by Miles Davis, my musical hero—who, back in the day, I was positive I was going to be when I grew up. It's one of those imagined senses in the sound track of our lives that tells us to pay attention.

With the top down and the light glinting fire-engine-metallic-red off the hood, the guy at the wheel is every bit as cool as the jazz musicians I used to idolize. A white guy, dark-haired, clean-shaven, of average height and slight build, he's wearing the sharpest suit, possibly custom-made, out of a beautiful piece of cloth. It's more than just a wonderful garment, it's the whole look—the tasteful tie, the muted shirt, the pocket square, the understated cuff links and watch. Nothing obnoxious, just well put together. No flash, no bullshit. Just sharp.

“Hey, man,” I say, approaching the Ferrari and waving at him as I point out where my car is parked, nodding to let him know that I'm coming out. Am I seduced by the Ferrari itself? Yes. I am a red-blooded American male. But it's more than that. In that instant, the car symbolizes all that I lacked while growing up—freedom, escape, options. “You can have my spot,” I offer, “but I gotta ask you a couple of questions.”

He gets that I'm offering a trade here—my parking place for his information. In my twenty-seven years of life so far, I have learned a little already about the power of information and about the kind of currency that information can become. Now I see an opportunity to get some inside information, I think, and so I draw out my trusty sword—a compulsion for question-asking that has been in my survival kit since childhood.

Seeing that it's not a bad deal for either of us, he shrugs and says, “Fine.”

My questions are very simple: “What do you do?” and “How do you do it?”

With a laugh, he answers the first question just as simply, saying, “I'm a stockbroker,” but to answer the second question we extend the conversation to a meeting a few weeks

later and then a subsequent introduction to the ABCs, of Wall Street, an entirely foreign but mesmerizing venue where I am just crazy enough to think I could do what he and others like him do, if only I can find an opening.

Despite the fact that I had absolutely no experience and no contacts whatsoever, looking to get my big break into the stock market became a major focus over the next several months, but so did other urgent concerns, especially when I suddenly became a single parent amid a series of other unforeseen, tumultuous events.

By this time period, San Francisco's conflicting attitudes toward a growing homeless population were already well known. What officials declared was a new epidemic in homelessness had actually been developing for more than a decade as the result of several factors—including drastic cutbacks to state funding for mental health facilities, limited treatment options for the large number of Vietnam vets suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome and alcohol and drug addiction, along with the same urban ills plaguing the rest of the country. During the long, cold winter of 1982, as government programs to help the poor were being eliminated, the economy in the Bay Area, as in the rest of the country, was in a downturn. At a time when jobs and affordable housing were becoming harder to find, access to cheap street drugs like angel dust and PCP was starting to get easier.

Though some business leaders complained that the homeless would scare tourists away, if you happened to visit San Francisco in the early 1980s, you were probably unaware of the deepening crisis. You might have heard about what neighborhoods to avoid—areas where you were warned about the winos, junkies, bag ladies, transients, and others who, as they used to say in my part of Milwaukee, “just went crazy.” Or maybe you did notice some of the signs—the long food lines, multiplying numbers of panhandlers, the mothers and children on the steps of overcapacity shelters, runaway teenagers, or those sleeping human forms that sometimes looked more like mounds of discarded clothing left in alleys, on park benches, at transit stations, and under the eaves and in the doorways of buildings. Maybe your visit to San Francisco reminded you of similar problems in your hometown, or maybe even alerted you to the increasing percentage of the working poor

who'd entered the ranks of the homeless—gainfully employed but overburdened individuals and families forced to choose between paying rent and buying food, medicine, clothing, or other basic necessities. You may have paused to wonder what kinds of lives and dreams and stories had been lived before, and perhaps to consider how easy it would be for anyone to fall through the cracks of whatever support had once existed, or to face a sudden crisis of any proportion and simply stumble into the hole of homelessness.

Chances are, however, no matter how observant you might have been, you wouldn't have noticed me. Or if you did happen to spot me, usually moving at a fast clip as I pushed a lightweight, rickety blue stroller that had become my only wheels and that carried my most precious cargo in the universe—my nineteen-month-old son, Chris Jr., a beautiful, growing, active, alert, talkative, hungry toddler—it's unlikely you would have suspected that my baby and I were homeless. Dressed in one of my two business suits, the other in the garment bag that was slung over my shoulder, along with the duffel bag that was filled with all our other earthly possessions (including various articles of clothing, toiletries, and the few books I couldn't live without), as I tried to hold an umbrella in one hand, a briefcase in another, and balance the world's largest box of Pampers under my armpit, still while maneuvering the stroller, we probably looked more like we were going off on a long weekend somewhere. Some of the places where we slept suggested as much—on the Bay Area Rapid Transit subway trains, or in waiting areas at either the Oakland or San Francisco airport. Then again, the more hidden places where we stayed could have given away my situation—at the office, where I'd work late so we could stretch out on the floor under my desk after hours; or, as on occasion we found ourselves, in the public bathroom of an Oakland BART station.

That small, cell-like, windowless tiled box—big enough for us, our stuff, and a toilet and a sink where I could get us washed as best I could—represented both my worst nightmare of being confined, locked up, and excluded and, at the same time, a true godsend of protection where I could lock the door and keep the wolves out. It was what it was—a way station between where I'd come from and where I was going, my version of a pit stop

on the underground railroad, '80s style.

As long as I kept my mental focus on destinations that were ahead, destinations that I had the audacity to dream might hold a red Ferrari of my own, I protected myself from despair. The future was uncertain, absolutely, and there were many hurdles, twists, and turns to come, but as long as I kept moving forward, one foot in front of the other, the voices of fear and shame, the messages from those who wanted me to believe that I wasn't good enough, would be stilled.

Go forward. That became my mantra, inspired by the Reverend Cecil Williams, one of the most enlightened men to ever walk this earth, a friend and mentor whose goodness blessed me in ways I can never sufficiently recount. At Glide Memorial Methodist Church in the Tenderloin—where the Reverend Williams fed, housed, and repaired souls (eventually accommodating thousands of homeless in what became the first homeless hotel in the country)—he was already an icon. Then and later, you couldn't live in the Bay Area without knowing Cecil Williams and getting a sense of his message. Walk that walk, he preached. On any Sunday, his sermon might address a number of subjects, but that theme was always in there, in addition to the rest. Walk that walk and go forward all the time. Don't just talk that talk, walk it and go forward. Also, the walk didn't have to be long strides; baby steps counted too. Go forward.

The phrases repeated in my brain until they were a wordless skat, like the three-beat staccato sound as we rode the train over the BART rails, or like the *clack-clack-clack* syncopation of the stroller wheels with percussion added from the occasional *creaks* and *squeals* and *groans* they made going over curbs, up and down San Francisco's famed steep hills, and around corners.

In years to come, baby carriages would go way high-tech with double and triple wheels on each side and all aerodynamic, streamlined, and leather-cushioned, plus extra compartments for storing stuff and roofs to add on to make them like little inhabitable igloos. But the rickety blue stroller I had, as we forged into the winter of 1982, had none of

that. What it did have—during what I’m sure had to be the wettest, coldest winter on record in San Francisco—was a sort of pup tent over Chris Jr. that I made of free plastic sheeting from the dry cleaners.

As much as I kept going forward because I believed a better future lay ahead, and as much as I was sure that the encounter outside San Francisco General Hospital had steered me to that future, the real driving force came from that other pivotal event in my life—which had taken place back in Milwaukee in March 1970, on a day not long after my sixteenth birthday.

Unlike many experiences in childhood that tended to blur in my memory into a series of images that flickered dimly like grainy, old-fashioned moving pictures, this event—which must have taken up little more than a split second of time—became a vivid reality that I could conjure in my senses whenever I wanted, in perfectly preserved detail.

This period was one of the most volatile of my youth, beyond the public turbulence of the era—the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, echoes of assassinations and riots, and the cultural influences of music, hippies, black power, and political activism, all of which helped to shape my view of myself, my country, and the world.

During my childhood and adolescence, my family—consisting of my three sisters and me, our mother, who was present in my early life only sporadically, and our stepfather—had lived in a series of houses, walk-ups, and flats, punctuated by intermittent separations and stays with a series of relatives, all within a four-block area. Finally, we had moved into a small house in a neighborhood considered to be somewhat upwardly mobile. It may have only been so in comparison to where we’d been living before, but this house was nonetheless “movin’ on up”—à la the Jefferson family, who still had another five years to go to get their own TV show.

The TV on this particular day was, in fact, the focus of my attention, and key to my mood of happy expectation, not only because I was getting ready to watch the last of the two games played in the NCAA’s Final Four, but because I had the living room all to