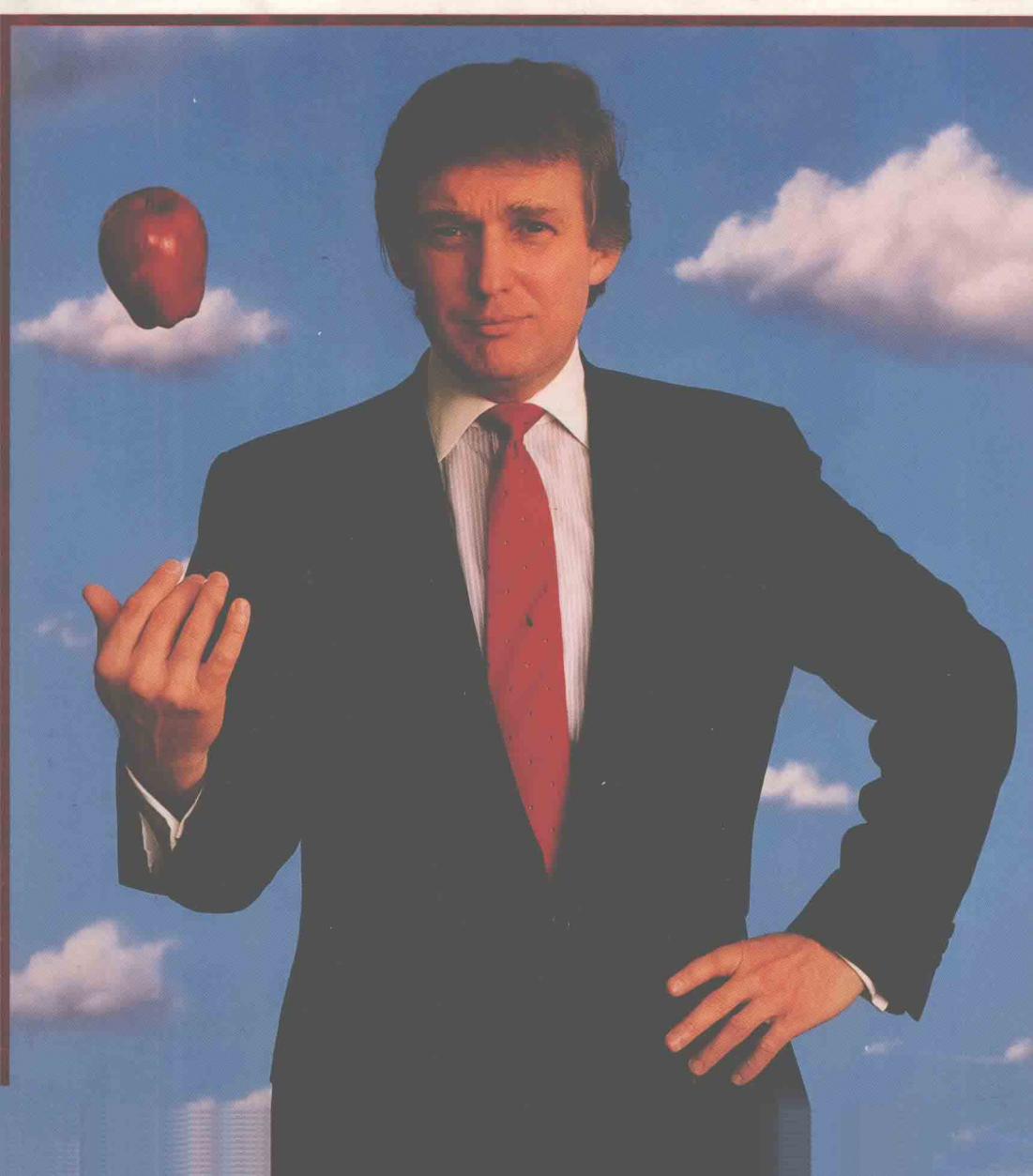


# TRUMP

## SURVIVING AT THE TOP



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**Donald J. Trump**  
with **Charles Leerhsen**



**RANDOM HOUSE**  
**NEW YORK**

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# **TRUMP**

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## **Surviving at the Top**

*For Steve, Mark, and Jon*

# Acknowledgments

When my good friend Si Newhouse, the owner of Random House, suggested that I write my first book, I was wary. The last thing I needed was to do a book about myself that went nowhere. Si was confident because he had noticed that when my picture appeared on the covers of magazines he owned, they became top sellers. Si is a very persistent man, and I was flattered by his interest. "Okay," I finally said, "let's do it."

Peter Osnos, associate publisher of Random House and an experienced and talented editor, went to work on the book with me, and we were joined by the writer Tony Schwartz. Si was right; the book turned out to be one of the biggest publishing successes in recent years. After it was published in 1987, *The Art of the Deal* spent thirty-two weeks on *The New York Times* best-seller list, many of them as number one. Then it was on the paperback best-seller list for nineteen weeks, seven of them in the number-one position. What many thought was just a New York book wound up being translated into more than a dozen languages and became an international best-seller. On the whole, the public here and abroad has shown great warmth toward me since the book came out. Looking back on it, I see that writing *The Art of the Deal* was one of the most satisfying and fulfilling experiences of my life.

Peter and I had to find another writer this time because Tony was involved with other projects. We chose Charles Leerhsen, a senior writer at *Newsweek*, who from the start shared our view that this second book should not simply continue the story of my major deals but should be a more personal work.

I've scored some of the biggest victories of my career since my first book, but I've also faced some obstacles that taught me not to take the winning for granted. That's why I decided to call this book *Surviving at the Top*.

I hope you enjoy it and can profit from it. I know that this

book offers not only better business advice but also, to my way of thinking, more lessons from life and the problems of fame and fortune.

D. J. T.

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The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat; who strives valiantly; who errs and may fail again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds, who does know the great enthusiasm, the great devotion.

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT

You don't have no fun at all, you know,  
if you get *too* famous.

—LOUIS ARMSTRONG



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# PART I

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## ONE

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# NOW FOR THE HARD PART

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**A** helicopter crashes, and several good friends are suddenly dead.

A marriage goes stale after twelve years.

A heavyweight champ in whose career you were involved, and who everyone thought was invincible, hits the canvas in a heap, not far from where you are sitting.

The business climate changes, and the so-called experts start questioning whether you've lost your touch. You know damn well you haven't. But you also know, better than most people, that perception is reality. And so you've got a job on your hands.

It doesn't matter whether you have three billion or three hundred dollars in the bank: Life is a series of challenges. Some of the challenges you face turn out well. Some don't. What separates the winners from the losers, I've learned—in business and any other

aspect of life—is how a person reacts to each twist of fate. You have to be confident as you face the world each day, but you can't be too cocky. Anyone who thinks he's going to win them all is going to wind up a big loser.

This is Phase Two of my life, in which the going gets a lot tougher and the victories, because they are harder won, seem all the sweeter.

The last three years have been for me a time of extraordinary challenges—successes and setbacks. I bought and restored to greatness the Plaza Hotel, a New York landmark. I acquired the run-down Eastern Shuttle and made it, as the Trump Shuttle, the best airline of its kind. I erected the magnificent Taj Mahal, one of the largest casino-hotels in the world—and a project that many experts predicted could never be completed.

In one sense, I continued doing what I have always been good at: acquiring new properties and following my instincts into new and varied fields; making deals and waging business wars.

But not all the news was positive.

In both my private and my business life I encountered some rough times. As a result, I'm not the same person that I was just a few years ago. The changes I've undergone—and the amazing things that I've seen happen along the way—are what this book is about.

I think it's vitally important, during times of pressure, to face up to reality, however unpleasant that may be. We live in an age when huge corporations and important investors are in the midst of

major restructuring. Business runs in cycles, and even the eighties had to come to an end.

The 1980s were, of course, the so-called go-go years of leveraged buyouts and megamergers—a time when almost any entrepreneur with a good track record could raise huge sums of money from banks, or from the sale of junk bonds, with unprecedented ease. It was also a time when “acquiring” became synonymous with “winning.”

When I attended the Wharton School I learned that buying low and selling high was basically what business was all about. During the last decade, though, a different mentality often prevailed, and anyone who backed down after showing an interest in any sort of asset was considered a loser. It used to bug the hell out of me when I’d drop out of the bidding for something and then get a call from a reporter asking, “So, Mr. Trump, how does it feel to get beat?”

I knew the real loser was the guy who overpaid. And yet to a certain extent I got caught up in the buying frenzy myself—although even my critics must admit I wound up with some truly world-class assets. Looking back, I see that there were two reasons for what happened, apart from the fact that the required money was always available. The first reason is that I’m sometimes too competitive for my own good. If someone is going around labeling people winners and losers, I want to play the game and, of course, come out on the right side.

The other reason is that I get bored too easily. My attention span is short, and probably my least favorite thing to do is to maintain the status quo. Instead of being content when everything is going fine, I start getting impatient and irritable.

So I look for more and more deals to do. On a day in which

I've got several good ones in the works and the phone calls and faxes are going back and forth and the tension is palpable—well, at those times I feel the way other people do when they're on vacation.

This has led to some misunderstanding. Many people have called me greedy because of the way I amassed real estate, companies, helicopters, planes, and yachts during the last several years. But what those critics don't know is that the same assets that excite me in the chase often, once they are acquired, leave me bored. I probably visited Mar-a-Lago, my 118-room house in Palm Beach, no more than two dozen times in the years I've owned it. As for my yacht, the *Trump Princess*, it is a dazzling trophy and a terrific business tool, but it never really became part of my personal life.

For me, you see, the important thing is the getting . . . not the having.

That's why it hasn't bothered me much that, largely because the Atlantic City casino market went somewhat soft and my properties there generated less cash than I had counted on, I had to restructure my holdings and generally streamline my operations and my life-style. Matters came to a head in the spring. Over several weeks of very hard bargaining, my bankers and I worked out a terrific deal that allows me the time, the money, and the leeway to come out stronger than ever. The negotiations were as intense as anything I've ever experienced. My lenders behaved honorably throughout, but the press consistently got the story wrong, exaggerating the likelihood of my demise—and hoping for it. I see the deal as a great victory—and eventually the rest of the world will too. Sure it was nerve-racking when everybody was watching and wondering if I'd fail. I couldn't speak out without endangering the negotiations. Still, in the midst of it all, I realized



that I was doing what I love to do most—battle back from the brink.

There is no question that the early nineties will be, for me and many other entrepreneurs, a period of retrenchment, a time when the businessmen who made it big in the eighties will have to get leaner and meaner again and lose some of those helicopters, private jets, and other expensive toys. But I also see these next few years as a period of great opportunity—in some ways very similar to the time when I got started fifteen years ago.

One of the main things I know now that I didn't know then, or even a couple of years ago, has to do with invincibility. Let me tell you what I mean:

It was a Sunday afternoon in Tokyo, and I was feeling impatient and still a little strung out from jet lag. In a few minutes Mike Tyson would be fighting James “Buster” Douglas.

Usually I enjoy the spectacle of a major heavyweight fight, especially when it involves Iron Mike, a fighter I've come to know and respect. But Tyson had such an aura of invincibility at that point—February of 1990—that the outcome of the fight seemed like a foregone conclusion, and I just wished it were over with. I'd already been in Japan several days, working on a few possible business deals. I'd signed a lot of autographs, and I'd been deeply impressed with the Japanese passion for precision in everything they do. But now I wanted nothing more than to be back in New York.

I wasn't the only one who thought the fight was a waste of time. The bookmakers were refusing to take bets on Tyson at any odds. The huge arena was about one-third empty because the Japanese people, who are no fools, assumed this was going to be