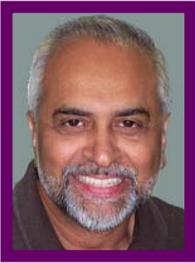


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WRITTEN BY: ASHOK DHILLON



Ashok Dhillon has 40 years of front-line business experience in Canada and International markets. He incorporated his first construction company in 1974, and since then has founded and led companies in construction and international power development.

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In the last few decades, as the Developed World has gained knowledge, industrialization, urbanization, technology and wealth, exponentially – to a degree it seems to have lost integrity. Somehow its value systems seem to have eroded, become crasser, and most of its institutions, political, business, educational, athletic and religious, seems to have lost some of the foundational values of old, particularly integrity and honour, both personal and collective, which were considered to be of far more value than any possible gain, at the loss of them.

Today a vast majority of these institutions, expound the credo of winning at all cost, and damn the principals of integrity and honour, which are looked upon as the values of losers, the excusers, and the weak.

We would like to take an unabashed look at some of the current-day, high profile, undisputed, public and self proclaimed 'winners', who have lived to the fullest the modern-day mantra of '**win at all cost**', and assess at the end of the day, how much did they really 'win', **and in the bargain what did they lose**. Well here goes

Lance Armstrong:



A legendary, renowned American professional cyclist that won the most prestigious and difficult cycling event in the World, the Tour De France, an astonishing seven (7) times. To top that unbelievable feat, he won the seven Tour de France titles, after battling and defeating one of the most dangerous cancers for men, testicular cancer. The cancer had then spread in to his lungs, lymph nodes, and his brain. The cancer had been announced in October 1996 and his doctors had given him a 40% chance of survival, at best. And if he did survive, no one gave him any chance of ever competing again.

But this was **Lance Armstrong**, a person of almost inhuman will and determination. He not only made up his mind to beat the cancer that had spread through his body, but also to live and to compete again.



Lance Armstrong fought his cancer as ferociously as he battled his competitors. He had a testicle removed, researched the disease and drastically changed his diet, and he underwent

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aggressive chemotherapy. In February 1997, it was announced that he was cancer free. He had fought and beaten insurmountable odds, beaten the cancer and survived, and in doing so had done the almost impossible.

For most people, this death-defying victory, of beating such an aggressive cancer would have been enough of an accomplishment, but not for **Lance Armstrong**. He then announced, as he had said he would, that he planned to train and return to the international professional cycling competition, which he did almost immediately.

From 1999 to 2005 he entered and won the Tour de France, 7 times!



No normal person, from their perspective, after his epic battle with cancer, would have given him any chance of even finishing the grueling 27 days of the most physically, mentally and emotionally punishing test that a human body is subjected to, let alone win it. He not only finished, but won the race against the best and toughest cyclists in the World, 7 years in a row!

There was however a flaw in **Lance Armstrong**; he wanted to 'win at all costs'. So he took banned substances while competing, and cheated consistently during all those years of winning cycling's most prestigious events.



For years he had been accused of doping, but he had vehemently and ferociously denied it, attacking any and all that had dared question his claims to being 'clean'. And he wasn't gentle or constrained in his attacks, instead he used his considerable power, clout and credibility to silence and defame those that dared to accuse him.

So when he finally confessed after years of steadfast denials, he stunned the World.

He had been so adamant, aggressive and consistent in his long years of denials that most people had come to believe him, and to support him even in that fight. Additionally, because of what he had overcome in his personal life, most people thought he could do the impossible. People wanted to believe that there were indeed 'super humans' amongst us that could beat all the odds and rise above being mere mortals.

Upon his confession the condemnation was swift and total. The World felt used and betrayed by him.



And in that moment, he lost everything. Subsequently, all his titles, honours, prizes, sponsors, cumulative prize money and his ability to compete in professional cycling, were all stripped from him, **and he was banned from cycling for life!**

Disgraced and disowned by all the organizations that had honoured, hero-worshipped and venerated him, considering him to be a 'Superman'; he was unceremoniously dumped by all and became the object of revulsion and shame. He had lifted himself high as an example to young and sundry, as the personification of all that was virtuous and admirable in a human being, and then shown himself to be without integrity, without honour, an untrustworthy consistent and bold liar.

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Now, in this the age of adrenalin fueled ambitions, there are some, we are sure, of the **'winning is the only thing'** school of thought. They would still think that what he did was alright, as he was competing at the highest, and therefore by default, at the toughest level of competition, and at that level 'everybody was doing it'. But such people fail to recognize that by cheating he wasn't really the 'undisputed champ' he made out to be, fundamentally he was an imposter. He was cheating. The **'winning is everything'** attitude has now cost him **everything**. He has lost universal acclaim, his titles, his prizes, and his credibility is shattered forever. Plus, he lost the trust of the very people that mattered to him the most, his adoring fans.

He had said: *"Two things scare me. The first is getting hurt. But that's not nearly as scary as the second, which is losing."*

And: *"The riskiest thing you can do is get greedy."*

Lance Armstrong got greedy and lost everything.

He also had said: *"A boo is a lot louder than a cheer. If you have 10 people cheering and one person booing, all you hear is the booing."*

For **Lance Armstrong** the booing must now be deafening.

Conrad Black:



It is the truth that in most things that matter to people, it would be argued that the United States has just about everything bigger, if not better, than Canada. However, when it comes to a person with the most manufactured conceit and hubris, we don't think the Americans have anybody that can match the defining arrogance and ego of Canada's own, **Conrad Black**.

Conrad Black was born privileged, to a wealthy business family in Montreal, Quebec. According to his various biographers, from his young days in Canada's top school, Upper Canada College in Toronto, from which he was expelled in the first year, for selling stolen exam papers, Conrad displayed his willingness to do **'whatever it takes to win'**, and prove himself worthy of the over-inflated view he constantly nurtured about himself. And he was never shy about it, he obviously believed in the credo that 'if one repeated a lie enough times to oneself and others, eventually it was no longer a lie'.



According to biographer George Toombs, this attitude is said to stem from his deep insecurity for being born in a family of very handsome and athletic people, while he was neither. So he set out to prove himself to be superior in every other way, and acted it out in an overtly pronounced manner, affecting the haughty mannerisms of established royalty during the Middle Ages, for, in this egalitarian World of ours today, no **real** current day 'Royal' would dare act as commoner Conrad regularly did, with open hostility and contempt towards fellow man.

After the death of his father, **Conrad Black** had

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inherited a large stake in an influential holding company in Canada, called Argus Corp. Over the years, along with his partners, he morphed that important business stake, primarily in mining, steel and general merchandise, into the third largest newspaper publishing empire in the World, with ownerships of newspapers in Canada, Great Britain, Israel, Australia and the United States.

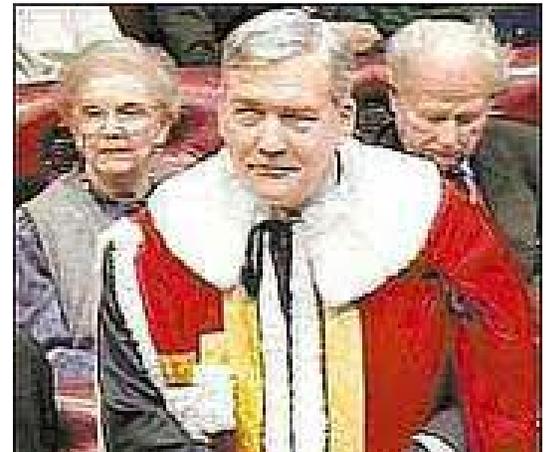
It is claimed, that in business he and his partners consistently and significantly enriched themselves at the expense of the employees and other shareholders of the various companies they controlled. And he did it without apology, acting out the fantasy that the common folk (*the employees and the shareholders*) had no right to question the 'Masters', himself and his partners.



By acquiring and stripping companies of money and assets, and doing whatever it took, as later claimed in lawsuits, he made himself very wealthy. Wealth he needed to give some credence to the aristocratic image he projected of himself to the World. Additionally, he had decided to change his 'commoner' status, by buying a stairway to heaven, 'Peerage in the House of Lords' in Britain.

With his wealth and prestige sufficient, **Conrad Black** went after what he had wanted all his life, claim to nobility and aristocracy. So using his wealth and influence, in 2001, he had himself (a far-right Conservative) advocated by Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair, (Labour Party no less), to Queen Elizabeth II, to confer on him life peerage with the title of **Baron Black**. In doing so

he was forced to give up his Canadian citizenship, as the Canadian Government objected to a Canadian citizen holding a foreign titular honour. To **Conrad Black** it was 'no-contest'. He had wanted, more than anything else, the claim to nobility, and Canadian citizenship was a small price to pay for it. With the title of 'Baron Black' he could now justifiably claim that he was true aristocracy, rather than just pretend and play at it.



The fact that the World knew that he was just a rich, overbearing, pompous guy from Canada, buying global respect from England, didn't seem to matter, or bother him, even when it was embarrassingly evident to everyone else.

'**Lord**' **Black's** energetic and hubristically built avaricious world came crashing down when he was charged in the United States, by his own holding company Hollinger International Inc., for embezzling \$80 Million from its shareholders.

As was his style, he mounted a vigorous defense, firstly by attacking the very idea that anyone would have the audacity to accuse him of any wrong doing. And secondly, by hiring the best criminal lawyers in Canada and the United States, to defend him from a number of charges of fraud and obstruction of justice, and from damning testimony of his lifelong business partner, David Radler.



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Conrad Black (Lord Black of Crossharbour) was convicted in a United States District Court in Chicago July, 2007 and sentenced to serve 6.5 years in a federal prison.



Since then he has appealed every sentence, got some reduced, but has been dogged by lawsuits from a number of quarters, in the United States and in Canada. In July 2013, the Ontario's Securities Commission restarted its case against **Black** and his partners alleging violations of the Ontario's Securities Act. And in early 2014, the Tax Court of Canada ruled that **Black** owed the Canadian Government \$5.1 Million in taxes.

Conrad Black's deep insecurities got the better of him and he strived throughout his life to accumulate enough wealth, by whatever means necessary, to cover them up with an exaggerated show of superiority of being, bloated opulence in living, and by being dismissive of all who worked for him and any who dared to criticize or challenge his version of facts, events or methods. In that he was very much like *Lance Armstrong*, threatening and attacking ferociously anyone who dared question or criticized him, even when the bare facts supported the criticisms.

For decades **Conrad Black** was the most fervent and ardent admirer of the United States, until they prosecuted and convicted him for fraud. Since then he can't stand the United States, and especially its justice system, and has become the fiercest critic of America. And so he is with everyone else who opposes or goes against him.

In thinking that he really was a later day 'noble' of some sort, and to support the accompanying lifestyle required, **Conrad Black** stepped across the line that divides the merely ambitious and

hard working, but law-abiding people, to the '**win at all costs**' crowd that recognizes no lines, and considers that all rules are meant for the lesser common humans beings, but certainly not for him and his elevated kind.

In living the '**win at all costs**' credo with a vengeance, **Conrad Black lost everything he so desperately craved**, respect and admiration of the World.

His naked and unbridled ambition stripped from him large chunks of his money, took away his business empire, the acceptance and respect he craved from his peers, and left him truly as an emperor with no clothes on. But, he has earned a new title now that will remain with him for the rest of his life – 'convicted felon'.

"I don't have any shame."- **Conrad Black**

Rajat Gupta:



Born in India to middle class parents, **Rajat Gupta** went to IIT Delhi (Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi) and then received his MBA from Harvard Business School. After graduation, he joined the famed global consulting firm of McKinsey & Company in 1973, as one of the earliest Indian-Americans. He was brilliant and rose steadily through the ranks to eventually being named the first non-U.S.-born Managing Director (CEO). He was re-elected two more terms of three years, as the head of McKinsey. In that position he was undoubtedly one of the most respected and influential business executives in the World, advisor to global political and business

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leaders, with personal access to anyone of significant wealth and importance. During his tenure of nine years as the Managing Director, **Rajat Gupta** increased McKinsey's revenues 280% to US\$3.4 Billion.

His own earnings as the head of McKinsey, were estimated to be an annual salary of over US\$5 Million. At the end of his career with McKinsey, **Rajat Gupta's** personal net worth was estimated to be about US\$100 Million.

After three terms as the CEO, of three years each (the maximum terms he himself instituted at McKinsey), he stayed on as Senior Partner Emeritus. During this time, it is said, he was not happy with the loss of status that he had had for almost ten years, and he missed being in the spotlight. Additionally, now as a senior partner of McKinsey, he was making mere millions, while he felt the people in the investment business on Wall Street and Silicon Valley, were making 'staggering' amounts of money. The step down in status, the step away from the spotlight and money envy of those much richer than him, sowed dangerous seeds of discontent.

These seeds of discontent germinated and grew, and **Rajat Gupta** determined to correct the situation by entering the investment fund business, through the help of a famed billionaire hedge-fund founder **Rajaratnam**, who had befriended him, and had agreed to co-invest and bankroll him. However, the price that **Rajaratnam** asked of all such 'friends' who were well connected in the business world, and few were better connected than **Rajat Gupta**, as he sat on some of the most important Corporate Boards, was to tap them for insider information on these companies. Keen to make it really big and play in the billionaire club, **Rajat Gupta** seemingly complied.



At that time, what **Rajat Gupta** did not know was that **Rajaratnam** was already being investigated and wire tapped by the Securities Regulators and the FBI. The telephone calls between them cost **Rajaratnam** and **Rajat Gupta** dearly. **Rajaratnam** was convicted on a host of securities laws and sentenced to 11 years in prison, and **Rajat Gupta** was convicted on three counts of securities fraud and one count of conspiracy, and sentenced to two years in prison, which he has appealed.



So what makes a person like **Rajat Gupta** risk his entire life's considerable accomplishments, including a significant fortune of US\$100 Million, for more money and even greater respect? Envy and simple insatiable greed.

Rajat Gupta wanted more money and the resulting elevated professional and social status that comes with mega-money. Someone as respected and accomplished as him, should have known better, but he succumbed to base greed and bought into the attitude that '**winning at all costs**' is everything. When he found himself in the company of billionaires, without his former peak of the profession status, he felt inadequate with a mere US\$100 Million, and former titles.



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In trying to win by whatever means necessary, **Rajat Gupta** lost it all. His image and world-renowned status and respect were destroyed by his conviction. His personal rapport and trust with the most powerful and influential people is forever compromised. A significant part of his considerable personal wealth will be lost to failed investments with **Rajaratnam**, and more will be wasted in fighting coming legal battles. He didn't think he had enough, so he went for it all, with the **'win at whatever it takes'** attitude, and lost it all. Except, like Conrad Black he gained a new lifelong title – 'convicted felon'.

Speaking at Columbia University **Rajat Gupta** had said: *"When I look at myself, yeah, I am driven by money..., And I think money is very seductive. However much you say you will not fall into the trap of it, you do fall into the trap of it."*

Of late, we in the developed World have fostered the culture where a lot of parents, teachers, coaches, bosses and peers, encourage and at times demand that we have a **'win at all costs'** attitude. Anything less we are told is for losers.

It should be self evident to all discerning people that this philosophy towards achievement is deeply flawed. The fact that it is not recognized as such, in spite of its obvious potential for destruction of character, and for the ethical and moral hazard that it presents to young and old, is distressing. For then it shows, that for all the education, literacy and abundance of the West, we have not developed any wisdom or insight, into what constitutes a successful life, and we have 'regressed' in the past decades.

In the recent past, wealth, status and fame have become the sole targeted goals of the ambitious, regardless of age, nationality or gender. Where **'winning by whatever means'** has become the only praise worthy trait and accomplishment of the high achievers; the alternative, ambition with forbearance, nobility of purpose, service to others, selflessness, integrity and honour, is supposedly for losers.

In the past three decades, the 'gods' of finance and business, the very 'top of the heap' types, Michael Milken (*the Junk Bond King*); Ivan Boesky (*Arbitrageur*); Bernie Ebbers (*CEO of WorldCom*); Kenneth Lay and Jeff Skilling (*CEO and COO of Enron*), and many, many others who



got convicted of fraud and securities violations and ended up in jail, losing everything they worked for and desired, seemed to have taught nothing to the new batch: Bernie Madoff, Conrad Black, Rajat Gupta, Rajaratnam and Mathew Martoma and too many others to mention.

The overarching ambitions that refuse to play by the rules, or are willing to circumvent the rules for the sake of the 'WIN', seem to be more the common place rather than the exception, particularly in the adrenaline fueled financial industry.

Similarly, the field of sports is littered with athletes that have cheated to **'win at all costs'**, losing and destroying everything they have strived for in their lives, particularly their 'god' like status with the adoring public, like Ben Johnson the Canadian sprinter, Marion Jones the famed American Olympic Sprinter, and of course Lance Armstrong; all relegated now to the heap of disgraced, flawed humans. Were the victories worth being stripped of all titles, medals and respect?

For societies to progress and move forward, all its members must play by the rules otherwise there is anarchy and destruction. It is no coincidence that the countries, consistently ranked **'lowest'** in corruption, are also yearly ranked **'highest'** in quality of life, and the ones with the **'highest'** corruption have the **'worst'** standings. Considering the destruction of lives above, we ask, does **'winning at all costs'** sound like a winning strategy, **or a real 'loser' strategy?**