

# LifeMap<sup>SM</sup>



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

March 2011

## This Month's Message:

### Making Your Own Luck.

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## Making Your Own Luck.

March brings with it one of my favorite holidays - St. Patrick's Day. No, I do not favor green beer and I confess to preferring a nice Jewish brisket to grey corned beef. But I do enjoy the opportunity to share my Irish heritage with those so unfortunate as not to have some roots in the Emerald Isle.

There are many great things appropriately attributed to the Irish such as an influential literary tradition, celebrated artists and musicians, lively humor and, yes, potent potables. And there are some silly things too such as leprechauns, green plastic derbies and the not-so-magically delicious Lucky Charms cereal. As I considered the latter I recalled the saying we've all heard a thousand times - "The Luck of the Irish". It's actually a pretty ironic phrase considering the prominence of colonization, political and religious repression, famine and poverty in Irish history. But it would seem to be more than happenstance that a people could turn such history around (paraphrasing Robert Emmet) to guide Ireland to "take her rightful place among the nations of the earth". Maybe there is something to this luck business as some recent research into the nature of luck - this month's LifeMap topic - suggests.

Many people feel that luck and chance are the same thing. Not so. Chance events are random such as getting hit by

lightening or winning the lottery. These are events that we have no control over (except to a minor degree by buying a lottery ticket or waving a 9-iron over your head in a thunderstorm). Random events do not happen regularly to the same people. But research has shown that people who report themselves as lucky also report that they consistently experience good fortune. So if it is not random and it is not by chance then it stands to reason that this effect has to be created by something they are doing! Thus the concept of making one's own luck.

One of the higher purposes of psychological research and practice is to replace superstition and old wives tales with proven, reliable and useable information. For eight years psychologist Dr. Richard Wiseman, head of the psychology research department at the University of Hertfordshire in England, and his colleagues conducted thousands of interviews and hundreds of experiments to examine why some people seem lucky and why others don't. Their findings indicate that lucky people share some basic psychological traits. Further Wiseman offers questionnaires and exercises to guide you to acquire or enhance luckiness. If this topic is of interest to you click here to learn more about Dr. Wiseman's work in [The Luck Factor: Changing Your Luck, Changing Your Life: The Four Essential Principles \[LUCK FACTOR\] \[Paperback\]](#) (Miramax, 2003).

One of the most successful military leaders in history was Napoleon. When asked if he preferred his generals to be courageous or brilliant he said, "Neither, I prefer my generals to be lucky." Was he talking about chance events or random tactics? No. He was talking about men who exhibited certain traits and who behaved in certain ways. You may not be the most brilliant or overly courageous but here are a handful of ways you can be more lucky.

### Paths Forward

- **Play To Your Strengths** We are all a mix of strengths and weaknesses. Yes, you can overcome weaknesses and I encourage you to do so. But you will make faster progress and get "luckier" if you focus more of your energy on what you're good at and build diligently on your strengths.

- **Don't Over-Focus.** Our Western business culture promotes single-mindedness and a driven work ethic. But lucky people have the habit or skill of creating, noticing and acting upon chance opportunities that others will miss if their noses are always firmly to the grindstone. To improve your luck lighten up a bit, take time to network regularly, scan the scenery as you push towards your goal, and try to be more open to new ideas and experiences.

- **Bad Luck Isn't All Bad.** One trait that lucky people share is that they don't let negative events overwhelm them. Yes, into each life some rain must fall but every storm isn't a catastrophic flood and the rain is usually good for the farmers. That's how lucky people think. They automatically think how things could have been worse, don't obsess on the negative and formulate a strategy to take control over the situation and move forward.

- **Expect Good Luck.** Do you expect your future to be bright or dark? Over time such expectations can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Expecting the positive helps lucky people overcome periodic setbacks. It also sets a positive tone for their interactions with others and, thus, positively affects the results they may achieve together. Optimism is a trait of lucky people and it is a trait that can be learned. (To help you develop this trait I strongly recommend you click here to learn more about [Learned Optimism: How to Change](#)

[Your Mind and Your Life](#) by Dr. Martin Seligman (Vintage Books).

May "The Luck of the Irish" (and everybody else) be with you.

**LifeMap** is about helping you become happier, more successful and, yes, even luckier.

Happy St. Patrick's Day to all!

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Have Dr. Paul speak at your next off-site meeting or conference. Fast-moving, practical, motivating presentations from an acknowledged leader in the field of career and personal success.

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#### Resources

· Are you or someone you know job hunting or thinking about it?

The best, concise, all-round job changing guide available. Revised Edition [Winning Job Interviews](#) by Dr. Paul Powers.

In this easy-to-follow, step-by-step book, Dr. Paul Powers demystifies job interviewing, explains why the process actually favors the job hunter, and shows how you can dramatically improve your interview skills. Packed with solid, practical information and laced with both humor and "kick in the pants" motivation, *Winning Job Interviews* is the book you wished you had before your last interview... and is mandatory preparation for your next one!

· Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?

Or know someone who is? Order your copy of [Love Your Job!](#) *Loving the Job You Have, Finding A Job You Love* by Dr. Paul.

<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/booksandarticles.html>

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**Sincerely,**

Dr. Paul

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