



# The Lazy Way to Success

How to Do Nothing and  
Accomplish Everything

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## CHAPTER 3

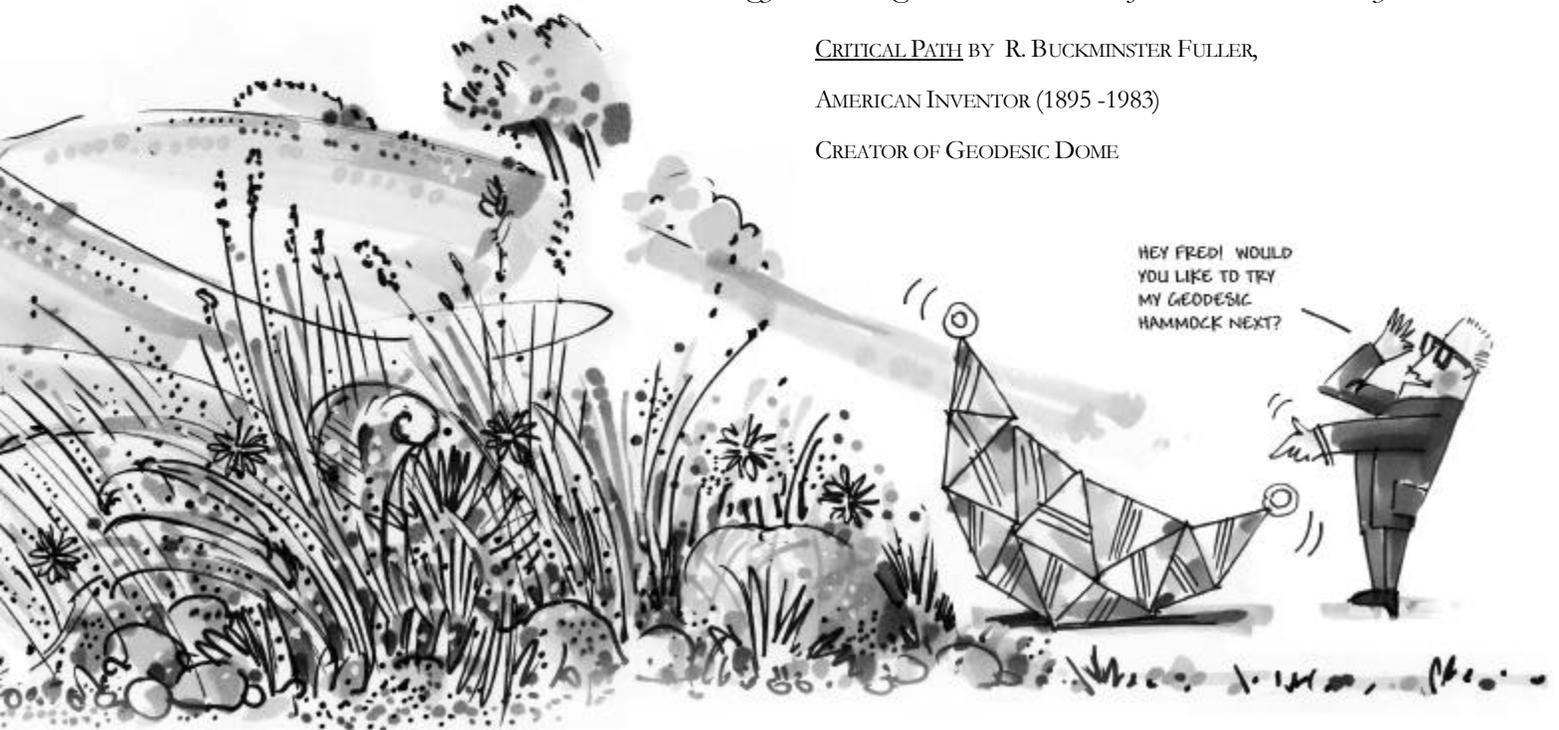
# In Search of Effortlessness

*History's political and economic power structures have always fearfully abhorred 'idle people' as potential trouble makers. Yet nature never abhors seemingly idle trees, grass, snails, coral reefs and clouds in the sky.*

CRITICAL PATH BY R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER,

AMERICAN INVENTOR (1895 -1983)

CREATOR OF GEODESIC DOME





Laziness comes in a variety of skill levels. Of course, there is your basic garden-variety, couch-potato laziness where avoiding work is its own glorious reward. This type of laziness certainly has its own value and charm and should be encouraged and nurtured, as all laziness (even this tender sprouting) is heaven-sent.

At the other end of the spectrum are masters of laziness who have harnessed the immense power of doing as little as humanly possible. These advanced black belts in laziness not only enjoy the pleasures of work avoidance but they also are able to accomplish great things and amass great fortunes *because* they have abstained from work. It is this highly skilled form of laziness that drives all progress in society.

Unfortunately, the unchallenged thinking in our culture calls laziness a blight on your character at best and at worst the Devil's workshop. Those of us who practice the high art of laziness are sub-

jected to stinging rebuke and are harangued with mind-numbing repetition that to accomplish more in life we must work harder and longer.

"I put in 16 hours a day of *hard work*," is a typical boast from a poster boy for this twisted, snore-inducing mentality.

Now don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with hard work and long hours per se. If you don't mind sacrificing your health, your family life, the rest of your life, and your spiritual evolution and you are willing to settle for a pedestrian achievement (snore), there is nothing wrong with working long hours. In this light, hard work has its own level of merit and satisfaction.

But if you want the kind of success that has Wall



Street investment bankers dancing around you like trained bears, then you need replace the 16-hour mindset with a new math. The one-plus-one-plus-one-plus-one plodding mentality of working longer and harder is like ending your education in mathematics at counting.

I will readily concede that if you achieve something in one hour, you will achieve two somethings in two hours. If your desiring limit is 16 somethings, then you have the mindless formula. But what if you want a million somethings? Then you need a new math.

The basis of that new math is this pure, simple and elegant truth — success is INVERSELY PROPORTIONAL to hard work. That means, as effort and hard work become less, success becomes more. As you move towards effortless, success moves towards infinity.

The natural conclusion from this truth is that hard work is detrimental to success. One obvious clue is that the world is chock-full of hard workers (nearly everyone works hard) yet there are rare few successful ones among them. But for some cockamamie reason, people cling to the notion that the harder they work the more successful they will become. In reality the only thing proportional to hard work and effort is fatigue.

In these pages, you will learn to embrace the laziness that strives for effortless performance — the ability to do nothing in order to achieve everything.

### **The Dollar Value of Hard Work**

It certainly does not make sense financially to work. If we were to graph the relationship between hard work and money we would see that the harder and more demanding the jobs, the less they pay. As effort decreases, success (as measured by money) increases. If people were remunerated

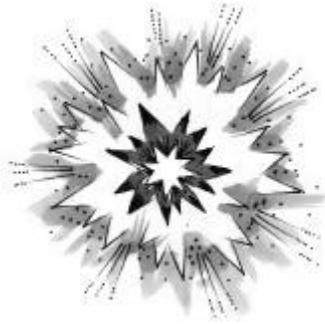




based on the amount of hard work necessary to accomplish a job, physical laborers would be the richest people in society. Obviously they are not.

In our graph we could start with the following benchmark based on present day prices. If a person only used his or her muscles to generate electricity (and not be assisted by devices or inventions that were derived through any brain activity), they would earn \$4.30 in a lifetime.

The conclusion is already self-evident: we must use our brains to work less and ideally to avoid work altogether. Otherwise we condemn ourselves to working and the more we must work the less we get paid — a double whammy.



### My Big Breakthrough

Decades ago, some friends and I had visions of renovating a run-down space into a fashionable graphic arts design studio.

Unfortunately, there, resting on its side, in the middle of our soon-to-be-magnificent parquet floor was a grotesque black safe, approximately 6 feet long and three feet by three feet at its base. It was obvious that before we could even begin the refinishing project we had to move this ugly box of rusted steel out of the room.

Seven of us surrounded the safe and, in a brilliantly timed, perfectly coordinated, and impeccably executed maneuver, we, at the pinnacle of our motivation, attempted to *lift the safe*. Eyes bulged, breath suspended, sinews strained, knuckles blanched, guts wrenched, veins popped, sweat beaded, fingernails tore, clothes ripped, grunts emanated. But that safe did not move one Angstrom unit.

We upgraded our strategy and with everyone at one end we resolutely, with an all-for-one-one-for-all, shoulder-to-the-wheel spirit, tried to *push it out*. Again the safe did not budge a micron. Despite Herculean after Herculean effort, we succeeded only in getting dirty, sweaty, bruised, tired, frustrated, and deflated.

“Maybe,” suggested a daunted one, “we could just cover it with a tablecloth and put a vase of

flowers in the center.”

On that defeated note we went to lunch.

When I returned from lunch I saw another friend circling the safe, studying it intently. He had not been a party to the earlier fiasco.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

“I’m going to move the safe,” he stated matter-of-factly. “Do you want to help?”

“You’ve got to be kidding. I’ve already seen this movie.” I said with seasoned experience and proceeded to tell him about the seven guys and the tablecloth. I held up my bleeding thumbnail as Exhibit A.

“You and I can move this bugger,” he said, dismissing my expertise with a flick of his hand. So hideous was this safe and its presence so discordant to our dream studio that I forgot the morning’s debacle and accepted his invitation. It wasn’t long before we figured out a solution.

We hammered the tip of a screwdriver under the safe, slid a long piece of pipe over the handle of the screwdriver, and put a 2-by-4 under the pipe to serve as a fulcrum. By pulling the pipe down, we were able to lever the safe up a teeny-tiny bit — enough to slide a few pieces of paper underneath. Even though only one edge of the safe was lifted off the floor an imperceptible height, it allowed us to push the tip of the screwdriver under a little further.

We levered the pipe a second time. It lifted the safe high enough for me to replaced the papers with a magazine. We then adjusted the





the two of us.

Two people using their brains accomplished *effortlessly* what seven people busting their backs could not. We did not avoid the job; we just avoided the work. We found the effortless solution.

That incident was a turning point for me because from then on I knew there was nothing in life that could not be accomplished. It is simply a matter of finding the right angle — and the angle for greater accomplishment, I have found, is *always* in the direction of greater ease and effortlessness.

Success is inversely proportional to hard work. This is true not just in moving heavy objects but in everything — dealing with people, products, money, situations, thought, emotions, whatever.

The basis of success is not hard work. The basis of success is doing less.

