## Monday, October 22, 2012 by Andy Dugan

### **Bill Gates**

One name that strikes me when discussing the American Dream is Bill Gates. Bill Gates is one of the most successful entrepreneurs of all time and ranks amongst the richest in the world. He is a self-made billionaire and can be described as brilliant, powerful, and passionate.

Bill Gates is a co-founder of arguably the biggest computer software program of our time: Microsoft. “This allowed him to top Forbes magazine’s list of the world’s wealthiest individuals, with a 2006 estimated net worth of $50 billion,” said [*About.com*](http://entrepreneurs.about.com/od/famousentrepreneurs/p/billgates.htm)’s article. This article summarizes Gate's life and some of his incredible accomplishments. Gates dropped out of Harvard his junior year because he saw incredible potential in the personal computer industry. This speaks wonders about his personality and I believe his “Go-for-it” attitude is what has made him successful today. Gates wasn’t afraid to take some chances in his life. One phrase I think that accurately describes him: "Go big or go home." Shortly after dropping out, Gates and his friend Paul Allen created Microsoft. Microsoft has developed into one of the world’s largest software companies. Today, Gates has also accomplished other pieces of the American Dream. He is happily married to Melinda French and has three children. In addition, he and his wife created the Gates Foundation. “The foundation was formed in 2000 and aims to reduce global poverty, improve global health, and increase technology awareness in American schools,” said the article. Bill Gates is a prime example of an individual who was able to achieve the American Dream through a lifetime of hard work and dedication.

**How Bill Gates Started – The Life of Microsoft’s Founder**

Bill Gates started out in a highly-educated family. But they were not programmers, not even engineers. Or technical people at all. So how did he start to be a genius hacker?

His father was a lawyer. A very successful one. His mother a teacher. Reading magazines in middle school he first thought about how cool it would be to open a company. You could say that’s how he started – with a childish dream. Many kids have dreams though, so what happened next?

## How Bill Gates Started To Hack

Next, Bill Gates saw a computer at 13. The school he went to bought one machine and a teletype. He paid for the time to use it. When money ran out, he hacked into the computer to use it for free. Then he got banned by the school. Then the school realized he had a rare skill so they asked him to use the computer and help them find bugs. He started to be a hacker.

## Started to Hustle

Next, Bill scored 1590 out of 1600 on SAT. He went to Harvard. Only to find himself unsure about where to start – as a pre-law major or as something else? Reading Popular Mechanics one day in college he read an ad about a new computer. He called them to say that he wrote a programming language for it. (He hadn’t.) He asked if they might buy it. He hadn’t even started to write the language. But, he started to be a hustler. And, yes, the computer company was very interested in buying.

## Being a Workaholic

Next Bill sat down with his friend Paul from high school, and the two wrote that programming language that he talked about on the phone. Bill wrote 50% of the code, using Harvard’s computers. Bill coded all day long, slept at the computer, woke up and picked up programming exactly where he left off. Bill started to be a workaholic.

## Being a Copyright Guru

When they were done, Bill flew to New Mexico to show this new language he had written called BASIC. The computer company bought it for $3,000. But Bill kept the copyright. Did he somehow know it would be worth a lot in the future? So he started to be a copyright guru.

## Started to Visualize the Future

Five years later IBM knocked on Bill’s door to see if he had written an operating system they could buy. Bill hadn’t. But he said, “Yes.” Real quick, he found an operating system from another person in Seattle and bought it. With the copyright. Then he sold it to IBM. For a lot more. This was DOS. And without copyright – they never asked for it. “Who would pay for software?” they reasoned. It’s the hardware that people are after. Bill saw the opportunity to make people pay for software. Bill started to see the future. He was now a visionary.

## Bill Gates Started to Be a Perfectionist

Then Steve Jobs showed up. He wanted Bill to write new software that was visual. Programs like Excel and Words. Programs that looked human. Bill got down to work. Jobs thought Bill’s team’s product was tasteless, but Bill kept at it. He got better and better until he got really good. Bill started to be a perfectionist.

## Being a Visual Thinker

But Bill was not going to spend his life working on Jobs’ brilliant ideas. Ideas, after all, are worthless until executed. Plus, Jobs’ ideas were stolen anyway. And so it was fair game to do the same. Bill remembered where he saw this idea of visual interfaces – it was Xerox. And now he wanted to create a visual operating system of his own. He called it Windows. He started to be a visual thinker.

 Being a Tough Cookie

When Jobs heard about Windows, he went ballistic. He lashed out at Bill calling him down to Cupertino. In front of ten Apple employees Jobs accused Gates for robbing Apple. Bill listened calmly and replied that Jobs stole the idea just as he did himself. Bill started to be a tough cookie.

When Windows launched, Bill visualized a world where every home had a computer, and that computer was running Windows. Bill started to become very rich. And as his vision materialized, by 39 he became the richest man in the world.

Sources:

* Walter Isacson,[*The Innovators: How a Group of Hackers, Geniuses, and Geeks Created the Digital Revolution*](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/147670869X/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=147670869X&linkCode=as2&tag=fnfbooks-20&linkId=OIHWVR3QDNKGQURD)
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