

Safely Prosperous or Really Rich

Choosing Your Personal Financial Heaven

HOWARD RUFF



WILEY

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Foreword

Robert Allen

Author of *Nothing Down*, the best-selling real estate book in American publishing history, as well as the best sellers *Creating Wealth* and *Multiple Streams of Income*, and the 2003 best seller, *The One-Minute Millionaire*

Before me and my ideas, there was Howard Ruff and his ideas, inspiring me and millions of other entrepreneurs and investors in America.

I've known Howard personally and professionally for many years. Everyone should have a friend like Howard. He was there for me when I was going through some serious crises. He believed in me even when I wasn't sure I believed in myself. Professionally, I have always admired his work. His writing and speaking are always clear, direct, and simple, so no one is ever left wondering what he's talking about. He has always been a highly principled man, and his old-fashioned views on ethics, faith, and family as they relate to money have always been a breath of fresh air.

I subscribed to and faithfully read Howard's financial newsletter, *The Ruff Times*, greatly valuing his counsel and often putting it to work in my own life and businesses.

I read with great interest his 3-million-selling *How to Prosper During the Coming Bad Years*, and was blown away by how right on he was at that time. I was also amazed that he could sell 3 million

books. My first book, *Nothing Down*, had just been released, and I was hoping for similar success.

As fellow Californians, Howard and I crossed paths often, sometimes attending or speaking at the same events. I was always impressed with his take on the financial world and what it meant for Main Street America. When Wall Street was saying one thing, Howard was usually saying another—and he was usually right.

Howard Ruff was one of America's first franchise millionaires, buying a speed-reading franchise and brilliantly marketing it into a booming business that rivaled the parent company, which used Howard's marketing materials as its own.

Howard Ruff was one of the first businessmen of stature to legitimize network marketing in America, an industry now responsible for more millionaires than any other (and one I advocate and participate in myself).

Howard Ruff wrote, produced, and distributed one of the largest financial newsletters in the history of American publishing—*The Ruff Times*—which has had a cumulative total of 600,000 subscribers over the past two-and-a-half decades, a success no other financial newsletter has ever come close to duplicating.

Howard Ruff was personally responsible in part for the 1980s gold and silver rush in America, accurately predicting the time to buy and sell, which made untold millions for investors who can trace their fortunes back to Howard Ruff.

Howard Ruff is personally responsible for saving those who listened from financial ruin when he accurately predicted the recent dot-com stock market collapse.

Howard Ruff is a marketing genius. He was the first newsletter marketer to utilize the self-return mailer, courageously mailing it to millions of people at a time with great success—an idea I and others also used in our businesses with great success. In fact, my company never did a mailing for which we did not rent Howard Ruff's mailing list, which always pulled well for us, because Howard had such a large and loyal fan base (which inspired me to keep track of and take care of my own mailing list).

Howard Ruff is a media darling, appearing on every major radio and television talk program in America with an aplomb that made me want to do the same each time one of my books was released.

Howard Ruff was also one of America's original financial and political radio and television commentators, with his own TV and radio shows syndicated in more than 350 markets nationwide.

PERILOUS TIMES

These are perilous times in America—and no one knows more about making money in America during uncertain times than Howard Ruff. In fact, I think Howard is more relevant today than ever before. After a decade of all the twenty-something Wall Street experts who have turned out to be dead wrong, we need a real adult to lead us forward. At age 73, with a lifetime of experiences, successes, and failures, Howard is that real adult.

Howard has watched, analyzed, predicted, profited, lost, and profited again for nearly three decades now, always shrinking it down to terms Main Street America can understand and profit or be saved from, making him one of America's most beloved and respected financial elder statesmen. I know his followers—and their posterity—are as anxious for Howard's take on the current economy and future trends as I am and welcome this, his latest, greatest work as much as I do.

This new book proves to me that, like a fine wine, Howard has only gotten better with time. Though I write and speak about wealth myself, Howard's insights here have given me some thought-provoking new perspectives to consider.

I am intrigued by Howard's unique concept of the Safely Prosperous versus the Really Rich. Howard would know: He has been both. I like how he has divided his book into two sections, the first dealing with becoming Safely Prosperous and financially secure by avoiding stupid money and investment mistakes and the second dealing with how to make the leap beyond Safely

Prosperous to Really Rich by taking the right carefully calculated risks. I've never read a book that so accurately outlines these two clearly defined paths.

Howard's brilliant concept that the roads to prosperity and riches are very different is liberating, and the true stories that illustrate this point are engrossing and compelling. I was especially moved by the story of Howard's father. The open book he has made of his life is unprecedented. In most financial books, the author would never do what Howard has done: recount with unflinching honesty the big mistakes he has made over the years so readers can avoid the same stumbling blocks and pitfalls. Only a very secure man would have the guts to do that.

I want to share a very personal experience with Howard. In my books and seminars, I talk about the down times in my career. In 1986, when my seminar company closed, I was devastated and embarrassed. Howard, who was enjoying great fame and fortune at the time, took time out of his grueling schedule to write me a personal note that read, in essence, "You'll be back and even stronger next time." That vote of confidence from a man of such stature greatly encouraged me. And he was right: I went on to build two more successful businesses and to write four more best-selling books.

Recently I was seriously injured in an automobile accident. When Howard learned of it, he immediately called my business partner, offering his love, concern, and help. That's the kind of man Howard Ruff is: brilliant at reading and analyzing and profiting from the markets, good and kind and generous to others.

I hope this book is read and applied by millions of people so they can become Safely Prosperous or Really Rich. Although not always easy, the road map Howard has laid out is clear and simple.

Acknowledgments

I'm surrounded by a veritable sea of friends, associates, and role models who have influenced me, taught me, and contributed to my personal and professional life and this book. First, there is Kay, my most recent wife (49 years and still counting). She is the stabilizing anchor in my life, and the only person in the world I'm afraid of—for fear she might be disappointed in me. As the mother of 13 children (four adopted) and numerous foster children, and grandmother of 63 (and counting), she is the quintessential earth mother. When I introduce her as Old Granny Ruff, audiences gasp, as her timeless beauty makes that the ultimate irony. She is the role model for all supportive wives.

Then there are our offspring who read this manuscript and made priceless suggestions, always looking for indications that I might be too full of myself.

Joann Allen has been my assistant for 24 years. Not only has she kept track of my schedule and managed my day-to-day personal finances, she would fall on a grenade for me. She has been a priceless contributor to this book, formatting, proofreading, and offering important insights.

Peg Fugal is a one-woman advertising agency, and was my muse at an important juncture as this book was taking form. Tom Lipscomb was the president of Times Books, and the publisher of *How to Prosper During the Coming Bad Years* in 1976. He saw its potential right off the bat, and his brilliant insights and marketing strategies helped turn it into the biggest-selling financial book in history. I again turned to him when this book was in the early development stages, and he immediately saw that I was on the wrong track. That painful counsel led me to many of the decisions that made this book what it is.

There are so many people to thank that I'm sure I will miss some, and to them I offer my apologies. There's W. Cleon Skousen; Jim Cook; Fran Perry; Terry Jeffers; Senator Orrin Hatch; former president Ronald Reagan; Neal Blair; Art Linkletter; Gary North; Jim Blanchard; my courageous mother, Rena Ruff; J. W. Marriott Sr.; Ezra Taft Benson; Robert Allen; Judy Kimball; Paul Eldredge; Sandy Broadus; my brother, Jim Ruff; Jeff Carneal; Mark Stoddard; Jay Abraham; Mike Bayback; Dan Rosenthal; Jack Anderson; Art Laffer; Dave Nemelka; Richard Russell; Mark Skousen; and countless others.

My editor, Jimmy Vines, jumped at the chance to represent me, as he had grown up in a home where his dad was a Howard Ruff fan, and dinner conversation often centered around my latest newsletter or TV show. He has been a friend and calm counselor all through the complex process of negotiating the sale of the book to a big New York publisher.

Then there's my editor at Wiley, Executive Editor Debra Englander, who saw the potential of this book and decided to take a chance on an old guy whose last blockbuster book success was a quarter century ago.

Introduction

If you are going to take my advice, you have every right to know what kind of a guy I am, so a little bit of history is appropriate. If my life bores you, you can cut right to the chase and go directly to Chapter 1.

Let's start with some of the fun stuff. My life has been so full and unusual that I cannot resist reprinting here something I wrote for fun a few years ago, right after a neighborhood barbecue when we played a game where we had to recount things we had done that we thought nobody else there had done. That fun trip down Memory Lane started my memory running wild. Enjoy!

- I traded one spool of 8-pound-test monofilament fishing line to a chief of a village in the Amazon jungle in return for two monkey-skull necklaces, a blow gun and darts, a bow and arrows, and an anaconda snake skin. After consulting with my wife, Kay, I respectfully declined the chief's offer of a night with one of his four wives in return for a second spool.