



# Who Owns the Ice House?

Eight Life Lessons From an Unlikely Entrepreneur

## BOOK DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Chapter 1: Choice

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Life is not a lottery. The ability to choose the way we respond to our circumstances is fundamental to an entrepreneurial mindset. Choices, rather than circumstances, will ultimately shape our lives. An entrepreneurial mindset empowers you to be mindful of your choices, choosing the life you want rather than accepting life as it is.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Which concept or quote from this chapter was most intriguing to you? Why?
2. How did Uncle Cleve exercise his power to choose?
3. Why is vision important to an entrepreneurial mindset? How does having a vision influence our choices?
4. “The ability to choose the way we respond to our circumstances is perhaps the greatest power we have.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? Illustrate how choosing a response in your own life changed your circumstances or led to your personal growth.
5. Who is your Uncle Cleve? Describe a successful person you know or someone in your community. This could be a small business owner, an executive, a self-employed professional, a professional services provider, or a high-growth entrepreneur. Describe the person and how they managed to succeed.
  - What, if any, advantages did they have?
  - What challenges did they face?
  - What choices did they make that influenced their success?
6. How might working side-by-side with someone who sees the world differently than you do influence the way you see the world?
7. How do you define reacting and responding? Is the distinction important? Why or why not?
8. Is challenging the assumptions we make about the world and ourselves important? Why or why not?

## Chapter 2: Opportunity

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Problems are often opportunities in disguise. Entrepreneurs are problem solvers, and the secret to their success lies in their ability to identify problems and find solutions. An entrepreneurial mindset challenges you to see problems as opportunities, helping you learn to solve problems for others as a viable path towards individual empowerment.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Which concept or quote from this chapter was most intriguing to you? Why?
2. How does this part of Uncle Cleve's story resonate with you?
3. Uncle Cleve was always talking to himself -- a trait he taught to Clifton. Do you talk to yourself? If so, is it negative talk or positive talk? Is it about mistakes or opportunities? What do you say to yourself?
4. Uncle Cleve wanted something that was "his own" that no one could take away from him. Many entrepreneurs feel the same way -- they don't want to be held hostage to someone else's rules and the possibility of layoffs, firings, and so on. Is that perspective appealing to you? Why or why not?
5. Uncle Cleve "was curious and his mind was constantly engaged, perpetually searching for solutions to the problems of others within his community." What are you curious about? How often do you pursue your curiosity? Why?
6. "Solving problems for other people is the 'secret' that enables [entrepreneurs] to transform any set of circumstances into success." How is solving problems for others beneficial for the person doing the problem-solving?
7. What happens to our ability to solve problems when we don't solve problems on a regular basis? What can you do to bolster the strength of your problem-solving ability?
8. Where do opportunities come from? How do entrepreneurs find them? What do entrepreneurs do once they find them?

## Chapter 3: Action

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Entrepreneurs are action oriented, and they tend to focus their time and energy on things they can change rather than things they cannot. An entrepreneurial mindset ignites action, encouraging you to solve problems through active experimentation and collaboration.

### Discussion Questions

1. Which concept or quote from this chapter was most intriguing to you? Why?
2. How does this portion of Uncle Cleve's story resonate with you?
3. Owning the ice house was a big accomplishment, but Uncle Cleve kept dreaming. Do you know anyone who, when they reach their goal, takes the next step? Describe them.
4. People of action are not afraid to try. Yet fear of failure is one of the biggest fears most people have. Why are we so afraid?
5. "Uncle Cleve was dedicated to his own success." How do you define dedicated?
6. In your estimation, what percent of time and energy do people spend on things that they can control versus things they cannot control? How productive is this division of time toward achieving goals? What choices can be made to use time more productively?
7. Entrepreneurs "understand that if they do what they have always done, they will get what they have always gotten." Do most people understand this? Why or why not?
8. "For many it is the internal barriers, the self-imposed limitations that must be overcome in order to succeed." Do you agree? Why or why not? How might self-imposed limitations be overcome?

## Chapter 4: Knowledge

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Our effort can only take us as far as our understanding. Entrepreneurs are self-directed, lifelong learners who understand the power of knowledge combined with effort. An entrepreneurial mindset fosters a self-directed approach to learning that encourages you to seek knowledge, think critically, and develop problem-solving skills.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Which concept or quote from this chapter was most intriguing to you? Why?
2. How does this portion of Uncle Cleve's story resonate with you?
3. Uncle Cleve's truck served as storage for his "tools of knowledge" -- the books, manuals, and newspapers he referenced to learn about the world around him. What are good "tools of knowledge" today? How do people use such tools to learn about the world around them?
4. Uncle Cleve was a self-directed learner, seeking out every opportunity to satisfy his curiosity for learning about the world around him. Do most people intentionally seek out knowledge about the world around them? Why or why not?
5. Uncle Cleve was future focused, learning from everything he came across. How can having a picture of the future help someone gain knowledge?
6. Uncle Cleve could see the change around him, and he prepared for it. Why is preparing for change important? How has the world changed in terms of information and resources since Uncle Cleve's time? What impact does such a change have on our ability to learn?
7. Recognizing the power of observing and listening, Uncle Cleve learned a lot from other people. What are some examples in your life when you used something you learned from someone else?
8. Entrepreneurs view mistakes as opportunities to gain new knowledge. Do most people view their failures as opportunities for learning? Why or why not?

## Chapter 5: Wealth

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Most people see work as an exchange of time for money. Entrepreneurs see it differently. The more problems an entrepreneur can solve, the more wealth an entrepreneur can amass. An entrepreneurial mindset helps you understand money to be a tool in service of creating value for others, and the creation of wealth enables you to take advantage of opportunities to solve more problems for more people.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Which concept or quote from this chapter was most intriguing to you? Why?
2. How does this portion of Uncle Cleve's story resonate with you?
3. Entrepreneurs know that the more problems they can solve for others the more money they can earn. Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. In your own words, define wealth. What are differences between having wealth and having money? Is it possible to have one without the other?
5. Uncle Cleve "spent his time and energy [and money] only on things that would improve his life in the long term and lead him toward his goal." Do you think this is a worthwhile approach to life? Why or why not? How can you tell if this approach to life is going well?
6. "Some people spend their money on things that create the appearance of wealth. They buy big homes and fancy cars. They eat in expensive restaurants and take exotic vacations -- often choking themselves with debt in the process." How do you define spending and investing? Is the distinction important? Why or why not?
7. Of all the things people spend money on, what percentage are things that are nice-to-have versus things that people need-to-have? How well are you spending your money? Where could you improve?
8. Saving money enables you to capitalize on opportunities when they arise. What are some examples of opportunities that could pop up and be taken advantage of? What criteria are important to consider when analyzing opportunities to capitalize on?

## Chapter 6: Brand

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Actions speak louder than words. Entrepreneurs are problem-solvers, and reliability is the key to their success. An entrepreneurial mindset helps you to be intentional about your actions and the way you carry yourself, influencing your brand and how other people view you.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Which concept or quote from this chapter was most intriguing to you? Why?
2. How does this portion of Uncle Cleve's story resonate with you?
3. Clifton says, "I knew that my clients would be buying me and my reputation, not just the machines I was offering." Do you agree with him that clients buy more than the product or service? Why or why not?
4. A good brand can be destroyed more easily than it can be created. What are some obstacles to creating a good brand? What are some strategies for overcoming such obstacles? How can damage be repaired?
5. Even though Uncle Cleve "couldn't control their [others'] opinions of him... he was in control of what they observed of him." If others were asked to describe you based on your actions, what would they say? What do you intentionally do to influence how others see you? What could you do?
6. "Uncle Cleve was known as the man who kept his word." What are you known for?
7. In your own words, define brand. How are brand and reputation related? How are brand and success related?
8. Clifton says, "in spite of how I felt about being a uniformed doorman and messenger, no one was able to say I didn't do my job well." Is it always possible to do a good job? Why or why not?

## Chapter 7: Community

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Entrepreneurs understand the power of positive influence, and they learn to surround themselves with others who have been where they intend to go. An entrepreneurial mindset understands the importance of creating an intentional community of positive influence, critical guidance, and diverse support.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Which concept or quote from this chapter was most intriguing to you? Why?
2. How does this portion of Uncle Cleve's story resonate with you?
3. We know that parents, teachers, and mentors often "want more" for us, but Clifton says that he had to want more for himself, in order for him to take positive action for himself. Why is it sometimes hard for us to want more for ourselves? What seems to stand in our way? What can we do to take ownership of our aspirations?
4. Consider your vision and goals. Why is a support network important to you? What is required to build a support network? Who are the key people in your support network? How did they come to find their place there?
5. Reflecting on his time with Uncle Cleve, Clifton says that Uncle Cleve "would caution [him] about how the wrong crowd could change the direction of [his] life without [his] control." How can our friends influence us without our being aware of it?
6. Clifton says, "It took courage to set my own path, to remain friendly and not captive to the ideas of others." Why does it take courage to leave a group? What are some strategies or techniques for doing so?
7. In your opinion, what percent of conversations are about the past, and what percent are about the future? In what ways might looking to the past and/or the future influence people?
8. The term "peer pressure" is often used in a negative context. Define peer pressure in your own words and describe an example of positive peer pressure.



## Chapter 8: Persistence

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All successful entrepreneurs acknowledge the importance of hard work, determination, and perseverance. An entrepreneurial mindset helps you acknowledge that hard work is a normal and necessary part of achieving success, and it equips you to persist in the face of challenges, setbacks, and self-doubt.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Which concept or quote from this chapter was most intriguing to you? Why?
2. How does this portion of Uncle Cleve's story resonate with you?
3. Clifton says, "To contemplate quitting is human. To persist and not give up is entrepreneurial." What does it feel like when you persist and accomplish something? What strategies do you use to help you persevere?
4. Define persistence in your own words. Describe a time in your life when you demonstrated persistence. How did this behavior impact your mindset?
5. Some people think that success should come easily, as long as they have a good idea or the name of a "good" school on their diploma. Do you agree? Why or why not?
6. In your own words, define failure. Can you fail and yet not be a failure? Why or why not?
7. Clifton says, "When failure does not tear you apart, it serves to spur you on." Do you agree? Why or why not? How do you respond after failure?
8. Describing Uncle Cleve, Clifton says of him, "Work to him was exciting, and working hard for himself was liberating." How does it feel when you work hard?

## **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

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