

Top Authors Reveal Treasured Resources and Success Secrets

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Orlando Ceaser has 30 years of experience in leading sales organizations through management training, diversity, marketing, leadership, and personal development. He has developed many leaders and is a much sought after mentor and career counselor. Orlando is a prolific writer, professional speaker and thought leader. He will introduce us to his wonderful new bestsellers today, *I Wake Up Wanting You* and *Unlock the Secrets of Ozone Leadership*.

P: Orlando, how did you come to your purpose and passion in life?

OC: I've always been a creative person. At home, my creativity was encouraged. I'm the oldest of 11 kids, and so I was the one charged with keeping my siblings in line; telling stories, and coming up with ways to entertain them. I used to draw pictures, cartoons, write poetry – whatever it took.

Growing up with that particular skill set, I noticed that I liked to help people get better at what they are doing. Through my years in management, I was granted numerous opportunities to manage people along their course of personal development.

What I discovered, changed me. It was exciting. After a while, I realized that my purpose in life was to entertain, educate, and inspire people to some kind of action that will help them find their purpose.

P: Tell us about how all of these amazing things that you're doing in personal development lends itself to you starting to write.

OC: Writing for me was always good. In third grade, I had a dream about the adventures of a jungle girl. When I woke up, I wrote down three pages of my dream. I shared it with my teacher, and she was excited about it. She wanted to put it in the school newsletter. She did that. She condensed my three pages down to two paragraphs, but nonetheless, that showed me that I had the talent for putting ideas into words.

During high school, I used to write poetry a lot. Poetry is something that saved me. I remember being in senior English class. I walked into the classroom and the instructor said, "Remember, class, the assignment is due today." My eyes got as large as saucers. "Assignment?" He said, "Yes. You were supposed to do a five-page typewritten paper or provide two poems." I thought, "Okay, poems." So, during class, I wrote two poems, turned those in, and I got 'A's on both.

When I was in sales, I used to write presentations to my customers. Also as a sales rep, I used to write out my responses to potential customer objections. When I was a manager, I helped design training programs, workshops, and exercises so I could challenge my employees to come up with better ways of thinking and relating to their customers.

I found a way to include writing into almost everything I did. It helped me in my job. It helped me in my relationships when I dated. I wrote poetry for people, and they were very receptive. As a leader that helped me a lot, because when you can communicate better with your employees, the chances of being on the same page are increased.



P: Because writing seems to be a natural gift to you, and some people struggle with it, I was wondering, do you feel the passion that you've always had for writing also contributes to the skill that you have exhibited so naturally?

OC: Yes, I think that's it, but I also think I've come up with a system for writing which makes it easier for me. When someone is writing, they sit down at the computer and say, "What am I going to write?" I'm not like that. I write all the time.

I find that when I'm exercising, there's something about the endorphins that stimulate the mind, and I come up with these wonderful associations. When that happens, I write it down. I used to tell my employees stories that I was exposed to growing up. One of my favorites was the shoemaker and the elves. That's a story about a poor cobbler and his wife, and they would lay out leather, and then the next day they'd come back and they'd see these beautiful shoes. What I would say to people, if you want to be involved in the process, you have to leave the leather out. You have to contribute.

If I'm thinking all the time about writing and about finding ways to associate things that happen in front of me to a lesson that I can use at a later date, that's fine. I write notes on slips of paper and later transcribe them into a spiral bound notebook. Those pieces that I think are significant I could work on immediately; I will use Dragon software and dictate them into a Word document.

Writer's block doesn't hit me too often, because if the document or the story is not ready now, I will move on to something else. Invariably by thumbing through my spiral bound notebooks or going through my files that I have online, there is something there that I can continue to work on. It may be a speech. It may be a blog post. I have over 170 blog posts about leadership/personal development. So, since I'm always writing, rarely do I hit a stumbling block. I work on whatever needs attention at that time.

In church, I have a book with me to jot down notes. It's like a 365/24/7 kind of deal. That's me and my compulsion for thinking and writing.

P: I was wondering, what is the nature of your writing when you're so prolific in the way that you jot things down? Is it actual visual observations, or is it emotions and feelings that come up for you?

OC: I think it's holistic and all of the above. In high school, it was like an acting approach. I would sit down and visualize different circumstances where people are going through conflict and emotional turmoil, and they were upset or their hearts were broken, and I would put myself in their position and then I would think, "How would they feel at that particular moment?" and then I'd write it. When I was in a business situation, I'd observe most things and find a way to write prose or poetry to make a point or solve a problem. If you look at my poetry, it's "practical poetry" because whatever you're dealing with, I probably wrote a poem that provides information and insight you can use. I've written poems with topics from grief to mergers in an organization. My poem "Eagles in Cages" talks about people who are in a job, but they're not being fulfilled.

I observe or hear about real life situations and write something about them. If I'm coaching someone and they're struggling with a certain area, I try to add value through finding and inspiring a new approach.

People would ask questions and I would give advice or provide information. They did not take notes, therefore 24 hours later most of my wise counsel was gone. So I decided to make it easy on myself.

One day I asked myself, "What are the questions people usually ask? What do I generally say to people when they ask me these questions?" I started writing down things I usually say.



After a while, I had ten items. When someone asked my opinion on something, if it hit one of those ten areas, I would say, "Here is some information on the topic. If you want more, send me an email, and then I will respond to you a little bit deeper." After a while, these ten items were sent out for publication.

P: That's terrific. Tell us *about I Wake Up Wanting You*. How did that book evolve for you?

OC: As I said, I am holistic, and I hit many different areas. Most of what we do is about relationships. In leadership, in your community, on the job, it's about relationships. I have a significant body of work written around romantic poetry. I was joking one day about people in relationships. I said, "People really don't go as deep as they need to sometimes." There's a lot of misunderstanding. There are problems with communications.

Then I said, "Could I come up with something where people could sit down and talk to each other?" I've taken some acting classes, too. "Let me come up with something like vignettes or scripts that couples can say to one another and go back and forth." I woke up one day with that in mind and called it "I wake up wanting you."

Now the preface tells you that there are times when communications may be an issue, when you say, "I love you," and somebody else says, "I love you," you don't know exactly what that means. It's almost like a greeting sometimes. How deep do you want somebody to go when they hear you say, "I love you"?

With this particular book, you can go through and read to each other, and by doing that, you'll see things that are practical for you; things that you can relate to. You'll see a title like, *I Wake Up Wanting You*. You'll see, "Do not abandon me when I'm old and gray." You'll see, "I really mean well." One is, "I am vulnerable with you, but I am exclusively yours." When it's over, hopefully you can say, "Let's talk about what we just read. Does that fit where we are in our relationship?"

I was in a store one day and a lady said, "Orlando, a friend of mine bought your book, *I Wake Up Wanting You*, and she scheduled a date night with her husband, and part of the date night was going to be to read sections of the book to each other."

P: That is so fabulous and so beautiful. I think you need to write the next book for politicians.

OC: Well, I wrote a poem the other day, and the title of the poem is "I Apologize Because I Got Caught," which could be great for some politicians. I have three comic strips; two that are really functional, about things in the world. One has a business setting, almost like a Dilbert gone wild. I have another one pretty much for teenagers. I have imagined a father talking to his daughter and the caption says, "Let me get this right. You want your independence so your friends can tell you what to do."

P: Tell us a little bit about your latest bestseller, *Unlock the Secrets of Ozone Leadership* and the message that you use to help people turn into great leaders.

OC: Two of the things that I always try to do are simplify things and find my motivation from the things that are around me. I found that if I could use something around me as a trigger, then that would remind me of the things I needed to do to motivate people, to inspire people to some form of positive action.

For example, I was a science major. My degree is in biology. Being in the pharmaceutical industry for many years, I found a way to use that. One day I'm talking to my managers, and we had launched a new drug. The drug was not going as well as it could have been going, so therefore, the heat started coming down from above. People started panicking and freaking out.

One day I'm talking to my regional managers, and I came up with the idea. I said, "Look, when the heat comes down from above, it can be rather intense. What I want you to do is this. You cannot let that heat go through unfiltered to your people, because sometimes it's raw, sometimes it's not in the most delicate language, and your people may not have as much involved in the process and the company and their careers as you do. So therefore, you have to stand in the

gap between the heat that's coming down and the heat that's coming to your people. You have to be the ozone layer for your people."

That stuck with me. I would routinely use that analogy of the ozone layer, because one of the things about the ozone layer is that the ozone layer doesn't just let everything go through. It filters the heat that comes from the sun to make sure only that which is most positive gets through to the plants so that we can live on planet earth the way we should.

Using that analogy over the years it dawned on me one day that I should probably codify it. Give it more depth. Put it in writing somewhere so that I can then pass it on to people. For example, when I started looking at the ozone layer, I said, "What are the attributes of the ozone layer that have an application to developing people to management to leadership?" I came up with 5 areas. The ozone layer is protective, selective, corrective and effective and as a leadership model, it would be directive.

One thing about the ozone layer is that it is protective. It will ensure that only certain UV light gets through to the earth, as I said earlier. As a leader, you also have to be protective. How do you help your people feel safe? What programs do you put in place? What kind of conversations do you have with people so that they feel that they can trust you, that you have their back, and that you are putting policies in place that look out for their best interests? The ozone layer is selective, so as a leader, how can you be selective with the issues that affect your people? How can you ensure that they are focused only on the programs and strategies important to your business?

Not only do I apply it to leadership, but I also apply it to parenting, because the same principles work with parents raising their children. They have to be protective of their children, selective of the things they get involved in, corrective with discipline and feedback so that they can be raised effectively, and you're guiding them through directive behavior to where they need to go.

P: When you look at your contribution as a legacy, what does that look like for you?

OC: My legacy is to help change people. I want to entertain, educate, and inspire people to some kind of action that's going to allow them to unlock their leadership greatness and achieve the results that they want. All of the writing and the speaking is to stimulate thinking so that folks can fully express their true potential for greatness.

When I train people, the training that is most effective is training that has multiple applications. I can use it at work, at home and in the community. I could use some of it at church.

My contributions can be seen in 12 books that I've written. I have several more completed. They're in my files. I have 2 audio books, which I narrated. I also have six CDs, where I read my poetry set to music.

My legacy has to do with being a resource, a value to people. For my purpose is to benefit others. This is through writing about many aspects of the human experience, giving speeches around those things, and giving people a perspective on how to think about things. I have a decision-making module in one of my books. I am a resource, and my legacy and my effectiveness ties into how I utilized myself as a resource so that somebody walks away from their interaction with me and my works and feels better.


That's it. That's the legacy that I have. The fact that I'm here and I'm influencing people and creating content that people can look at and say, "I can use this." I can listen to this. I can read this. This will help me."

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Unlock the Secrets of

OZONE LEADERSHIP

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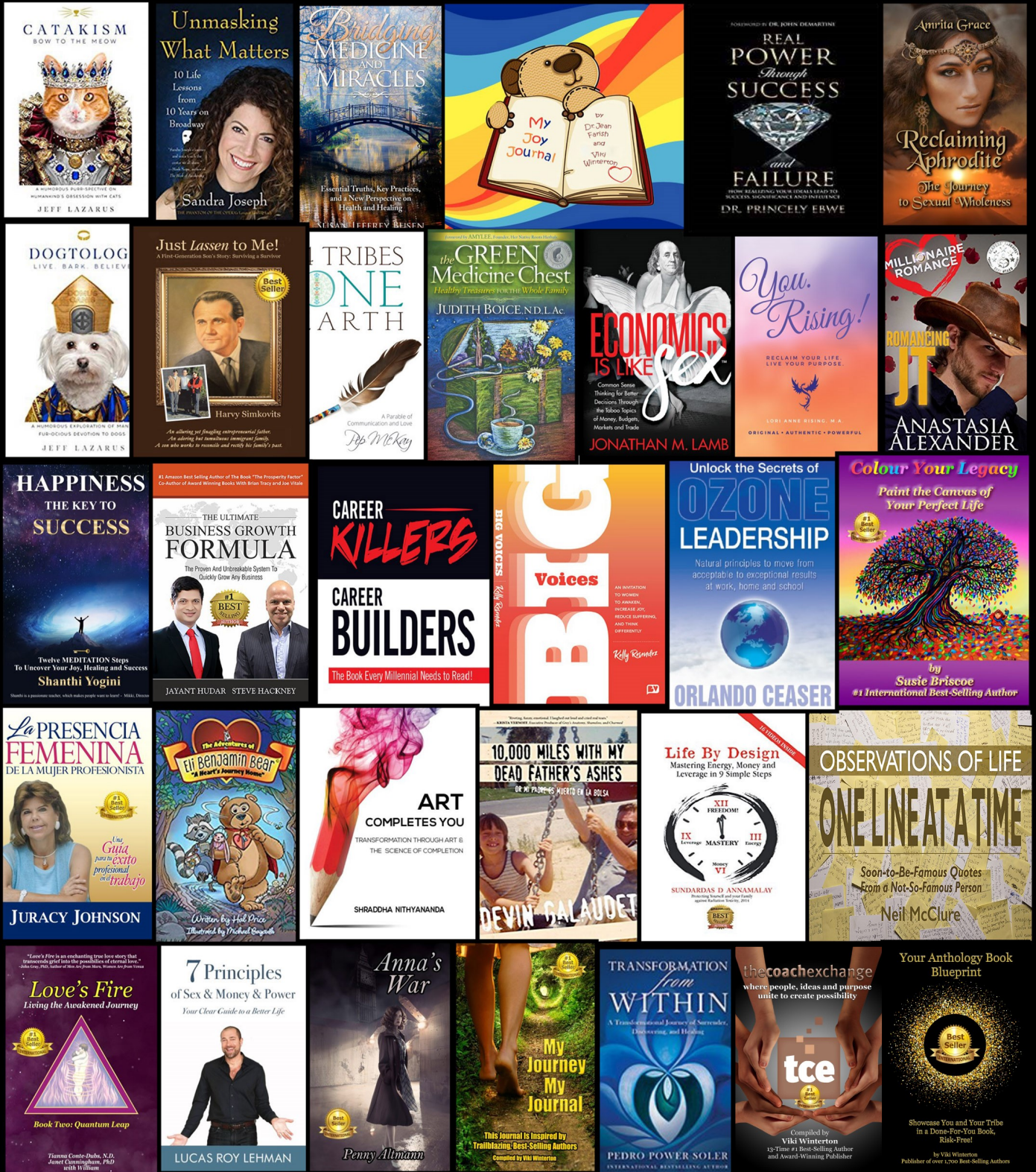


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