

A photograph of Robert Herjavec sitting in the driver's seat of a car. He is wearing a dark blue jacket and jeans, and has a watch on his left wrist. The car's interior and steering wheel are visible. The background is slightly blurred, showing the car's structure and some light coming from the side.

Dynamic entrepreneur, cybersecurity expert and co-star of the hit television show Shark Tank discusses the connections between health and financial well-being.

FISCALLY fit

by Jodi Marsh

One of the best words used to describe business mogul Robert Herjavec is “focus.” It was a young Herjavec’s focus that helped his family transition to living in North America after escaping from former Yugoslavia at the tender age of eight.

That same drive also helped Herjavec bounce back in his mid-20s after losing his job. His ambition and willingness to work hard helped lead him to the top of the business world. As we start the new year, Herjavec says that it’s a sense of purpose that will help people reach their resolutions and achieve their personal goals.



“Anything you focus on in life comes true,” Herjavec says. “If you’re going out partying all the time, it certainly comes true. If you focus on weight loss, that comes true. The key to financial success is consistency.

“You have to have a game plan and you have to take financial responsibility for yourself. In our current economy, it’s so hard. It’s so competitive. There is no such thing as a guaranteed job or employment. Unless you are constantly adding value, you could be out of a job. You’ve got to take responsibility for your retirement, for paying your bills and for taking care of yourself.”

Success in business life begins in one’s personal life. Herjavec says that having both a healthy mind and body is key. If those are in tune with each other, he says it makes accomplishing the other obstacles you face at work and home much easier.

“I think the real lesson is to live in the present,” Herjavec says. “The past doesn’t define you, and I think that goes for a healthy lifestyle too. I think you’ve got to take care of your body because it’s the vessel for your mind. If you want to be financially independent, you have to work on yourself.

“A lot of your health, you can control. Before you get into financial shape, get yourself into shape. That’s why I run. That’s why I try to watch what I eat.”

Making time for fitness and eating right are valuable parts of every day. That same drive to be successful in business also should drive a person’s need to stay healthy.

Herjavec says that it’s important to remember “We all get the same 24 hours.” How you spend that time, he says, is what can determine your level of success.

“You’ve got to make time for it (healthy living),” Herjavec says. “I always find that busier people tend to make time for exercise. You schedule it and you think about it. You’ve got to find that time. The busier I am, the more I need to exercise. It’s impossible for me to work at the schedule and level I’m working without exercise.”

// Self-made man

In both his personal and business life, things did not come easy for Herjavec. As the only English speaker in his family, Herjavec carried a heavy load of responsibility.

“This is still the land of opportunity. It’s still the greatest country in the world and it’s still a place you can come to and achieve, really, anything you want,” Herjavec says. “In my case, it was important to repay the sacrifice my parents made to come here with nothing and then work incredibly hard to provide for me.”

It was those experiences that helped shape the man who today oversees one of North America’s fastest-growing technology companies — a global cybersecurity firm aptly named Herjavec Group — and who became a best-selling author and one of the stars of the popular TV series, *Shark Tank*.

Following the success of his two previous books, *Driven* and *The Will to Win*, Herjavec’s new project is aimed at helping small businesses recognize and achieve sales goals.

“The biggest thing we find when talking to small business owners, or what we see on the show, where people really fail, is their lack of sales,” Herjavec says.

So much of the success of a small business is dependent on sales. He says the often-negative connotation some people make with a salesperson can hold a business back. It’s Herjavec’s contention that in order for companies and businesses to grow and succeed, the CEO or founder must be good at sales.

Herjavec maintains that you don’t have to be slick to succeed in sales. This belief has become the inspiration for his third book, which he is in the process of finishing: “I wrote a book about sales for the non-salesperson. Really, you don’t have to be a shark to be good at sales.”

// Expert advice

If he had to do it over again, Herjavec says that he wishes he’d have saved more money in his 20s. It took him getting fired from his job — unable to make mortgage and bill payments — to properly motivate himself to get on the right track to success.

“The defining moment for me was getting fired. It forced me to start a business. If I wouldn’t have gotten fired I would have never started my own business,”

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Herjavec says. “There was a great lesson in it for me — you never know what you’re capable of until you’re put in that situation.

“I have a great ability to build businesses and it’s worked out for me. But if I didn’t, I would have really been in trouble because I didn’t save when I was younger.”

Herjavec acknowledges that starting a new business, or even a new job, is risky.

One of the keys to taking those risks is having something to fall back on, even if the risk doesn’t pay off.

“It’s impossible to get ahead in life without taking risks,” Herjavec says. “Risk is not an all-or-nothing thing. Any risk that can hurt you to that degree is really bad.”

It’s also important to keep your goals realistic. Herjavec stresses that you have to be willing to work hard over the long haul, whether you’re starting a business or building a nest egg. Before venturing out on your own, he recommends building up a personal savings that would support you and your family for at least six months.

“If you can’t live without any income coming in for six months, you’re going to have a very difficult time taking any financial risks,” Herjavec says. “Always save for a rainy day. It’s very cliché, but bad things do happen and it does rain.”

The world has experienced change and growth on a global scale, much in part to the Internet. Herjavec stresses to everyone, including his own children, that competition in the business world has moved well beyond the local level.

“The world is now hypercompetitive. You no longer compete against your neighbor or someone you know in the same city. You are competing against people all over the world,”

Herjavec says. “Distance and time have gone away. What that means in a hypercompetitive environment is that the world does not reward mediocrity; it only rewards greatness and value.”

As a young business owner, Herjavec says that one of the best pieces of advice he received was from Warren Avis, founder of Avis® Car Rental. He advised Herjavec to hold on to the equity in a business, something he still follows to this day.



“If you want to do great things in life, you have to have great challenges.”

“Typically, when I’ve started my own businesses, I’ve hung on to as much equity as possible until I either sold that business or brought someone else in,” Herjavec says. “Never be enamored by how much a company sells for. Be enamored by how much of it you get to keep.”

One of the best ways to find that success, Herjavec says, is to find something you love. That passion for what you do makes it easier to succeed at whatever endeavor it is.

“Then you have to find a way to add value to doing that thing you love,” Herjavec says, which is a cornerstone in building personal success and happiness.

“You have to go out there and push yourself. I think life is so incredible that you can always find a new challenge,” he says. “If you want to do great things in life, you have to have great challenges.”

For Herjavec, it was competing on the reality competition *Dancing with the Stars*.

“I went on a show that required me to dance in front of hundreds of people in a live audience and millions of people watching (on TV), and I had never danced in my life. That, to me, was far scarier than racing cars, jumping out of an airplane or any of it.

“The thought of fear is often greater than the actuality of fear,” Herjavec says. “I think if you have that ability to put yourself out there and take it on, it’s amazing what you can achieve.”

Jodi Marsh is Executive Editor for *Healthy Living Made Simple*.



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