

There's magic in your mistakes



Wilson is chairman of both Canoe Financial and his Prairie Merchant Corporation and is a member of the Order of Canada. HEATHER FRITZ

Telling it like it is. W. Brett Wilson tackles the tough side of getting to the top

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Dragons' Den co-star and Risky Business host W. Brett Wilson became one of Canada's top investment bankers, but learned the hard way that financial success and the respect of business peers can come at the price of losing health, family and friends.

In his new book *Redefining Success*, which is in stores tomorrow, Wilson tells the story of hitting the big-time financially while hitting rock-bottom personally, and what led him to redefine his life.

Metro caught up with Wilson to chat about success, business savvy and what it truly means to be satisfied.

If we're being completely honest, does one's personal life have to suffer at least marginally in order to climb the professional ladder?

Yes, there are sacrifices for sure because we can only do one thing at time and we



have competing demands on our time. That simply drives home the relevance of setting priorities to steward ones time with.

What are three key warning signs that you are not balancing work and life properly?

There are many warning signs, but at the personal level when you aren't allocating time to your health, your family and your friends ... quite simply you are not balancing life and work very well.

If I were hoping to get you to invest in my small business idea, what could I tell you that would make you back out immediately?

If you told me the idea was new and you thought it was worth a "flyer" I would question for passion, for the concept and ability and interest in following through — meaning I am gonzo!

What has been the biggest risk you've ever taken in your professional life and did it yield positive or negative results?

The biggest risk I ever took, in the eyes of my family and friends and peers, was starting FirstEnergy — the energy-focused brokerage firm — as the entrepreneur. I was comfortable with the risk (it was my life's focus after all), but there were many doubters. Did it work out? Financially it was a success. Personally, it absorbed every waking hour, to the detriment of key relationships in my life.

Can you recall a moment in your life where you felt like you achieved success wholly and completely?

Success is hard to measure, therefore it's hard to respond to the question.

Have I achieved success? The last line in my book of fers: "A successful man is one who has earned the respect and admiration of others." I would add, "especially that of his children." On that basis — I hope I have achieved success. I know my life's work is far from done.

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