

**THE
EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL
SALESMAN'S CLUB**

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The Extremely Successful Salesman's Club

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CONTENTS

The Legend of The Extremely Successful Salesman's Club

Chapter 1 - A Rather Beguiling Invitation 1

Chapter 2 - A Most Vexing Decision 3

Chapter 3 - The Secret Place of Thunder 8

Chapter 4 - The First Rule: Adopt the Positive 12

Chapter 5 - The Simple Clarification of the Cochlea 19

Journal Entry - Sunday, 4th September 1887 26

Chapter 6 - The Second Rule: Embrace the Fundamentals 29

Chapter 7 - The Astonishing Alchemic Properties of
Appropriate Questions 37

Journal Entry - Monday, 5th September 1887 46

Chapter 8 - The Third Rule: Plot Your Course 48

Journal Entry - Tuesday, 6th September 1887 61

Chapter 9 - The Fourth Rule: Take the Journey 63

<i>Journal Entry - Wednesday, 7th September 1887</i>	73
Chapter 10 - The Fifth Rule: Design Your Reputation	76
Chapter 11 - The Sixth Rule: Regain the Tenacity of a Child	86
<i>Journal Entry - Thursday, 8th September 1887</i>	94
Chapter 12 - A Tour of the Triforium	97
Chapter 13 - The Seventh Rule: Listen as if Your Life Depended on It	103
Chapter 14 - An Intriguing Interpretation	109
<i>Journal Entry - Friday, 9th September 1887</i>	114
Chapter 15 - We Meet Again In Exactly One Year	116
The Extremely Successful Salesman's Club	120
About the Author	121

To SJ, EJ & AC
With all my love

THE LEGEND OF THE EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL SALESMAN'S CLUB

Of all the exclusive Victorian Gentleman's clubs, The Extremely Successful Salesman's (ESS) Club was often described as the "*most elite and important of all London clubs.*"

Standing in close proximity to St. James Square, the Club was noted for its magnificent smoking and dining rooms, and extensive library. It was instantly recognisable to the well-informed by the large cochlea shell engraved in the glass above the front door. The cochlea was the symbol of the Club and served as a reminder that all who entered practised the art of deep listening.

From its London inception in 1843, as a dining club for the professional classes of the City, it quickly became a place where the like-minded could share their wisdom, secrets, and methods that had provided them their success.

These "success" lessons were later distilled into the Club's legendary *7 Rules, 5 Truths, and 3 Laws.*

"...they shall end by becoming prosperous enough to join the Whittington Club, or the ESS Club, or the Gresham Club, or the Travellers' Club....the Club is composed of merchants, bankers, and other gentlemen of known respectability. No candidate is eligible, until he has attained the age of twenty-one years..."

An Exploration of London Society – Ishmael Cayton Jones

THE EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL SALESMAN'S CLUB

Membership was by invitation only, with the weeklong initiation ceremony conducted by the new member's sponsor. A week being the time expected for an inductee to grasp the 7 Rules – the minimum expected understanding – in full. After proving himself over a twelve-month period, the Apprentice was considered for the position of Neophyte, and then could move toward becoming a Journeyman.

The 5 Truths and 3 Laws were rites of passage in themselves, only revealed to those who had proven themselves to be truly worthy, and were delivered with the award of a gold, and then a platinum membership.

As a physical entity, the Club disappeared sometime after the First World War. However, the rules, laws, and truths continued under a variety of different guises, passed from generation to generation.

There are those, who say that the society still exists, controlling and manipulating international trade with their vast network of contacts and combined knowledge. And that they continue to put the ancient secrets of the Club to the very use they were intended – *making those who know them extremely successful.*

CHAPTER 1

A Rather Beguiling Invitation

Dear Simeon,

I am well aware that the last few years have not been easy for you or your family and would like to offer my sincerest sympathies following the sudden passing of your father. With this in mind, I have decided to offer you a chance to improve your fortunes to the best of my ability.

It is well-known that a man can only be as successful as the network of associates to which he belongs. Therefore, I would like to make you a unique offer, which if you do not accept at once, will unfortunately be beyond my influence to present to you again.

Since you have recently celebrated your twenty-first birthday, I am able to sponsor your induction to an establishment over which I hold some small influence. It is simply known as The Extremely Successful Salesman's Club.

Before you make your decision, I need to make you aware that

THE EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL SALESMAN'S CLUB

there is an incredibly strict apprenticeship, which among other tasks, includes the absorption of seven critical rules.

If, after accompanying me for a full week in London, we discover that you are able to abide by these rules and are accepted by the inner chamber of the Club, then I can promise you that your life will never be quite the same.

It would not be untrue to say this purposefully private Club, has enabled many men, from a variety of backgrounds to become extremely successful, and in turn, fabulously wealthy.

It is this opportunity that I wish to share with you.

Having no children of my own, I have been allowed to extend the invitation of a trial membership to you, Simeon, my only nephew.

Do not back away from this through a fear of possibility or opportunity, as so many do. Instead, embrace it wholeheartedly, and take your first steps towards an incredibly prosperous life.

I will be waiting for you in the Club's dining room at eight on the evening of the fourth. If you decide that you will not be joining me, I will understand, and we shall never mention this again.

However, as you may recall, I do so hate to eat alone.

Best Regards,

Barnabas Kreuz

CHAPTER 2

A Most Vexing Decision

AFTER RECEIVING THE INVITATION from his uncle, Simeon had made all the necessary arrangements and on the evening of the fourth, in a rather apprehensive mood, was dropped by cab close to the central London address.

Carrying a small case with one hand, and holding a business card high in the other, he strolled briskly in the warmth of the late summer air, trying to get a sense of the direction in which the house numbers ran around the square.

This curious little card had accompanied the invitation from his uncle. It was inscribed with the St. James' address on one side and a sketch of what appeared to be a small whirlpool on the reverse. He counted down from the last building showing a visible street number, until arriving at his destination.

Walking through the small gate and up the large stone steps towards the foreboding black-paneled door, he noticed the same whirlpool design engraved in the semi-circular window above.

With one last deep breath to steady himself, he knocked.

As the door opened, Simeon felt dizzy and slightly nauseous, a feeling he would later contribute to nerves. The tall, balding, white-gloved man in the doorway gazed just above Simeon's head.

"May I help you?"

"I am here to meet with my uncle Barnabas, Barnabas Kreuz..."

His explanation was cut short by a booming voice from within.

"He's with me, Jenkins. This is my nephew. I'll look after him from here."

Through the door, Simeon could see a great bear of a man bounding across the mosaic-tiled floor. He was exquisitely dressed and sported a wide moustache, which framed his beaming smile.

"Uncle Barnabas!"

"Hello, my boy. Well, let him in, Jenkins. Come on. Poor boy can't get started from out there."

Jenkins nodded, and indicated to a small desk just inside the door.

"Certainly, Sir. The gentleman will, of course, be required to sign the visitor's book during his stay."

"Quite so. Quite right. Come on, my boy, let's make this legal and above board."

Simeon stepped into the vast entrance hall and looked up to the ceiling, which rose through two floors above them. The area was framed by a number of internal balconies. To his left was a manned cloakroom, and ahead a pair of large solid doors.

Barnabas took Simeon's coat, while enquiring about the journey and then, once pleasantries were over, he placed a hand on either side of the young man's shoulders, his smile dropping slightly.

"It is fabulous to see you and I am delighted that you accepted my invitation. I truly am. However, forgive me for a moment, while I take a more somber tone. You see, our time together is limited and this undertaking is of a most serious nature. The information I will be sharing with you throughout this week must remain for your ears only. Do you understand?"

"I do."

A MOST VEXING DECISION

“Good, good. In my letter, I promised you an opportunity for success and wealth. However, these next few days act only as a guide of the routes and roads to be taken. If the man taking the quest is not up to this task, then simply understanding these directions will not suffice.”

“Thank you, Uncle. I have been warned. Let’s get started.”

“One moment. Take your time, young man. I have a number of questions to ask you.” Barnabas pointed to the wall behind him saying, “You should only step through this next set of doors if you genuinely wish for your life to change. Please listen to these words, as I ask you, most earnestly. Do you wish to become wealthier than you can currently comprehend, with success you cannot yet possibly dream of?”

“Yes, I do – who wouldn’t? Why would you ask?”

Barnabas stared as if strangely possessed, his voice showing signs of impatience.

“Because it’s so vitally important, that’s why! I need you to focus. Imagine in your mind’s eye your personal interpretation of wealth.”

Simeon raised his brow, stared slightly to the right and grinned.

“I have it.”

Barnabas tapped two fingers on the top of the young man’s head.

“You hardly had time to visualize anything at all. Take your time, concentrate hard, and then ask yourself, are you ready to start the journey that will take you there?”

Simeon took a deep, slightly-agitated breath, closed his eyes, and thought hard on his uncle’s request.

“Yes. I truly am.”

“Do you want to join the ranks of the extremely successful?”

“Of course I do, without doubt!”

“Do you understand that only a small number of men have ever

been invited to join this Club, and fewer still ever take permanent residence in the greater society beyond these doors?"

"I do now."

"And yet you still wish to continue?"

"Yes, of course. Whatever else you have to warn me of, Uncle, shall we just assume that I accept and we can move on."

"Assumption is not in my nature, dear boy. Listen to me carefully. One way or another your life is about to change! Few people hear these words when offered, but I will share them anyway, and you will no doubt hear me say them again and again. Your life *will* change! You don't realize it yet, but you are currently in a fairly enviable position of ignorance."

"Thank you very much, I'm sure. Ignorant and enviable. What a perfectly delightful combination."

"Not very often, but on this occasion, yes. Each and every person, who stood at this threshold spent some time afterwards wishing they had turned away. Once you and I lift the lid on Pandora's box, it will always be open. You will not be able to unlearn what you have learnt."

"You are warning me of the consequences of my own success?"

"Or the opposite. There have been those who walked through these doors unwilling to rise to the challenge. They now spend their lives constantly aware of what could have been theirs, knowing that their own weaknesses keep them from true happiness. Its propinquity an unremitting reminder of their failure. If that is to be your destiny, then I'm afraid your future holds nothing but anger and bitterness"

Simeon swallowed hard, the cheerfulness draining from his features.

"So I ask you, before you go any further, do you still wish to accept my invitation to join The Extremely Successful Salesman's Club?"

A slight hesitation, and then Simeon answered,

A MOST VEXING DECISION

“Yes!”

Barnabas produced a bright, golden key attached by a short chain to the inside of his jacket. Simeon could hear the echoes in the space beyond where they stood, as the key turned in the lock. Barnabas threw open the large, double doors, signaling for his nephew to walk through them.

Ahead of them was a corridor of around twenty feet in length. The floor paved with highly-polished, black-and-white diamonds, bordered by portraits of austere men, who looked down on the pair as they walked past like discontented chess pieces watching over a narrow marble board.

Simeon suddenly felt as though he had not been ready for this at all.

CHAPTER 3

The Secret Place of Thunder

THEY MADE THEIR WAY TOWARDS the single, brown, leather-padded door at the other end of the corridor. Their clacking steps echoing all around them, and reverberating up to the high, white ceiling above.

As Barnabas stopped, key in hand and brow raised, his eyes gestured to the room beyond the door.

Simeon nodded. His uncle grinned, took a deep breath, and pushed the door inward.

The round windowless room ahead of them was empty but for a three-legged table standing over a mural of a mariner's star.

An identical door perfectly mirrored the one from which they had just entered.

Simeon looked up and noticed that there was an inscription written around the wall just beneath the cornice:

“Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret

place of thunder.”

As Simeon walked across to the table, he heard the heavy door shut hard behind him.

Desperate for something to say to break the silence, he nodded towards the other door.

“Where does that one lead?”

“That is a completely different set of golden keys altogether. One room at a time, my boy, one room at a time.”

His uncle paced around the outside edge of the room, rocked back on his heels, and raised his arm towards the table.

“I believe there is an envelope addressed to you. Kindly open it.”

Simeon moved closer as instructed, an envelope sat on top of a thick, ancient book. The corners of its heavy cover were dark and tatty, the edges of its inner pages thick and jagged.

“This is an old book.”

“One of the oldest.”

“Why is it kept in here, all locked up?”

“My boy, that book is more than a thousand years old. It was brought to London after the third crusade. And then passed down through generations of one of England’s most well-known families. That book contains the true secrets of success. The very foundations of this entire establishment.” Barnabas smiled a respectful smile. “You know, after all this time, we still haven’t translated it all. To this day, it continues to keep some secrets from us, deep within its ancient pages.”

Simeon looked skeptical.

“You’re telling me that this esteemed Club bases its techniques on an untranslatable, thousand-year-old book?”

Barnabas looked genuinely aggrieved.

“There are no mere techniques here. This book contains

principles, my boy. True undisputable principles. You won't find fashionable ideas or parlor tricks disguised as wisdom in this mighty tome. Techniques, young man, are to be learned and discarded. Principles are to be understood and absorbed. Principles are what you build your life around. No. What we have here is the lost Eighth Book."

"I'm sorry. Is that supposed to mean something to me?"

"Ha, my apologies, dear boy. Probably not, but you are more than likely aware of the rest of its family. Over two thousand years ago, select members of the intelligentsia put together eight pieces of literature. Over the centuries they were largely forgotten as actual physical objects, but you've no doubt heard them referred to as The Seven Pillars."

"The Seven Pillars of Wisdom? You're saying that they were once physical books?"

"Of course, absolutely! The Book of Power, The Book of Knowledge, the Books of Understanding and Counsel, followed by Prudence, Discretion, and Sound Judgement. But this book, the book you see before you here, this is the Eighth Book. This is the complete collection, an intense distillation of the other seven."

He placed his hand gently on the ancient tanned cover, his face beaming, his voice lowered to a reverent hush,

"This, Simeon, is The Book of Success."

Simeon's face showed a mixture of doubt and disbelief.

"So this is my challenge. I am to read and understand this long-lost Eighth Book of Wisdom?"

Barnabas boomed a laugh.

"Good God no! That would take you forever. Probably bore you to death before that. No, you must read the rather shorter letter, placed on top of the book, which I believe you will find is addressed

to you.”

The young man’s nervous fingers found a small opening above the wax, ripped through the top, and unfolded the paper within.

Barnabas smiled at Simeon’s bewildered expression.

“What do you see?”

“It states my name and that this, or rather, that these, are the Seven Rules of The Extremely Successful Salesman’s Club. Then, there is a list of random statements. It says I must learn these rules. I must live them and make them work for me as they have done for the chosen few before me. I must follow the path of those, who have gone before me and spend my time piecing together the letters of the secret word of success. The word that means all things.”

“You’re frowning?”

“Well, these statements don’t seem to make any sense. How am I supposed to follow rules that I can’t make head nor tail of? And how can a single word mean all things?”

“That, my boy, is precisely what I’m here for. Intrigued?”

“Confused!”

There was a silence, and then Barnabas raised his hands.

“Well that’s a start, I suppose. Come, we should eat. You must be famished – and no one should ever be confused and hungry at the same time, eh?”

CHAPTER 4

The First Rule: Adopt the Positive

AS THEY SETTLED DOWN FOR DINNER, Barnabas motioned towards the back of the room with his hand.

“Do you see that large lobster tank over there?”

Simeon turned to see a large rectangular aquarium in the corner of the room

“Oh yes. I don’t know how I missed that on the way in.”

“Ha! We shall deal with your limited powers of observation at a later date, my boy. For now just watch how they interact will you.”

Simeon unfolded the large white napkin resting across his plate, and turned to watch as the lobsters clawed their way onto each other’s backs, making tall columns before toppling backwards and joining the other inhabitants on the base of the tank. He became captivated by this strangely hypnotic display, quickly realizing that the collapse was due to the majority pulling the top lobster back down amongst them.

He turned back to his uncle, smiling.

“How strange. Those lobsters could easily climb out of the tank. There seems to be no lid or impediment to their escape. Yet each time one gets near to the top, the rest pull him right back to the bottom.”

“Well spotted,” said Barnabas. “Bizarre. Is it not?”

They both watched a little longer before he gestured with an open hand towards a newly emerging tower of lobsters.

“You know, Simeon, I see lobsters pretty much everywhere.”

“I’m sorry?”

Barnabas dabbed the side of his mouth and laughed.

“Don’t worry. I’m not suffering from some form of crustacean-based madness. I’m not delusional. What I mean is this. I recognize lobster-like qualities in the way people interact. That tank is simply a reflection of how the human race regularly treat one another. Most don’t even know they’re doing it. It just appears to be the way the human race functions.”

“To climb up and pull down?”

“Ha, well in a way I suppose. Ever noticed how others react when you get a chance to better yourself? How they seem to delight in pointing out why the opportunity might be beyond your capabilities? Above your station in life or just so far out of reach it would be pointless to even try for? They seem to mean well, don’t they? Have your best interests at heart? They’ll be convincing and sincere, but all they are actually doing is passing on their personal fears and superstitions regarding life outside of their own private lobster tank.”

Simeon nodded, placing his knife and fork neatly at the side of his plate.

“I have to say there has been no shortage of people, who advised me to set my aspirations at a level beneath my abilities. Even more

who mocked my personal self-beliefs. Maybe I'm fooling myself, but I always felt there must be a way to achieve my hopes and dreams, make my family proud."

"And you shall, young man. You shall! And by adopting this first rule, *you will!*"

Simeon was carefully flattening his newly-acquired letter on the table in front of him.

"So what does *adopt the positive* actually mean?"

Barnabas put his hand on Simeon's elbow and leant in.

"It means you fill your life with positive people, positive conversation, and positive literature. It means you politely ignore naysayers, understanding that everything you do has a consequence. The subject matter you decide to read or not read, believe or not believe, the words you say or don't say, wherever you decide to go or not to go. These are your choices every day and they are decisions of vast importance. Pity the naysayers, if you wish, but do so remembering you have better things to spend your time on than trying to convert those who fear success."

"Pity them. Ignore them. That all sounds rather uncharitable."

"No. Not really. Just realistic."

"And who would fear success?"

"Pretty much everyone."

"Nonsense. I can't subscribe to that. Who wouldn't want to be rich beyond their wildest dreams?"

"Come now. I saw the fear in your eyes when we discussed failure in the lobby. How many people would actually make the most of success if the chance came, eh? Allowing yourself to be a conduit for opportunity requires a brand new outlook on life. Lady fortune cannot enter a locked door, you know. And contrary to that well-known saying, she has rarely been known to knock."

“So how do I make sure she comes somewhere near my door then?”

“Ha, straight to it, eh? Good for you, good for you. Well, you do so by keeping your head up and your eyes open. You listen. You become aware. You recognize coincidence and you notice the gaps that so many others miss.”

“Gaps? I can assure you, Uncle. There’s nothing out there being missed. Every way of making a living is already being taken advantage of by someone.”

“Do you think so?”

“I know so.”

“You know so do you? My dear boy, you really need to adopt this rule, you really do. If you’re not ready to receive opportunity, it’ll walk right past you. Carry on believing that every piece of fortune is already spoken for if you want, but while you and your friends are out there looking at your feet wishing life was easier, those destined to be successful can see chances for greatness everywhere right in front of them.”

“Why? How is it that they can see what I cannot?”

“Because they’re looking, because they’re receptive, because they’re not being dismissive or negative, because they’re eagerly waiting for life to show them the next big clue, the next sign to set them on a road to greater riches and success.”

“So you believe that adopting this positive attitude is the magic ingredient to success?”

“No. I do not. But it’s where everything starts. Success would be a fairly boring and uninspiring dish if anybody could create it with a single ingredient, however difficult that ingredient was to find. No, success has several layers to its pallet. This is just the beginning.”

“Then how should I begin to develop this mindset? How do I

adopt the positive?"

"Quite simply actually. You just need to start by understanding where you currently are. The fact that you wish to become extremely successful must mean that you currently do not see yourself as such. Therefore, you need to change. The question you should be asking is what do *you* need to become? What kind of a man attracts success?"

"Is that the first rule? Putting my mind to what I should like to become?"

"No. It's just the easiest bit. Disciplining yourself to block out negative thoughts and unhelpful noise is a large part of Rule Number One. Your focus is your reality. Whichever way you are facing is the way you will end up heading."

This conversation was starting to unnerve Simeon. He was not seeking to change himself, just his predicament. And he was quite sure that he liked himself just as he was.

"How much do you think *I* need to change then, Uncle?"

Barnabas realized that some level of comfort was required.

"Consider this, my boy. Would anyone, other than a fool, follow the same instructions time after time, do the same thing over and over again, and expect different results on each occasion?"

Barnabas paused, waiting for Simeon's response.

"Well, I suppose if you walk the same path every day, you will always end up at the same place. That would be obvious."

"Quite so. Quite right. And yet human beings, who dream of becoming more successful often fool themselves into believing that it can happen without changing a single thing about themselves. They believe that success is some mysterious external factor that will just sort itself out while they sleep. The truth, Simeon, is that we make *ourselves* successful. We create our own luck by ensuring that we change into the people we wish to become."

He paused, as if trying to catch a memory before continuing, and said, “Trust me. If you do not decide where you are heading, and refuse to take the appropriate action, you will end up being shaped into what others would have you become. Then any change will not be made for your benefit but for theirs. People submit too easily to change from others. And yet, for some reason, whenever they consider changing themselves, the focus is always on what they are giving up, never what they are about to gain. Answer me this. What is the alternative to self-improvement?”

“Staying the same?”

“Staying the same! Precisely! Improve yourself or do not. Your choice. Your responsibility. Everything you desire is always just outside your comfort zone, dear boy. If it wasn’t you would already possess it, would you not?”

“I suppose so.”

Barnabas smiled. He recognized the light that was starting to sparkle in Simeon’s eyes.

“Good. Now let us further translate the meaning within your letter. There is an old line that I’m rather fond of, which is *nobody ever kicked a dog wagging its tail*. I think that sums up this first rule pretty well too, don’t you think?”

“Does it? I have no idea.”

“Ha. No. Of course you don’t. Forgive me. I’m really not very good at this. Listen, selling anything to anyone is all about an exchange of...”

“Money?”

“Ha! We really do have a lot of work to do with you don’t we? No, no, no. Money comes in a little later. It’s actually all about an exchange of feelings.”

“Feelings?”

“Yes. If I can make you feel the same way that I feel about my product or service we’ll have a meaningful conversation about it and how it can help. The trouble is that most sales people don’t feel anything. Nothing at all.”

“In what way?”

“They’ve never given any thought to how they help people with what they’re selling. Therefore, they don’t feel anything for it. They just have a vague sense that it’s what they have to sell to make money for themselves or to keep their jobs.”

“But salesmen are there to sell. That’s their role.”

“From your side of the table, maybe. From the prospect’s side the view is slightly different. You are either trying to help or you’re wasting his time.”

“So tell me, Uncle. How does this first rule help *me*?” Simeon waved his fingers in front of his face like a magician. “How do I learn this exchanging, mind-trick thing?”

“There are no tricks, no magic. I’ve already told you that. If you wish to adopt the positive you must learn how you truly help people with the things that you sell. Once you are aware of that vital piece of information every demonstration, every presentation, every transaction will be delivered with a light shining from your heart. From your heart will shine a beacon that tells all prospects you can truly help and that that is your sole purpose for being there.”

Simeon sat back in his chair and breathed out hard. He wasn’t sure how his products or service had ever really helped anyone. It came as a bit of a shock to realize he really had no idea at all.

The Extremely Successful Salesman's Club

Keep up to date with all ESS Club news, success tips and free exercise templates with the quarterly Club newsletter.

Visit the official website at **www.TheESSClub.com** to find out more.

About the Author

Chris Murray has become prominent as an inspirational speaker, author and sales training coach, delivering workshops and keynote speeches that challenge teams to re-examine what it means to be '*in sales*' and requiring them to stand back and view the whole experience from a refreshingly different angle.

Chris is also founder and Managing Director of Varda Kreuz, one of the UK's most innovative training and development organisations.