

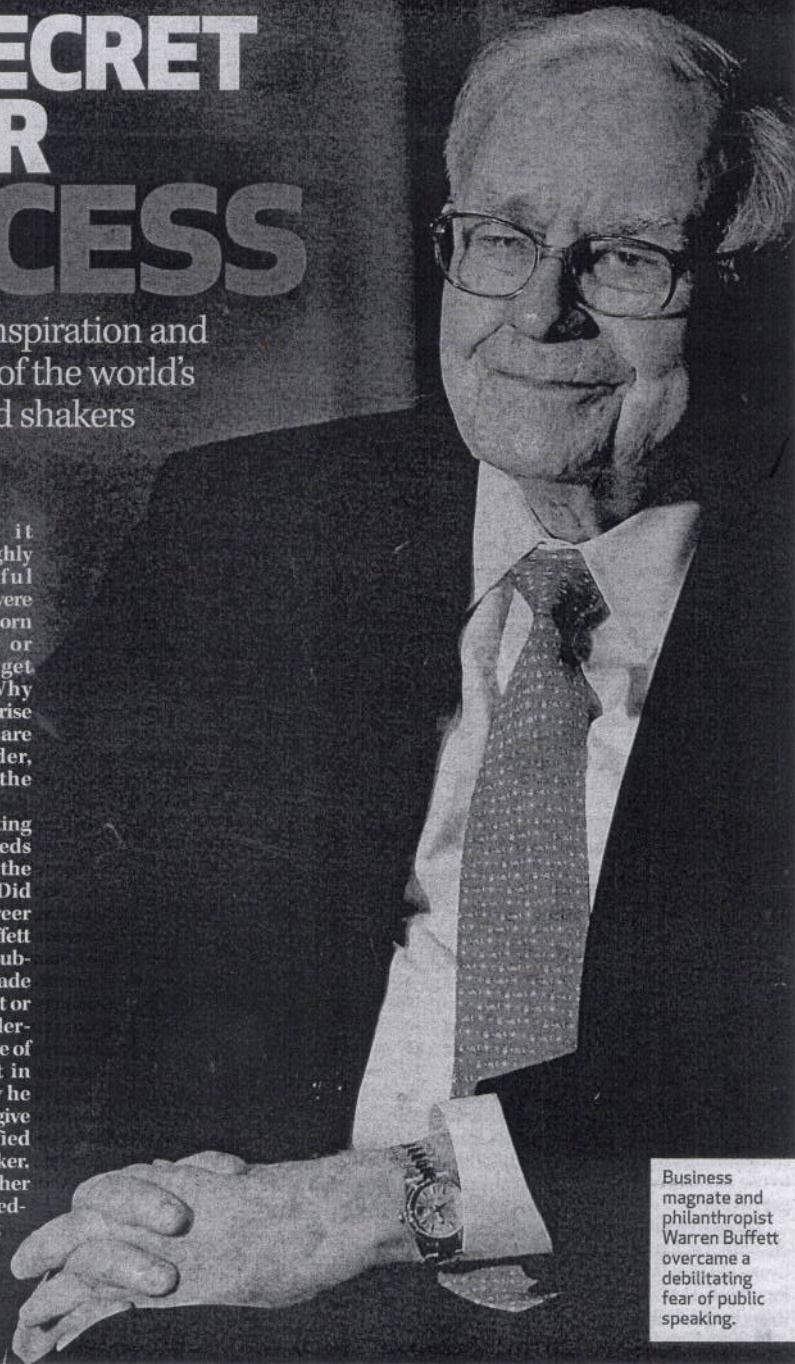
# THE SECRET OF OUR SUCCESS

Amazing stories, inspiration and advice from some of the world's biggest movers and shakers

**W**HAT is it about highly successful people – were they just born that way or did they get lucky? Why did they get to enjoy a meteoric rise to the top while the rest of us are stuck on the corporate ladder, banging our heads against the glass ceiling?

A fascinating new book, *Getting There: A Book Of Mentors*, sheds light on the secrets of some of the world's movers and shakers. Did you know that early in his career billionaire investor Warren Buffett was so terrified of speaking in public that even the thought of it made him physically ill? And believe it or not, dynamo CNN anchor Anderson Cooper wasn't nearly so sure of himself when he started out in broadcasting – in fact initially he struggled to find anyone who'd give him a job and had to be satisfied with a lowly post as a fact checker.

In *Getting There*, they and other famous names share their incredible stories and offer tips about how you can get over the hang-ups holding you back and convince people to take you seriously.



Business magnate and philanthropist Warren Buffett overcame a debilitating fear of public speaking.

## WARREN BUFFETT

American business magnate, investor and philanthropist

Up until the age of 20 I was absolutely unable to speak in public. Just the thought of it made me physically ill. I'd literally throw up. I selected courses in college where I didn't have to stand up in front of the class and I arranged my life so I'd never find myself in front of a crowd. If I somehow did I could hardly say my own name. I'm not sure what led to this problem but it was there in a big way.

When I was at Columbia Business School I saw an ad in the paper for a Dale Carnegie public-speaking course and figured it would serve me well. I signed up and gave them a cheque. But after I left I swiftly stopped payment. I just couldn't do it. I was that terrified.

I returned to [my hometown] Omaha after graduating and got a job as a salesman of securities. I knew I had to be able to speak in front of people. So again, I saw an ad in the paper and went down to sign up but this time I handed the instructor \$100 in cash. I knew if I gave him the cash I'd show up. And I did.

There were about 30 other people in the class and we all had trouble saying our own names. We met once a week for a dozen or so weeks. They'd give us different types of speeches to practise and taught us psychological tricks to overcome our fears. There was that communal feeling that we were all in the same boat and really helped one another get through the class.

As soon as the course was over I went to the University of Omaha and said, "I want to start teaching." I knew that if I didn't speak in front of people quickly I'd lapse back to where I'd started. I just kept doing it and now you can't stop me from talking!

The impact that class had on my life was huge. In fact, I don't have my diploma from the University of Nebraska hanging on my office wall, and I don't have my diploma from Columbia up there either – but I do have my Dale Carnegie graduation certificate proudly displayed. That \$100 course gave me the most important degree I have. It's certainly had the biggest impact in terms of my subsequent success.