

the **5** **GREATEST**
SECRETS

OF POKER

AND LIFE

*How to win at
whatever you do*

Victor Boc

THE FIVE GREATEST SECRETS OF POKER AND LIFE

SPECIAL SAMPLE CHAPTER EDITION

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SAMPLE CHAPTER

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Special Edition

The Five Greatest Secrets of Poker and Life How to Win at Whatever You Do

This publication is a special abbreviated edition of the full book. It contains the following content from the unabridged edition:

Dedication

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*This book is dedicated to Tom Engle,
who played the game of life,
smiling.*

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introduction

Do you want to be a winner? Do you want to conquer all who oppose you? Do you want to triumph at life? Then read on, because that is what I will show you how to do.

I have been playing poker since I was nine years old, and I've learned a few things along the way. I want to tell you what they are.

I boiled them down to five secrets. I call them secrets because almost nobody knows them. I learned them the hard way, but you don't need to; you have the luxury of acquiring them all in one place, right here.

And get this: These secrets, extracted from poker, apply to all areas of your life. These five secrets will transform your experience of this world. With these secrets, you can win at whatever you do.

introduction

When I was child, I did many typical things children do. I built a tree house. I played baseball in a vacant field. I hunted frogs in a creek alongside railroad tracks. But my favorite activity of all was to gather the neighborhood kids and play poker on our front porch. Aah, heaven. I loved it. I loved it not only because I took all their nickels and dimes, but because it was a living expression of my admiration for the exquisite game of poker.

Years later, I took up playing professionally. I played in games wherever I found them. I played in taverns, pool halls and gambling parlors. I played in crummy little cardrooms with guys who spoke only Spanish. I played in the World Series of Poker—as far back as 1981, long before poker became fashionable. And I play today. But you know what? No matter where I play, from casinos in Vegas to websites on the Internet to tournaments across the nation, the essence of the game of poker is always the same. It's raw. It's real. It's beautiful. And it holds the most powerful secrets of the world beneath its humble exterior.

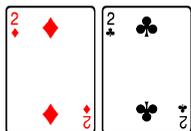
The five secrets in this book will do much more than elevate your poker game. Improving your poker game is the least they will do. These secrets have the power to dramatically enhance every aspect of your life, from boardroom to bedroom.

introduction

Armed with these secrets, you can obtain whatever you desire, whether it be money, fame, love or anything else. At last, you can create the life you've always wanted. You can start winning, instead of losing. Rejoice, because this book contains the secrets you've been missing.

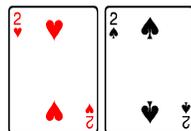
This book is not primarily about poker. I discuss a few hands here and there, but I do not concentrate on poker complexities. (Plenty of good books are available for that.) You do not need any knowledge of poker to grasp the underlying principles presented in this book and derive great and lasting benefit.

Here's the deal. If you want to improve your poker game, I have some valuable tips for you. But if you want more than that, if you want to improve your entire life, then I am holding the door wide open for you. Come on in. I've got what you need.



“If you know poker, you know people,
and if you know people, you got the
whole world lined up in your sights.”

— Bret Maverick



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“Look outward.”

Salinas, California, years ago, was a city in transition. The sleepy farming community of Steinbeck’s day was becoming a modern urban center. But you would never know it to look at downtown. Dilapidated pawn-shops and grungy cardrooms were the mainstay back then. I know. I was there.

I was fresh out of school, nearly broke and living in downtown Salinas when I decided to take the plunge and become a professional poker player. I needed to start playing regularly, and what better place to begin than a go-for-bust town like Salinas.

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The Rex. I don't know why, but for some reason, that was my favorite of the cardrooms. It was a dump like all the rest, but I did well there. Sometimes I won and sometimes I lost, but overall, I managed to win enough to pay rent and eat egg sandwiches.

Over time, I became aware of one particular guy who played there. He spent almost as much time at the Rex as I did. They called him Lopez. Lopez was the only player who seemed to win more money than I. Many days, I'd grind out a small profit, but Lopez would rake it in.

I noticed something about Lopez. Every time I looked at him, he was already looking at me. It was uncanny and a bit unnerving. Whenever I glanced his way, his eyeballs were staring back at me. At first, I didn't think much of this, but after a while, I became intrigued. I made a study of Lopez. I wanted to know what made this guy a good poker player, what caused him to win more than I did. Then I figured it out. He was always looking outward.

Paying attention...

The secret is to look outward. What I mean by that is to focus on the people and events around you. Attune your consciousness to that which is happening outside yourself. Set aside your own thoughts and feelings,

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and aim your attention at the external world, that which is happening around you. Quit thinking about yourself.

I have noticed a correlation. Invariably, those players who consistently win at poker are those who watch others like hawks. They are the players who are always looking around the table, studying everyone, paying attention to everything.

That does not describe the average poker player. Ninety-nine percent of people who play are always thinking about themselves. They are pondering their cards, their money, their position in the hand. They are thinking about their choices and their dilemmas. They have a thousand contemplations, and every one concerns themselves. How should I play these cards? Am I playing well? Am I likely to win at this table? What kind of cards am I getting? How did I lose that last hand? How can I play better? How is my money holding up? Should I cash out? Should I set a limit? How do I look to the other players? These are the thoughts that fill the mind of the average poker player. It's all me, me, me.

The average player thinks about things from his own perspective. He will base his decisions on the strength of his hand, the money he put in the pot, his supply of chips, how much he has won or lost and the advice he read in that poker book last night. Again, it's all me, me, me.

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That is not the way to approach the game of poker. Even the most well-reasoned thinking along those lines is destined to fail. You may be thinking smartly and accurately, but if your thinking is directed inward, it is no good. If you are thinking only about yourself and your situation, you will come up short.

Forget about yourself for the moment. You do not exist. Focus on the other players in the game. Look around the table. Pay attention to everyone. Notice everything. Observe the behavior of every player at your table. Be aware of every action (and inaction) occurring at every moment. Even when you are not in a hand, watch anyway. Always. Constantly. Intently.

You do not need to consciously interpret what you are seeing. You do not need to figure out what any of it means. Just watch. Your subconscious mind will know how to interpret what you see. Even if you think this is not helping, do it anyway. You are going to be sitting there spending time, right? You may as well be paying attention. There will be plenty of time later to contemplate how you performed and what sort of player you are. For now, think only of the other players. Put yourself out there with them. Be them. Think their thoughts. Their thoughts matter; your thoughts do not. What they are thinking is valuable to you; what you are thinking is old news.

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Don't pore over your cards. Don't study your chips. Don't regurgitate all the poker advice you've gotten over the years. Get all that garbage out of your mind. Don't play the cards; play the players!

I could have called this secret, "Pay attention to others," but I want to draw a contrast to thinking about yourself. When you are thinking about yourself, you are looking inward. Do the opposite. Look outward.

Doing this does not require that you change your style of social interaction at the table. Be as talkative or as quiet as you like, but all the while, be paying attention. Make this your secret. I do call it a secret, you know.

You may need discipline to pay attention, but I assure you, if you make it a habit, it will pay off big. Gradually, your game will improve. In time, you will be playing better and pocketing more cash. What's funny is, you may not know why. You may not detect any difference in your playing style. Your success may be a mystery to you. That's how this secret works.

Very few people, it seems, will tell you this secret. Occasionally, a poker book will suggest that you "observe other players at your table." But that is not enough. I am telling you to lose yourself and devote your full consciousness to the other players. Give them your unwavering focus the entire time. Nothing less.

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Jamie Gold won the main event at the 2006 World Series of Poker in Las Vegas. And he didn't just win the event, he destroyed his opponents all the way through the entire two-week ordeal. Seldom has any one player so dominated a poker tournament, as Jamie Gold did during that particular World Championship.

Immediately after his victory, he was asked how he did it. What was his secret? What was the biggest factor in his amazing performance? Here is his answer: "I'm playing against the other players, while they are trying to play their cards. I sit down at every table with the same strategy. I want to find out how they're playing, and then I want to figure out how to beat them—whereas they're just trying to figure out how to get the best cards and get their money in there. So, sooner or later, I seem to be able to trick them into giving me all their money."

As Jamie answers this question, what do you hear in his words? I'll tell you what I hear: He was looking outward! He was paying attention to the other players, while they were thinking about themselves. Simple. Yet nothing could be more powerful than this strategy.

Jamie did a lot of talking during the tournament. Everyone remarked how much he interacted with other players at the table. But all the while he was talking, he was intently watching. Talking was his style; looking outward was his strategy.

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You know something else? When you pay attention at the poker table, you meet the most amazing people. In Riddle, Oregon, I met a man who lost his leg in World War II. In Gardena, California, I met a man who was sold into slavery in Africa. In Ft. Collins, Colorado, I met a man whose six-year-old daughter died of leukemia. In Buffalo, New York, I met a woman who rescued a drowning boy. In Berea, Ohio, I met a man who played guitar with Paul McCartney. In Orlando, Florida, I met a woman who trained astronauts at NASA. In San Jose, California, I met a man who donated \$7 million to Live Aid. In Flagstaff, Arizona, I met a woman who owned a chain of casinos in the Philippines. In New Orleans, Louisiana, I met a man who was shot three times in a drive-by shooting. In Vancouver, Washington, I met a man who was friends with George W. Bush.

Of course, meeting people is not your goal in poker. I understand that. But when you meet interesting people (and learn from them) on your way to victory, you are making the most of your experience.

Striking a bell...

Can this secret be used away from the poker table? Does it apply to life? You bet it does! In fact, that is where this secret really shines. That is where its magic will blow you away.

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Scientists say human beings are social animals. They say that when people are deprived of interpersonal contact, they fail to develop emotionally and, sooner or later, lose the ability to function altogether. What this means is simple: People depend on other people.

You are no different. You must interact with others as you attract sustenance and good fortune into your life. This is an inescapable fact. If you think you are so high and mighty, so masterful and self-sufficient, then think about this: Every material thing that comes into your life comes to you by way of other people.

The food you eat—you did not grow that food. The clothes you wear—you did not design those clothes. The roads you drive—you did not pour cement for those roads. The building where you work, the park where you play, the electrical grid from which you get power—you did not create those things. Other people did. The gas in your car, the heat in your home and the water in your sink all made their way into your world through the efforts of other people. Even the money you stash in your investment account was transferred to you by other people. If you give something in return for what you acquire, that does not negate the fact that you depend on others all the way through the process of obtaining goods and services. You are, as we all are, dependent on others for your continued earthly existence.

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Because everything comes to you, ultimately, from other people, the actions of other people are important. If you are to receive something of value, it must come, one way or another, through the consent of others. To apply this secret to your life, pay attention to other people. Stay focused on those around you.

Of course, most people do not do that. Most people think primarily of themselves all the time. They make exceptions for family and a few friends, but they give barely a passing consideration to everyone else. These same people struggle through life, wondering why they fail to achieve success. They forget that success in the competitive arena of the world is a joint effort, a result of their individual energy outlay in conjunction with the will of other people.

Stop thinking only about your wants and your problems all the time. Notice those around you. Put yourself in their shoes. Think as they think. Feel as they feel. Pay attention! That is what a good salesperson does.

The first and most important rule of good salesmanship is to *sell benefit*. Explain to your customer how the item will benefit *him (or her)*. Do not tell her you need the sale to hit your quota and you need the commission to get a new couch and she should buy this doodad to make you happy. She does not care about that. Nobody does. Except you.

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Instead, put yourself in her place and think and feel as she does. Effective salespeople relate to their customers in an attentive way. They forget themselves. They concentrate on the other person.

By paying attention to others, you learn their desires and motivations. You understand what might prompt them to do what you want. The best way to facilitate having good things happen to you is to engage other people, to tap their energies. Other people, taken as a whole, have influence over events in your life.

I realize this advice runs counter to conventional wisdom. Popular books and seminars preach that the way to improve your life is to get in touch with your inner self. They say you should discover who you are and then work on your deep problems.

That is good advice. Inner work has its place. But it is no good at all when you are seated at a poker table. There is a place for resolving inner conflicts, but a poker game is not such a place. Likewise, when you are engaged in life's battles, inner reflection is exactly the wrong thing to be doing. You should be doing the opposite. You should be looking outward.

Self-improvement workshops teach you to look inward, claiming that self-reflection leads to peace of mind. Again, that is true. But you should practice your

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self-improvement techniques during downtime, not when you are facing an adversary. Competition is the wrong time to focus on yourself. Competition is the time to acquire knowledge of your opponent, and the way to do that is to look outside yourself. These days, with everyone preaching the value of looking inward, I want to offer a little balance. Allow me to strike a bell for the wisdom of sometimes looking outward.

Aiming for success...

Several years ago, I decided to try my hand as deejay/manager of a new nightclub in Eugene, Oregon. I poured my heart and soul into setting the place up the way I thought it should be. I built a disc-jockey booth and sound system second to none. I designed the lights and programmed the music to make the club a happening place. Everything was perfect, or so I thought. Opening day came—and it was a disaster. Everyone who walked through the door turned around and left.

Four months went by, and nothing changed. In my opinion, our club had the best music, the best lights, the best dance floor, the best drinks and the best staff—yet nobody wanted to be there. We became known as a place that was always empty. To make matters worse, we were losing money fast.

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Do you know what was wrong? The whole time, I had been focusing on what *I* wanted, on my fantasy of what the place should be. All my efforts were oriented around my own personal opinions and desires.

When I realized this, I removed myself from the equation. I hired a woman to do a survey, and she talked to every person who came through our door. She surveyed patrons at other clubs, too. She found out what *they* wanted. She even asked about club names, and I changed our name to “Scandals.”

Using what I learned from that survey, I redid everything. The music, the lighting, the sound, the drinks, the layout, I changed it all. Most importantly, I changed my vision of myself within the club. I was no longer important, no longer the star. I did not matter. The customers mattered. They were the stars.

Within weeks, the place caught on. Every night, we had a line of patrons waiting to get in. On weekends, the line stretched across our parking lot. We often reached capacity by 8:30 PM, which was unheard of in the nightclub business. Scandals became the most successful nightspot in the state of Oregon, and it remained so until I departed three years later. The secret to success was paying attention to others. Let me repeat that: The secret to *my* success was paying attention to *others*.

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Life is about other people. The happiest individuals are those who devote their life's energy to the call of others. That is why a life containing an element of service, of giving freely to those in need, proves so rewarding. I am not suggesting you devote your life to the service of others. I am suggesting only that you notice those around you.

Imagine, for a moment, you are playing football. You are running with the ball, and an opposing player is planted directly in front of you. You want to get past him. What should you do? Should you intellectualize about your abilities and how to use them? Should you contemplate your training techniques and all the nifty moves you know? Should you analyze the fact that everyone is watching you and what a great opportunity this is to impress them? No, your best course of action is to focus entirely on that player. Forget about yourself, and concentrate on him. Watch him intently. Coaches say you should focus on a point at the center of his waist and nothing else. In other words, get outside yourself.

Say you are placing a bid on a house. What should you do? Should you think about your needs and how much you want the house? Should you bring your own thoughts and emotions into your analysis? Should you base your bid entirely on your situation? No, if you're smart, you will focus on the seller and his agent. What

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are their motivations? What are they interested in? How might you relate with them to get what you want? You will do best if you concentrate on them, not yourself.

Say you are writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper and you want the paper to print it. What should you do? Should you focus on the importance of what you have to say and how great you are for writing it? Should you tell the editors how badly you need your letter published? Should you be thinking about all the praise and notoriety you will get once it is published? No, that will not persuade them. If you're smart, you will consider their point of view. What do they want? What is in their minds? What would motivate them to select your letter? You have a better chance of seeing your words in print if you concentrate on them instead of yourself.

Lopez understood an important fact of life as he sat at that poker table in Salinas many years ago. He realized that the secret to his success lay in his ability to tap into others. Lopez was a wise man. (By the way, years later, I learned that Lopez had moved to Los Angeles. The story was that he had made enough money playing poker to send his son to Stanford.)

This secret works in life, as it does in poker, when you pay keen and constant attention to others. I realize that thinking about yourself is more habitual. It is the easy

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thing, the typical thing everyone does. Thinking about others is rare among people. But so is success.

You might find it hard to aim for success, but as Tom Hanks said in the movie *A League of Their Own*, “It’s supposed to be hard. If it wasn’t hard, everyone would do it. The hard is what makes it great.”

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