

# REALLY RICH: Balancing Wealth with Health

## A Conversation with Russell Simmons

by Bill Van Arsdale

**R**ussell Simmons is a rare combination of self-made multi-millionaire and spiritual guru. Co-founder of Def Jam records, the Phat Farm fashion label and several other business and philanthropic ventures, Russell has just released his second bestselling book, *Super Rich: A Guide to Having It All*. His idea of “having it all” is not what one might imagine.

***While you have achieved extraordinary financial success, instead of becoming completely swept up in ego and material things, you have evolved from being the “Godfather of Rap” into a guru. What set you on the path to writing Super Rich?***

As we grow, we experience proofs that what our parents, preachers, prophets and scriptures told us as a child is true: The process of living in the cycle of giving is the thing that makes us happy.

We also learn that the outside world separates us from the God inside of us, and if we take that Godlikeness and exude it, spreading it out, then the world gives it back to us. These truths are right in front of us, but we are not taught them enough, or else we forget to remember them. So, the purpose of this book is simply to help us remember.

***You present many lessons on how to move toward higher consciousness, while simultaneously allowing for financial success. How can we use our creativity to apply ourselves to***



Courtesy of Gerald Janssen

***something we really believe in without worrying about accolades or financial reward?***

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna says you have control of the action alone, and never the fruit. The work we do is our prayer. Going to work every day is God’s work. Finding an entrepreneurial business or another endeavor that you are proud of and inspired to use to give—that’s God’s work. You have to be creative, which means that you have to look inside enough to come up with something that the world needs. You can’t see the whole if you reside on the outside, where others move you around; the inside is where you make your own choices.

Success and prosperity are fringe benefits. *Super Rich* means a state of needing nothing, of operating from a state of Christ consciousness, or Nirvana, or Samadhi. If we can operate from

that, then the cycle of giving speeds up. We become a much greater servant because we are good givers, and good givers are great receivers. That is the core premise.

***Don't the pursuits of wealth and enlightenment pull us in opposite directions?***

Spiritually, we know what's right, and that is what I am really trying to get people to engage in, this process of prayer, of looking at the inside instead of the outside for answers. I want them to become what is in their heart and do what they think makes good sense.

Can we heal ourselves from the inside out and, in so doing, create a world where we are contributing something good? As human beings, are we going to lift the collective consciousness to the point where we are aware of and actively moving forward to heal the Earth?

***What do you think that people can incorporate into their daily routine in order to lead more fulfilling lives?***

Meditation is vital if you want to see the world in real time and be awake enough to make good choices, live calmly, stay healthy and maintain the clarity needed to focus on the task in front of you. You can only realize a state of higher consciousness with a still mind.

When you routinely walk around exuding inner happiness, you become what I call very sticky and attractive. Good givers of good will and hard work and service become very successful.

The road to enlightenment is paved with rich results. As you give, as you become more enlightened, you become more empowered. Things fall in your lap. Yet, as you become more attractive and sticky, things you thought you wanted become less valuable, until they mean nothing.

***Many are rightly alarmed at how humans are degrading our planet. What actions must we take now to pass along a livable world to our grandchildren?***

The first thing we have to do is stop eating animals, including sea creatures. This is a great cause of many environmental ills currently destroying the planet. We could turn it around if more people would become vegetarians.

When individuals take control of their own lives through their meditation and prayer, they will come to all types of decisions that are helpful to this planet and all life. That's what we want for everyone.

*Bill Van Arsdale is a freelance writer living in Naples, FL.*