



Can't Can't

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About 45 years ago I had the honor of meeting Herman Becker face-to-face in his real estate/insurance office in Webster, Massachusetts. Where's Webster you ask? Central part of the state in Worcester County and proud locale of Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg (45 letters - 1,1442 acres), the longest named place in the nation (maybe in the world).

One thing I discovered early in my career was that in every suburban area there is one individual who pretty much owns everything commercial. Herman was the man in that part of the state, and I soon learned why.

While I had driven all that way to sell him advertising, he ended up selling me a 13-week 33 1/3 rpm record sales motivation course. "How much money do you have on you?" he asked me after I had listened to 20 minutes of Earl Nightingale's famous 20 minute recording of The Strangest Secret. I had \$2. "Ok," he said. "If you promise to listen to all of the 13 presentations, only one a week, the same one every day for one week, I'll let you take it and owe me. I know that if you faithfully listen to these records, your sales will grow ten-fold and you will easily be able to afford the cover price of \$120. And, I'll throw in these two records free of charge."

I took the deal, sold him nothing and drove back to Boston, and then faithfully arrived in the office everyday a half hour early to listen and learn. Interesting factoid that I never revealed to anyone before, especially Herman (who did become a good advertiser after I had paid him in full and I became a good salesman). I never finished the course, ending at the seventh lesson. I was so busy meeting prospects and selling them, I didn't find the time. I did however listen to the two bonus records over and over, again and again.

One was The Strangest Secret, and the other was not as famous but just as important entitled I CAN'T. It taught me that there is no such thing as can't. Look it up in the dictionary. The word doesn't exist. Anything can be done. And don't forget, 90% of all real estate development has happened in the past 45 years (well, except in downtown N.Y.C.)

When the New England Real Estate Journal was founded in 1963 there was one industrial park, one shopping mall and one skyscraper in New England. There were no fax machines, cell phones or office computers. What if Bill Gates had said, "I can't." I guarantee that if you could do a survey of the companies that have survived the past two years of this recession, you would find that they all agreed that there is no such word as CAN'T. That philosophy taught me by Herman Becker got me here, and will get me to wherever I choose to go. And it can work the same for you.

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