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## WORDS OF WISDOM

# Noted business innovator shares insights in new book

By DEBORAH SKOLNIK

In an uncertain era such as the present one, who couldn't use a few words of wisdom from somebody who's lived a rich and multifaceted life? Now there's a way to get almost 100 thought-enlightening adages in one fell swoop: by getting a hold of "The Book of Normanisms," penned by Quaker Ridge resident Norman Goldstein.

It's a beautiful work, born of an ugly year. "I used the pandemic as a timeframe, to have the time, availability and patience to do most of the writing," Goldstein said. Mostly, it was an exercise in recall — "I've amassed a lot of the quotes and the adages over 20 years of sort of experiential learning," he explained.

Creating the book, which Goldstein self-published on March 15, involved efforts on a global scale. To help make his dream a reality, he worked in tandem with a collaborator, Sarah Martin, who is based in the U.K. Together they searched for an illustrator who could capture "Normanisms" spirit. "We went on a site that has artists from all over the world, and we decided that we would get somebody who had the compassion and appreciation for the book in order to help us craft all of this work, because it wasn't just a drawing," Goldstein said. "It really required somebody to embrace the heart and soul of it." Ultimately, they settled on Rachel Caruana, an illustrator based in Malta.

The result is a breezy, 99-page read (available through Amazon and Barnes & Noble), filled with pithy gems of insight and tenderly rendered drawings. "An attitude of gratitude is the best medicine for a sick soul. Be grateful for what you have," reads one Normanism, accompanied by a sketch of a woman surrounded by thought bubbles containing words such as "Clean Water" and "Fresh Air." Another Normanism advises, "The secret to getting help is to ask for it," and is illustrated with a drawing of a schoolgirl asking a friend to lend her a hand with an assignment.

The book makes self-improvement easy, but Goldstein, 75, learned many of the lessons it imparts the hard way, in the course of his many-storied existence. "I've had my own challenges, both in business and personal [life], with amazing experiences and difficult encounters," he shared.

One example of the latter occurred on Goldstein's wedding day, when his then-business partner (the two were licensing agents for the pop artist Peter Max) "reached into the limousine with my then-wife on the way to the airport on our honeymoon and said, 'We could send some letters out to our investors while you're away. Here are some sheets of paper — just sign your name and I'll type over the signature to send it out to our investors.'" The papers, in fact, gave the company to his partner's sister, who then turned it over to an organized crime syndicate as settlement for her brother's debts. "Oh my gosh, it was pretty scary stuff," Goldstein said.

Yet he gradually realized he had to let go of the animosity he harbored toward the partner who fleeced him, along with the ill will he bore other shifty colleagues he encoun-



Norman Goldstein

tered at various jobs. "I've had, over the years, issues in business where I was done wrong to," he said. "And I held on with an iron fist to the resentment and anger towards that individual. And the more I held on and pulled hard on that emotion, the more I got stuck to that resentment, and what I realized is that I was trapped in that internal, harsh emotion towards that person. But it was almost as if I was taking a pill to poison them. I was the one that got sick."

His epiphany led to the book's opening adage: "Letting go of resentment, hostility and angry feelings is difficult. A child's straw finger toy is an example of how we can free ourselves of them. The harder we struggle, the less likely we can be free from these emotions. Relax and enjoy your freedom."

For Goldstein, that's meant freedom to have a wide-ranging career. Raised in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, he attended New York Community College for one semester before dropping out and going into business. Besides repping Peter Max, he served as president of Geoffrey Beene Menswear and leading fashion design company Rafael. He was part of the team at Walker Digital that launched Priceline, "and I was also partners with The Sharper Image, all of which led to the amalgamation of a lot of experiences, knowledge and interactions that gave me sort of the culmination of many years of wisdom," he said.

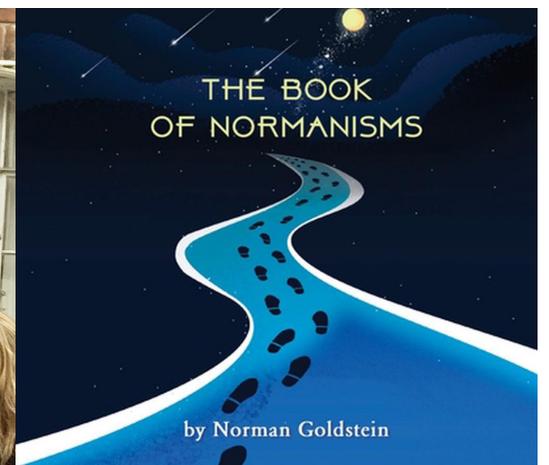
Nowadays, he does business coaching (see coachnorm.com), and is the founder and CEO of EduNetwork Partners, an educational marketing company that creates philanthropic youth education programs for corporations.

"I have been developing programs for Fortune 500 companies that impact students' family lives in a profound way," he said.

His work in the field of youth innovation and empowerment earned him a congressional leadership award and a nod from CNN in 2007 as one of "Ten National Innovators" changing lives in America. Goldstein has also served as a New York state mediator, as well as a lemon law arbitrator.

EduNetwork Partners helped run a national campaign around literacy, called The Secret Millionaires' Club, for Warren Buffet — a project that turned the fabled investor into one of Goldstein's friends. "He is probably one of the most amazing men I've ever met in my life, not because of his wealth, but because of his being so down to earth," he said.

Speaking of down-to-earth things, Goldstein counts his 44-year marriage as his greatest accomplishment, and being a father and grandfather to his children and grandchildren as his biggest joy. "My kids and grandkids are here all the time, and it's a blessing," he said. "I will urge you to work diligently and desperately on the welcoming of your children." Wise words indeed, from an authority on wisdom.



Things that happen to us can either be life-threatening or ego-threatening. If it is life-threatening, move at light speed. If its ego-threatening, let it go. It is not worth the cost to our emotional and spiritual currency to defend our egos.



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