

MIA BARC

RED AND GREEN APPLES

Series

*THE SECRETS OF
A BUSINESS-BUBBLY KID*

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*To my son,
an endless source of fresh inspiration*

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Introductory Word for Parents

I started this book as an essay for my first audience: parents who can't find the time or the right words to make their curious kids understand how the world of trade works. In raising our children, we try early on to protect our little ones and to offer them valuable lessons on how to avoid being cheated or lured by false opportunities or, on the contrary, how not to lose trains with unique destinations.

On the other hand, we are cautious to add yet other lessons to the multiple ones they do learn in school or extracurricular activities. "And when would I have time to play?" we hear so often. However, every day brings new arguments that highlight the importance of a better understanding of the economic, business and marketing environment in our survival in the same way that a better understanding of nature was vital for our ancestors to survive in the ancient times. There are tangles, there are rules and laws which meanings and consequences we'd better grasp for they are part of our everyday lives and we no longer have an option.

Why sometimes we refuse to buy them something that they want, or why we, the ones who decide how to spend the money, choose to buy instead something that doesn't seem the most logical choice for the child's perspective? Messages in the media, the internet and discussions between classmates or friends at home influence daily the behavior and preferences of the little ones.

Poor understanding of the advertisements sometimes leads to kids' insistent purchasing requests, leaving the parents unable to find sufficiently convincing arguments to make them change their minds. The fact that a chocolate is presented as the prize of a champion, does not necessarily mean that it is the healthiest dessert. But WHAT do you say and HOW do you say this as a parent? And how do you argue that something might be different than presented on TV?

Detailing how product prices are set, what items to keep in mind when trying to implement a business idea or criteria for arranging merchandise on store shelves that can influence our choices, are other topics I am discussing in this book.

Like any educational book for kids that aims to be read from end to end it needs to be covered in humour and use kids-friendly words. And how else to do this better but having a kid as the narrator of the story sharing his stories, his thoughts and his dreams.

Encourage your children to read this book! They will enjoy it and learn from it.

Prologue

My story starts a while ago when I did not know much about business, about how to make money and I did not have the faintest idea of the success that I would later have. Now I like to remember it and tell everyone how it happened, step by step. There were several lessons that I learned and found useful when I started my business and made more money than I ever aimed for or dreamed of. The lessons I learned could inspire any kid that is determined to work hard and has a taste for business.

The success was a beautiful journey with many joyous moments, a pinch of luck and steady effort on my side. Good and smart friends were a bonus. All happened at the right time with the right people. It is important to follow your dream, not follow the crowd; to **live your way and have your opinions**, even if some would laugh or challenge you. As my Mom told me once: "If the underwear over the leggings would have been worn by anyone but Superman, we would have had a good belly laugh.

But Superman is our hero and we can't look at him with less than admiration".

As for Dad, out of all the business lessons he shared, this one stayed with me: "It is important to always look for the solution that really solves the problem... for instance to turn down the volume of the sea waves if you want to sleep on the beach".

But I will not postpone the story anymore and I will just start from the beginning.

CHAPTER I

VALUE

I.1. Ice Cream: the Price or the Value

This park reminds me of my early childhood. I used to come here with Mom and Dad on Saturdays or Sundays.

Oh, how interesting I found those slides and those climbing areas! And I remember how annoying it was that, at any given time, countless kids were crowding to have a turn. On top of it, my parents would call me to go home just when the play was getting funnier. They always said they had enough sitting on the sidelines just watching me. I don't understand why would they have to watch over me like this?! As if I couldn't manage on my own?! Or... maybe I couldn't. Hmm... now, after many years, I see there might have been some safety issues for a kid that young.

Then, just like now, this park seemed huge to me; it surrounds a lake whose surface is of almost 100,000 square meters, my Dad told me. In the summer there

are boats we can use to cross the lake from one side to the other. There are many playgrounds for younger children with different types of slides and swings, climbing nets, carousels and sand boxes and always a crowd of kids around them.

The longest waiting line was at the trampolines. There were only a few and we weren't allowed to jump in more than 4 to 6 kids at a time. Now, when I grew up, things have changed a bit and most often I go with my friends in the skateparks where we rollerblade and skateboard. Then we stroll and chat and sometimes "melt" an ice cream.

It's called the Central Park. Once, I had a lot of fun coming with nuts in my pockets. I would take a nut in each hand and the noise of hitting them together would make the squirrels run to me. The squirrels are very friendly. I do not understand why in some books they are called rats with bushy tails and sharp ears as I find them super cute. They are everywhere in the park, so they would always show up when they hear the nuts banging sound. Some squirrels have brown fur and very bushy tails, others are beige-gray, and seemed more fearful to me, or maybe less worried about winter coming and running out of supplies

because they were watching us from afar and they would come and steal the nuts only after we were gone. No matter the colour of their fur they were all so speedy: they hardly took the nuts placed by us on the grass near the alley when I would see them up in the nearest tree.

I'm Ral. That's how everyone calls me, and I'm glad it's one short name, so I don't get any nick names from my friends; they can just call me on my full name. I play tennis, I play the piano, I go to school in 5th grade and I play at least 2 hours every day (as my Mom always reminds me....). And I wanted to **become a businessman**, but I never thought nor even dreamed that it would happen long before I would become a grown up. Why a businessman, you wonder? Well, when my parents were talking to each other about a good thing that might have happened or about the best possible solution to a problem, I would hear them saying approvingly:

- **That's a business!**

And about a person who managed to **make money out of thin air** they would say appreciatively:

- What a businessman!

Before deciding what I want to do when I grow up, I wanted to make sure that I understood correctly what my parents meant, so I started questioning:

- So Mom, what does it mean to be a businessman? And what does it mean when you say “That’s a business!”? Is this about making money?

- The businessman is a person who runs a business. This means, he or she **produces, sells or buys** something, **making money** out of it. But a good businessman must **understand** many things in order to excel: what is the need of a certain group of people, how is this need and where and when this particular need is manifested; then to communicate to people about what he or she is doing to fill this need and to convince people that this is the best option (most of the times we find several products that address the same need), and a businessman must understand all of that and much more. There are many things we need to consider if we want a business to work.

- Oh, but businessmen really need to know a lot!!!! How do they know all of that? Where do they learn it from?

- Well, here comes the **intelligence** of the ones who run businesses but also, their **knowledge** from school

and their own qualities like the **spirit of observation**, **attention** to their environment and to opportunities, **courage**, **understanding money** and their **value**. Many of their qualities are innate, and cannot be taught, we can only acquire them after many attempts and going through experiences.

Interesting... If I were a businessman, if I EVER become a businessman, this would mean that I would know a lot of things. This was the moment when I decided to become a businessman. It's the greatest job!

But let us get back to what I was telling you about the park. Life was very good then, when I was little and went to kindergarten. No teachers, homework, tests, and others alike that are anything but fun. Back then, I had a worry-free life. The ONLY one thing that I can think of that is better now is ice-cream! I can eat more of it and more often. Yuuummy!

Also I have more games. And even the ones that I truly wished for. When I was little, I had no idea how many things you can actually find in a store. I had only the games and toys that Mom bought for me (this was part of her job) or I was playing with the

neighbours', which were more or less the same as mine.

Now, we are going shopping quite often. And when I open my mouth to say that I want or like something:

- It's **not worth** it! Mom cuts in.

- What do you mean it's not worth it? I frown. Look, this Lego is cheaper than that Lightsaber and I only want this Lego.

I didn't understand what 'It's not worth it!' means...

If I like it and it's cheaper, it should be worthy, right?!

Another annoying thing about my parents is when they talk between themselves in half sentences, so I don't understand what they mean.

Mom says:

- Have you read the email from his classmate's father?

- Yes, but I didn't understand it! answers Dad.

- Anyway, no one wants to substitute for their teacher because of some characters in the class. Ral told me it's about Gore, the twins, and David.

- Which father, which classmate are you talking about? I ask.

Naturally I'm curious, it's about my classmates.

- Can't tell you! Mom cuts me off. But it's the father of a girl. And she's not even a friend of yours.

Right! As if she couldn't tell me in plain language what was going on?!

Another one today: email from our class teacher. Money went missing from Karol's backpack. So, someone is rummaging through kids' backpacks. I had no idea that someone stole something from someone else. But this is bad. Anyway, I never carry any money. Why would I? I don't need to buy anything at school.

I'm getting sidetracked again. Back to the park:

- Mom, would you buy me an ice cream? I asked with lots of excitement. Many times I overstate my excitement, hoping mom will hesitate to ruin it by refusing me.

- Now?!

It drives me crazy when she asks this? What does she mean by NOW? But when, Mom, a year from now?! I burst within me. Yet, I keep quiet. My sad face should let her know how I feel.