

How One Small Step Can Change Everything

The 59-Cent Investment That Launched My Career

Fifty years ago, as a college senior, I wanted to give my mother a meaningful Christmas gift. Like most students, I didn't have the funds for anything extravagant, but I was determined to create something special. That determination led me to Woolworth's, where I picked up a 59-cent tray of watercolors.

Back in my dorm room, I pulled out a sheet of drawing paper and began to paint a scene I had observed during my student teaching. With each brushstroke, the image came to life, and within a few hours, I had something I was proud to give. I went back to the store, spent \$2.98 on a picture frame, wrapped it up, and placed it under the Christmas tree.



When my mother unwrapped that simple gift, her joy was beyond anything I had expected. She held it close, looked at me with a mix of pride and excitement, and said words that would forever change my life: **“Honey, you have to do more!”**

I had no idea that this small act—born out of love and resourcefulness—would set the foundation for a career spanning 50 years. What started as a humble Christmas present became the first step in a lifelong journey of creativity, passion, and purpose.

Lessons from a 59-Cent Beginning

Over the years, I've reflected on that moment and the lessons it holds—not just for artists, but for anyone looking to create something meaningful in their life or career.

1. Start with What You Have

You don't need the perfect circumstances to begin. Too often, we wait for the “right time” or ideal resources, but success is rarely about having everything figured out. Whether it's a creative endeavor, a business idea, or a personal goal, the key is to start with what's in front of you. The tools don't define the masterpiece—your passion and commitment do.

2. The Power of Encouragement

One voice of belief can change everything. My mother's words—“You have to do more”—became the catalyst that propelled me forward. Encouragement is a gift that costs nothing but has the power to shape lives. Surround yourself with those who see your potential, and be that voice for others.

3. Small Beginnings Can Lead to a Lifelong Purpose

The smallest steps often lead to the most profound journeys. At the time, I had no idea that painting would become my life's work. What seemed like a modest Christmas gift turned into a career spanning thousands of original artworks, collaborations with Fortune 500 companies, and an impact that reaches far beyond what I ever imagined. The key? Taking that first step—no matter how small.

Your 59-Cent Moment



Think about where you are today. What passion, skill, or idea have you been holding back on because you feel you don't have enough time, resources, or certainty?

The truth is, you don't need the perfect plan—you just need to start. Whether it's writing the first page of a book, learning a new skill, or launching a project, take what you have and **begin**. You never know where that small step might lead.

Three Action Steps to Start Today

- 1. Identify Your Passion Project** – What's something you've always wanted to do but have put off? Write it down and commit to taking one small step toward it today.
- 2. Leverage What You Have** – Instead of waiting for the perfect resources, find ways to use what's already available. Your first step doesn't need to be grand—it just needs to happen.
- 3. Seek Encouragement and Give It** – Find people who uplift and support your dreams, and in return, be that person for someone else. Encouragement is a powerful force that can change lives.

Ready to Take the Next Step?

If you found value in this guide, let's connect! I help organizations and teams embrace resilience, adapt to change, and turn failure into fuel for success.

Schedule a Call with Me Today and let's explore how I can bring this message to your audience!

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