

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- At the beginning of the video we learn that, “Success relies on absolute truths, on supply and demand, on work and reward, on competition, and on achievement, not group identity.” Then Mr. Gutfeld claims that, “...if liberals applied their no-score, no-winner, no-loser belief systems to their hobbies or professions, they would fail miserably.” Do you agree with this assertion? Why or why not? What are some examples that would support your answer? How can people be successful in any endeavor or industry without hard work and achievement?
- When Mr. Gutfeld refers to the liberal paradigm as “...no-score, no-winner, no-loser belief systems...” he is alluding to their maxims of “feelings are more important than outcomes” and “everybody should be treated equally.” How are conservative values and the liberal paradigm different in terms of defining success? Which school of thought is better suited to financial and business success? Why?
- When explaining the example about exercise, Mr. Gutfeld states, “For the amount of effort you put in, you reap the reward you deserve.” Here, he is describing a fundamental principle of conservatism – merit. Conservatives believe that the team that won the most games should get the trophy because they earned it by working the hardest and getting the best results – whereas liberals believe that all teams should get a trophy because they have earned it by participating. A major difference in the two philosophies is in how to determine who deserves what, based on what metrics. Liberals strongly believe that ‘fairness’ comes from equality, and thus everyone is deserving of some basic level of rewards and benefits, whereas conservatives believe that only students who did the work to understand the material and studied hard enough to answer all of the questions correctly on the test deserve, or merit, an A grade, students who studied a little and answered 70% of the questions correctly deserve a C grade, and those who didn’t put in any effort and answer fewer than 50% of the questions correctly deserve a failing grade; in other words the rewards should scale with the effort put forth. Which principle do you value more – merit or equality? Why? Which one do you think will be more helpful for you to be successful? Why?
- Business, by its very nature, is anti-equality- in fact startup businesses take great effort to distinguish themselves from their competitors and try to promote how they are different (and better!) than their competitors. This is especially true in the hospitality industry where new restaurants and bars must differentiate themselves to survive in a market with competition. When discussing the restaurant example, Mr. Gutfeld states that successful ones, “...got that way because of reliance on a diligent work ethic,” and that, “You cannot reach that pinnacle [of being able to require reservations well in advance] without being intensely competitive and results-oriented, in other words, a capitalist.” Do you agree with this assertion? Why or why not? What fundamental principles of economics and of human nature don’t allow for equality to be a guiding force in building a successful business? If four Mexican restaurants opened within 3 weeks and 3 blocks of each other, but the local market could only support 2 of them, which 2 do you think would survive? Why? What would they need to do in order to be the ones that make it? Would ‘feelings’ play a significant factor in success or failure?
- Further, Mr. Gutfeld contends that, “...In the end, cooking is really just building a successful enterprise, with food. And it must taste good, not fulfill a greater good.” What exactly does he mean by that? Why do you think that some people expect businesses to operate

primarily on moral principles rather than sound economic principles? Can businesses ever do both? What are some examples to support your answer?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Gene Simmons

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article, “Gene Simmons Describes ‘The Most Profound Capitalist Lesson’ He Ever Learned,” then answer the questions that follow.

- Mr. Gutfeld’s main point in the video is that, “All success in life is based on conservative principles.” What conservative principles did Gene Simmons learn and apply to earn himself such great success?
- Do you think Gene Simmons values equality? Why or why not?
- Do you think that any musician could survive and be successful in the music industry by focusing on ‘feelings’ and equality rather than trying to sell more sponsorship, records, and merchandise than the next band? What are some examples to support your answer?

Gene Simmons Describes 'The Most Profound Capitalist Lesson' He Ever Learned

[Richard Feloni](#)

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Gene Simmons, best known as the demonic bass player of legendary hard rock band KISS, is above all else a very successful entrepreneur.

He is the business architect behind the band that [he told CNN Money](#) he believes, from the endless merchandising and touring since 1973, is worth somewhere between \$1 billion and \$5 billion.

He's the owner of the [LA KISS](#) arena football team, [Simmons Records](#), the [Cool Springs](#) financial services firm, and [Rock & Brews](#) restaurant chain, among other ventures. He also starred in the "Gene Simmons Family Jewels" reality show that ran for seven seasons on A&E, and gives motivational speeches at corporate events. He has unabashedly focused his life on building the Gene Simmons brand.



Wikipedia/ChadnerMount Carmel in Haifa, Israel.

In his new book "[ME, Inc.](#)," Simmons explains that the first time he realized that he was going to dedicate his life to the pursuit of making money was when he made his first profit selling fruit as a poor boy in Israel.

He was forever changed by the experience of being able to, despite a lack of running water and food, not only buy an ice cream cone but give his mother money.

Back when he was 7 years old and still went by his birth name Chaim Witz, Simmons decided one day that there was an opportunity in the crowds that passed by his neighborhood on their way home from work each day. He told his friend Schlomo that they were going to hike up nearby Mount Carmel and pick cactus fruit to sell to commuters.

He and Schlomo borrowed a vat of ice water from a local grocery and spent a day filling it with fruit they picked.

"We didn't realize that it was a business venture, and we wouldn't have known what the phrase meant. But we *did* have a sense that if we worked hard, we *might* make money. And that was an exciting idea: *making money*," Simmons writes. "It still is."

By sunset, the boys discovered they made the equivalent of two dollars, which Simmons estimates would today be about \$20.

On the way home, he grabbed an ice cream cone for two cents, which he says is still the best one he's ever had.

When he arrived at his house, his mom was upset that he had been gone all day. But her expression changed when he placed a handful of coins on the table.

"The astonished look on her face will forever be etched in my mind," Simmons writes. She gave him a big hug and called him "my little man."

"So I made the connection that, 'Oh, hard work not only makes you money so that you can buy an ice cream cone, which I did, but it also makes your mom love you all that much more,'" Simmons tells Business Insider.

In his book he writes that as he hugged his mother while covered in cactus pricks, "I knew that work was good. Work resulted in money. Work and money resulted in food. Work and money resulted in happiness. And that is the most profound capitalist lesson I have ever learned, though I was far too young to understand it at the time."

It was a lesson he took with him to the US when he moved with his mother two years later, and a lesson that he used to motivate him to always find new business opportunities, regardless of the field.

And when he cofounded KISS, he never saw it as just a musical project, he says. He always saw it as a music business.

"The KISS thing, when you really look at it," he tells us, "has become this huge monster, despite the fact that critics say that doing games and slot machines and golf courses is not credible. Critics still live in their mother's basement. We own the world."

<http://www.businessinsider.com/kiss-gene-simmons-on-entrepreneurship-2014-10>