

## The Future of Success

*Robert B. Reich*

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*"Reich is a big thinker and a great writer." —The Washington Post*

# THE FUTURE OF SUCCESS

> Working and Living in the New Economy <



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**Robert B. Reich : The Future of Success** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Future of Success:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Audiobook worth listening to many times. Has political leaningsBy GreenyReich is the reader in this audiobook and speaks with authority. Actually, he is overly pedantic, explaining everything as if to a high school student. Nevertheless, you will understand him completely.This is a highly educational book, not entertaining in the least in my opinion. Its educational value is so great that I intend to listen to it a few more times. Reich covers and integrates many, many subjects surrounding work and the meaning of work in the

current generation. Again, it isn't just that he covers so many subjects meticulously. He integrates them. Reich has a highly informed and intellectual viewpoint that is worth considering. At the same time, Reich clearly has strong political beliefs and leanings. His leanings are left of the general population in my opinion, but only with regard to a set of matters. He wants an economic system that doesn't marginalize the very people working so hard. Specifically, he addresses health care and other areas where the hard-working middle has been getting squeezed. I think Reich identified the problem areas and provided values with which to address them rather than concrete actionable solutions. But that's not the reason I'd like to listen to this book additional times. What I like about this book is the historical outline for how our lives have changed and continue to change. Reich is very articulate on this. Work has changed. Life outside work has changed. Expectations have changed. Insecurity is only increasing. Yet innovation brings us many improvements. In the end, we're not happier as a society. We're stressed out. We can't sleep as well as we used to. There's no economic solution that's apparent for this condition. The Future of Success articulates much of what we feel and know deep down.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Why am I working so many hours? By Dave Kinnear

If you have been working more and enjoying it less, or even if you've been enjoying it more, this book can explain why. Well documented and reasonably argued positions on why the "new economy" is going in the direction it is provides insights into the phenomena we are likely all to be experiencing at work, but have not been able to figure out ourselves. Robert Reich takes us through the history of how we got here as well as the common misconceptions of our times. He points out, for example, that contrary to popular belief today's innovators are not necessarily particularly adept at using new information technology. He points out that they are creative workers. He then breaks the creative workers into two groups defined as "Geeks," and "Shrinks." The Geeks provide the creative innovations from a technology point of view, but the Shrink provides the marketing intelligence as to what people really want for the product or service. Reich's thesis is that technology is speeding and broadening access to "terrific deals." That is driving everything including worker mobility since they are selling their own services. The look for the best deal as an employee much as the employer looks for the best deal in materials as well employees. One of the difficulties facing workers in this new age is that they will not be able to predict their "bottom line" income. Because payment is based on value added at almost all levels of the economy, your annual income will depend on a great many changing parameters. To put it in his terms, "the fabulous new deals of the fabulous new economy carry a steep price: more frenzied lives, less security, more economic and social stratification, the loss of time and energy for family, friendship, community and self." We must all be aware of this change and manage the high touch part of our high tech lives.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. What in the world is going on? By Kimberley Mitchell

In this book, Robert Reich explains clearly and succinctly the economic and social forces which influence our increasingly frenzied society. People are working more hours than ever before, not only when they need the money, but especially when the work is particularly well paid. Loyalty is a scarce commodity, not only from employees, but also from employers, customers, and investors. This book does an enormous service by helping us see the mechanisms underlying the great trends in our social fabric over the past couple of decades. Only by understanding the underlying mechanisms can we hope to play a part in controlling their motions. This book provides that understanding. The final chapter addresses ways that the trends can be changed. Unfortunately this chapter seems lame in relation to the rest of the book. The suggestions do not seem practical or even possible to implement given the enormity of the problem outlined in the rest of the book. Yet the clarity with which the current situation is laid out is so valuable, the author can be forgiven if he can't provide -all- the answers. This is the most enlightening book I've read in years. If you want to understand where America stands at the breaking of the millenium, the concepts in this book are a required curriculum.

If you think it's getting harder to both make a living and make a life, economist and former secretary of labor Robert Reich agrees with you. Americans may be earning more than ever before, but we're paying a steep price: we're working longer, seeing our families less, and our communities are fragmenting. With the clarity and insight that are his hallmarks, Reich delineates what success has come to mean in our time. He demonstrates that although we have more choices as consumers, and investors, the choices themselves are undermining the rest of our lives. It is getting harder for people to be confident of what they will be earning next year, or even next month. At the same time, our society is splitting into socially stratified enclaves--the wealthier walled off and gated, the poorer isolated and ignored. Although the trends he discusses are powerful, they are not irreversible, and Reich makes provocative suggestions for how we might create a more balanced society and more satisfying lives. Some of his ideas may surprise you; all should spark a healthy and essential national debate. From the Trade Paperback edition.

From Publishers Weekly

From his dual perspective as former Clinton administration secretary of labor and academic social scientist, Reich (bestselling author of *Locked in the Cabinet*) offers a knowledgeable overview of the pros and cons of today's economy for the average worker. New ways of doing business spurred by digital technology, he states, have led to "eye-popping deals and bargains, opportunities never dreamed of—exactly what you want, from anywhere, at the best price and value" for consumers. At the same time, the ease with which potential buyers can switch to any better new deal puts all producers under intense competitive pressure. Reich argues that the choice between innovation

or death that producers now face has filtered down to workers in the form of reduced loyalty from employers and sharply curtailed retirement and fringe benefits. Those who suspect that they are working harder over longer hours will find confirmation here that they are in good company, as well as a keen analysis of the impact of our new working arrangements on marriages, children and how we enjoy our lives. Then Reich pops the \$1 million question: Would we willingly accede to the new demands of the workplace if we fully appreciated the consequences for our family lives? Sensing a growing dissatisfaction across the nation, Reich offers tantalizing proposals for moderating the more disruptive influences that have arrived along with the blessings of the emerging economy. (Jan. 15) Forecast: Reich's personal, engaging approach to the hot button topic of worker burnout in the new economy, combined with his high visibility in the traditional media, should raise the profile of this title, which has an announced 100,000-copy first printing, as well as a simultaneous audiobook release from Random. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Reich reflects on the changes in the work lives of Americans in this audiobook. As a former U.S. secretary of labor, he is in a good position to know what the "new economy" might hold. Global competition, better information access, and a faster-paced economy will affect all individuals. Reich thinks employees are becoming more like independent contractors; he believes there will be greater opportunities, and also greater insecurities, as some people have already discovered. While the author may at times overstate the extent of change, this is a clear, stimulating, and worthwhile presentation. Reich is also an excellent reader and could make a living at narrating until the next Democratic administration comes along. Recommended for larger public libraries. Mark Guyer, Stark Cty. Dist. Lib., Canton, OH Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The erstwhile secretary of labor says he loved that job like no other he ever had. He spent long hours at it--so long that his small son asked his father to wake him when he came home, even though the boy would be sleeping, because then he would know for sure that his father was around. Reich decided shortly after to resign and to make the ever longer hours Americans are working the stuff of a new book. The first section of his tripartite essay describes the radical deracination of work during the last three decades as standardization gave way to personalization because new technologies, crucially including the computer and its myriad applications, allow narrowly targeted marketing to thrive and prosper. The second homes in on the new ways of life and success under the constant-growth economy, which include working forever, selling yourself constantly, outsourcing the functions of the family, and regarding all social attachments (i.e., "communities") as just so many disposable or tradable goods. In the last section, consisting of two chapters on choice (choice is, by the way, supposed to justify the personalized economy that requires the additional working hours), Reich concludes that you can either be successful or have a life but, for the foreseeable future, not both. Despite the fact that most of what he says will strike many as dreadfully probable and some few as utterly ghastly, Reich is ebullient. Ray Olson Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved