

THE FINANCIAL EDGE

July 2025



KEEPING AN OPEN MIND

Personal comments by Mary

In today's world, keeping an open mind seems to be out of fashion. We talk, but we don't always listen. Social media has become a popular platform for expressing opinions — often anonymously — which tends to bring out harsher, more critical, and even hateful comments than face-to-face conversations typically allow.

I still read the newspaper, and I remember when it focused on reporting facts, not opinions. Even our court system seems, at times, to lean toward popular sentiment instead of staying grounded in core values. Lately, I've been reflecting on how I can push back against this trend in my own life. Three simple but meaningful ways came to mind.

First, I try to keep an open mind and learn from others. I've always loved to read and explore new ideas. Limiting what we expose ourselves to also limits what we understand. Sometimes I'm wrong — or simply don't know everything — and that's okay.

Second, I've learned to be slower to judge. Each of us is unique. It's easy to view others through the lens of our own experiences and values, but there's always another side to the story.

Third, I make space for serendipity. Some of life's best moments happen when we leave room for the unexpected. One of my favorite examples happened in 2016. I had just booked what I thought would be the trip of a lifetime: an African safari. Not long after, my son met someone whose family owned safari lodges in Kenya. His friend was excited that we wanted to visit and helped us plan a five-star, once-in-a-lifetime adventure—an experience far beyond anything I could have arranged on my own.

Keeping an open mind hasn't just helped me grow—it's made life richer, more enjoyable, and full of surprises.

Mary Guldán-Lindström



"As both a personal client and a family business owner, I've entrusted Focus CPA with our accounting needs and they've consistently gone above and beyond. Their team understands the challenges and nuances of running a business and managing personal finances simultaneously. They provide tailored advice that has been crucial for our operations and growth. Having a partner like Focus CPA, who is as invested in our success as we are, has been a game changer. If you're looking for a CPA that truly gets the pressures and priorities of business and personal financial management, I can't recommend them enough."

*Eric Thompson, Owner of
Local Results Marketing & Real Estate*

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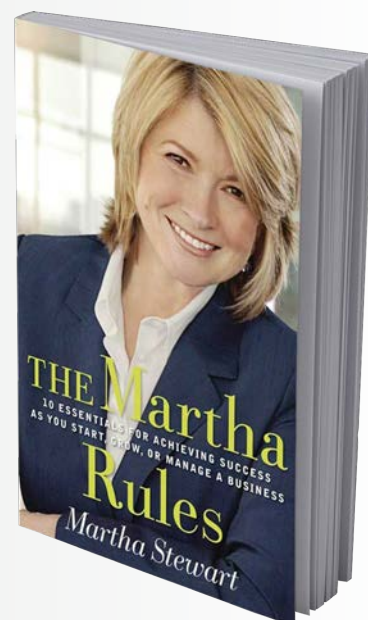
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THE BOOK REVIEW

TITLE: Martha Rules
AUTHOR: Martha Stewart
TOPIC: Awareness
EASY TO READ: \$\$\$\$\$ (5 out of 5 dollars)
APPLICABLE TO SMALL BUSINESS: \$\$\$\$\$ (5 out of 5 dollars)

Summary: Martha shares 10 rules she has used to create her billion-dollar business. She provides a little history, from being a model to stockbroker to becoming “Martha Stewart” and recovering from getting prison time.

My recommendation: I was impressed. Based on her passion, good living, I didn’t expect sound business advice. Besides building a mega company, she has taken a non-business issue and created a business around it. In the book she provided a wonderful combination of practical advice along with great stories that showcased how her rule was important.



Pages: 205 | Published: 2005



UPDATE ON IRS ID THEFT CASES

As of April 18, 2025, the IRS had received 140.6 million individual income tax returns and processed 138.1 million of them—an impressive 98 percent. However, nearly 3.4 million returns remained suspended due to issues such as error resolution, potential identity theft, processing rejects, and unpostable returns.

Among the many challenges the IRS faces, one persistent and unresolved issue is the lengthy delay in resolving identity theft cases. These issues typically surface when a tax return is electronically filed. This year, the IRS’s fraud detection filters flagged approximately 2.1 million returns as potentially involving identity theft. When a return is flagged, the IRS sends a letter to the taxpayer, requiring them to authenticate their identity before receiving a refund. According to the Taxpayer Advocate’s report, “The IRS typically takes several months to resolve these cases.”

In one of the most common scenarios, a thief uses a taxpayer’s identity to file a fraudulent return under their name and Social Security number. These cases are referred to the IRS Identity Theft Victim Assistance (IDTVA) unit for resolution. As of the end of the last filing season, the IRS had roughly 387,000 IDTVA cases in inventory, with an average resolution time of 20 months. Additionally, in fiscal year 2023, 69% of affected taxpayers had adjusted gross incomes at or below 250% of the federal poverty level.

To minimize the risk and impact of identity theft, it is important to file your tax return as early as possible. Early filing increases the chance of identifying and resolving issues more quickly.



YOUR AMERICAN DREAM

By Mary Guldán-Lindstrom CPA

When the United States was founded, it was built on the hope of a fresh start—a place where people could create their own lives and pursue their goals. The idea of the American Dream is rooted in the Declaration of Independence, which proclaims “that all men are created equal, with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” This gives each of us the freedom to create a rich and meaningful life for ourselves and our families. Becoming a small business owner is a powerful example of someone actively pursuing that dream.

One remarkable example of living the American Dream is Walt Disney. Born in 1901, he started with a simple love of drawing cartoons and went on to build one of the greatest amusement parks in the world: Disney World. Many things contributed to the massive success of his dream, but three key components, as outlined in the book *How to Be Like Walt*, stand out:

VISION – Your vision is your personal definition of success. We each have our own. For many, the fulfillment of a meaningful project is the ultimate goal. In Walt Disney’s case, money wasn’t the main pursuit—it was a means to fund the dream. He used his earnings to support cartoon creation, movie production, and eventually, the building of Disneyland and Disney World. Financial success was a tool, not the goal.

COMMUNICATION – The clearer your vision and your ability to share it, the more powerfully it can come to life. Having a detailed, vivid vision can be difficult—but essential. Walt Disney imagined every part of his parks down to the location of a bench where he could sit and watch visitors enjoying the experience. A vision becomes powerful only when it can be shared. To pitch the idea of the first full-length animated movie, Walt performed the entire story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs to his animation team—giving each character a distinct voice and personality. After the performance, he simply told his team: “Now go make it.”

PEOPLE SKILLS – We can accomplish more by working together. The ability to delegate, manage, inspire loyalty, and build a team will turn a vision into reality faster and more effectively. A coach is a great example of how people skills bring dreams to life—someone who taps into the strengths of each team member, offers encouragement, and ensures results. Without action, a vision remains just a dream.

Each July, we celebrate the birth of our nation. It’s a time to fire up the grill, watch fireworks, listen to music, and gather with neighbors. But it’s also an ideal time to reflect. I challenge you: take time to define your vision. Clearly communicate it with those who can help bring it to life. Then guide it—and your actions—with purpose and determination.

“All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them.”

~ Walt Disney

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Is the American Dream of owning your own business NOT living up to your expectations?

Most entrepreneurs do what has to be done to survive. Many times those habits destroy the business. We end up working with people that suck our energy, doing things we aren’t good at, not taking vacations and struggling to keep the cash flowing. That is not my idea of an American dream.

Give us a chance to help you change your story. Contact us for a free one hour “Discovery Meeting”. We will help you recall why you started your business and work to recapture that passion and reduce the stress.

Contact us at
920-351-4842 or
mary@focus-cpa.com

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FOCUS\$CPA Inc

117A Packerland Drive
Green Bay, WI 54303
Phone: (920) 351-4842
www.FOCUS-CPA.com



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A LITTLE HUMOR...SOME WONDERFUL SUMMER PUNS

Fishing you a wonderful day	Why do you have to be so sunscreen?
I'm in need of some vitamin sea	Whale you join me?
I'll beach you there!	You're campified!
The meal's all bucket-and-spade for	We'll just lobster roll with it
That's a fin-tastic fish	It's easy to get tide out in the summer heat.
Oh, buoy!	Where there's a will, there's a wave
You're not that sunny!	You're going to holi-pay for that!
Peaches and suncream	It's about time
Water we waiting for?	We mermaid for each other
Shorely the water's too cold?	That hike was in-tents
Let's have a so-fish-sticated chat	Ready, sun set, go!
That a-piers to be the case	Please, no s'more
That's very shellfish of you to say	

From [twinkl.com/blog/40-summer-puns-for-kids](https://www.twinkl.com/blog/40-summer-puns-for-kids)

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