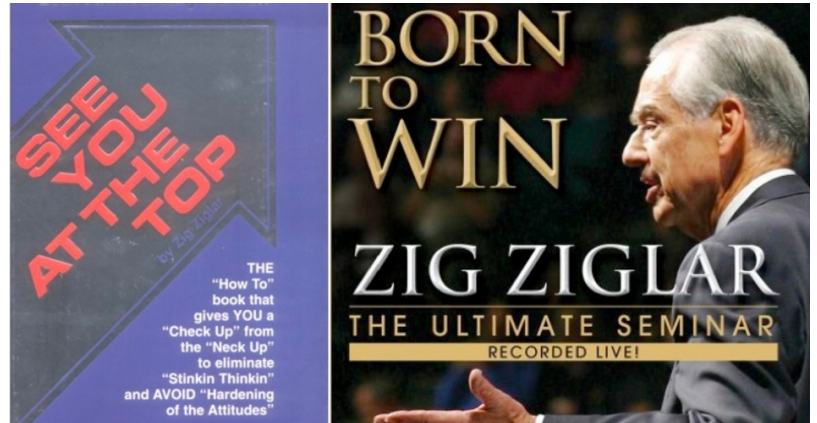




Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 30, 2012

## Noted Motivational Speaker, Author Zig Ziglar Dies at 86

[Zig Ziglar](#), the motivational speaker who dispensed can-do confidence sprinkled with subtle Christian encouragement to help millions of people the world over believe that they could reach their dream, died in Dallas November 28 at the age of 86. A message on his [Facebook page](#) stated that “Zig Ziglar passed from this world today after a short bout with pneumonia. Though his time on earth has ended, he is speaking with Jesus now in his heavenly home. The angels in heaven are rejoicing and his family is celebrating a life well lived.”



With such home-spun “Ziglarisms” as, “If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time,” and, “Attitude, not aptitude, determines altitude,” Ziglar built a multi-million-dollar business writing books and conducting seminars to help people believe in themselves. But he also emphasized the importance of faith in a successful life, declaring that the “foundation stones for a balanced success are honesty, character, integrity, faith, love, and loyalty.”

Noted motivational speaker Peter Lowe, who was mentored by Ziglar and worked with him for over 20 years, said that “this is a very sad time. But, it is also a time to celebrate a great man of God who impacted the lives of so many.” Lowe remembered Ziglar as “a man of integrity, and an amazing man of God who always wanted to share his personal faith in Jesus. I have literally talked to thousands of people who have listened to his CDs and told me that it transformed their lives.”

Among the more than 30 books Ziglar penned was the 1975 bestselling motivational manual *See You at The Top!*, along with the 1978 *Confessions of a Happy Christian* — and its 1998 sequel *Confessions of a Grieving Christian*, which he wrote following the 1995 death of his daughter Suzan Ziglar Witmeyer from pulmonary fibrosis.

“Grieving for the Christian is like going through a long winding mountain tunnel,” Ziglar wrote in that deeply personal book. “You know there’s an end to it; you just don’t know where, so you keep going — not in your own strength — but in the strength of Christ. Then the grief ends when you get to the end of the tunnel and you see the light shed by the Shekinah glory of Christ and you’ll see your loved one right there with Him.”

The [New York Times](#) noted that Ziglar began his career as a successful motivational speaker following “a long and difficult career as a salesman, pitching products as diverse as cookware and insurance.” The change came after Ziglar realized that “the product he sold best was his own energy and optimism,” added the *Times*. “He began speaking to sales groups in the 1950s, but he could not afford to do it full time until the early 1970s.” Ziglar’s real success began after he became a born-again Christian in 1972, “and began teaching ‘biblical principles,’ though he did not necessarily label them as that in his presentations,” reported the *Times*.

Ziglar’s personal assistant, Jay Hellwig, recalled to the [Associated Press](#) that Ziglar “got saved at the age of 42, which means that he accepted Jesus Christ as his savior. Ever since that day is what he said



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was the turning point of his life. The last 41 years of his life he lived fully with that as his mission.”

Throughout his more than 40-year career, during which he gained a reputation as the world’s top motivator, Ziglar emphasized the theme that was key to his own success: “You can have everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want.” During a 2002 interview he said that such a philosophy “works in your personal life, your physical life. It works in corporate America. It works in government. It works everywhere.”

Hellwig recalled that his boss and friend “was the same guy behind closed doors as he was preparing for his presentations to thousands of people [or] when we were sitting at the kitchen table and he was reading the newspaper.” He added that Ziglar “had the uncanny ability to make everyone he ran into feel like they were his friend.”

The AP noted that “after a 2007 fall down a flight of stairs left him with a brain injury, Ziglar, along with another daughter, Julie Ziglar Norman, wrote ‘Embrace the Struggle,’ a book that described how his life changed after the injury.” In addition to that daughter, Ziglar is survived by his wife Jean, with whom he had celebrated 66 years of marriage two days before his death, along with another son and daughter.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) noted that to a new generation of success-minded individuals, Ziglar’s success slogans “might seem kitschy and a little bit corny” — such as, “Failure is a detour, not a dead-end street,” and, “You don’t have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great.” Nonetheless, Ziglar’s passing prompted Twitter posts from such hip notables as social media guru [Jeff Bullas](#) and rapper-turned-actor [LL Cool J](#), who Tweeted: “Zig Ziglar rest in peace. Your life inspired us. Thank you.”

Similarly, noted financial adviser [Dave Ramsey](#) tweeted: “There was none better. Mentor and Friend Zig Ziglar woke up in Heaven this morning. I miss him already.”

And in Ziglar’s adopted hometown of Dallas, Dr. Tony Evans, pastor of [Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship](#), reflected that “we have lost a giant of the faith who was able to connect Kingdom principles with professional life in a way that brought excellence, integrity, and productivity to the workplace in the name of Jesus Christ.”



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