

Self motivated

A dropout at 15, speaker a millionaire by 35

By Jeff Richgels

The Capital Times

At 15, Randy Gage was a dropout and substance abuser jailed for armed robbery.

Today, the 44-year-old Madison native is a multimillionaire.

The path was long and tortuous, but the key to Gage's transformation was simple, he says.

"I became honest and hard working, but I had a lot of self-esteem issues on a subconscious level that were holding me back," Gage said in a phone interview. "I don't think I felt I was worthy of success."

After his second attempt at opening a restaurant failed, the then 30-year-old Gage was left with no assets and \$55,000 in debt.

"I decided I had to start myself over and I started a serious study of self development," said Gage, who was expelled from Madison West in the 9th grade. "I looked at internal issues instead of looking at outside stuff — the economy or the IRS — as the reasons for my failure. I realized I was the problem. And that's when things really started to change for me."

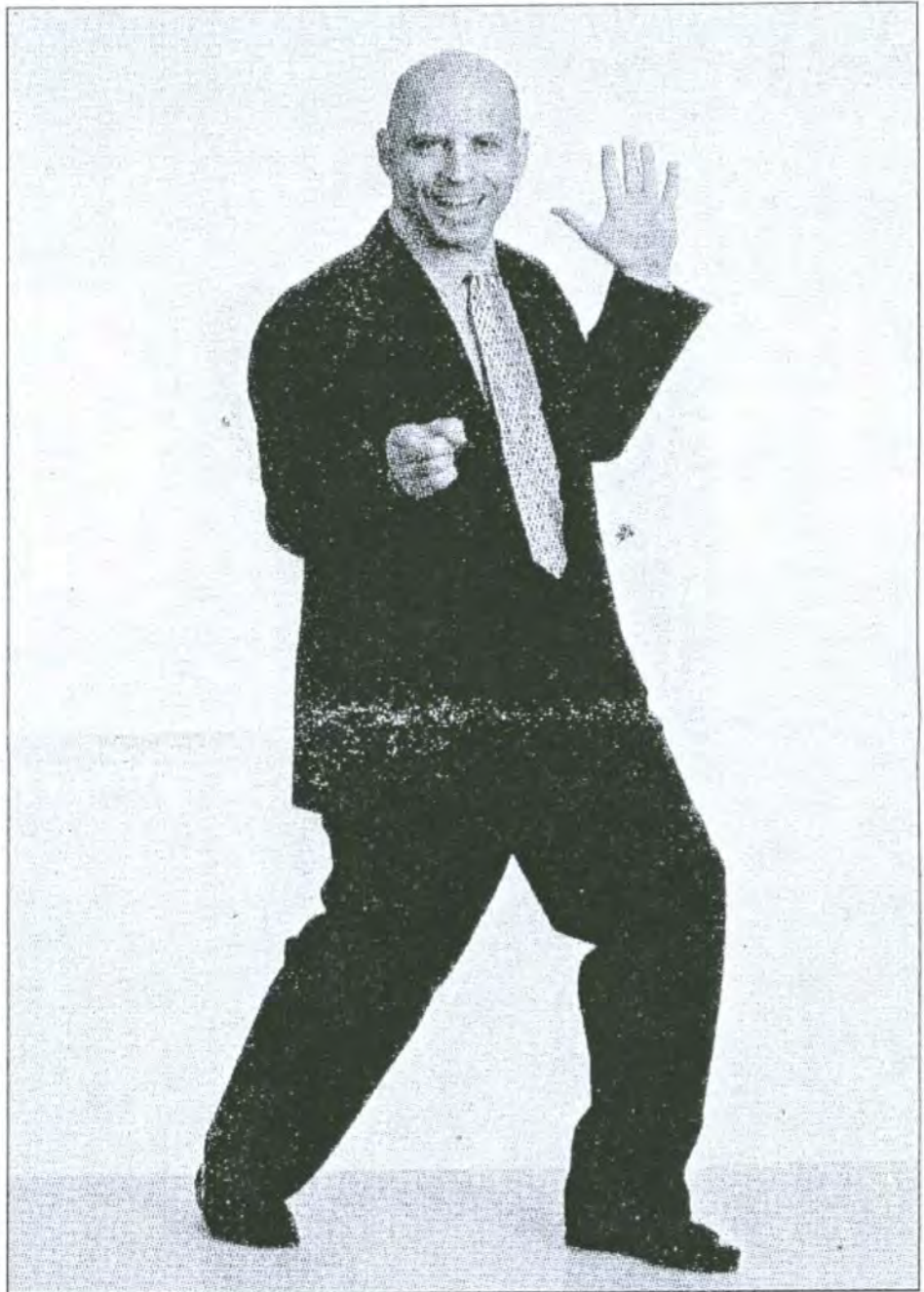
Gage got into network, or multi-level, marketing — Amway was his first venture in that area — and eventually started a training program for his people on how to become supervisor. When others started asking to undergo the training, Gage started charging for the program.

"I realized a whole bunch of people needed this kind of training," he said.

Today, Gage is a professional motivational speaker and personal coach with his own Web site, www.randygage.com. He sells his services, as well as books, tapes and online coaching.

"I would say I am an expert in helping people tap into their human potential," said Gage, who lives in Hollywood, Fla. "I really fell into it. I think it was my destiny: The assignment I was put on Earth to do."

His typical client is a salesman in network



Madison native Randy Gage has overcome a troubled youth to earn a fortune as a motivational speaker.

marketing or insurance or real estate.

Gage declined to compare himself to other motivational speakers.

"What I do is so unique," he said. "What I do is not just the rah-rah thing to hype people up. I really try to work on their core belief system; the

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subconscious that is keeping them from being successful."

No matter how well a person has mastered sales techniques, if they don't believe in themselves they won't be successful, Gage said.

Gage is returning to Madison this weekend to visit his mother and grandmother. While here, he will be giving a special speech on Saturday at the Radisson with the proceeds benefiting the Wisconsin chapter of the National Speakers Association.

The NSA says Gage is "considered by many to be the preeminent expert on direct selling and network marketing in the world."

This speech, though, won't be his typical motivational offering aimed at sales people. Instead, it is directed at others who may want to follow in his footsteps. NSA members can attend for \$147 in advance, \$177 at the door, while non-members are welcome for \$177 in advance, \$197 at the door. For details and registration, call (414) 617-0880.

Gage said the key figure in his life was Baxter Richardson, a local teacher who visited him in jail.

"At 15 I went down the wrong path," Gage said. "I thought stealing money was the answer to all my problems. (Richardson) told me I was a very smart guy capable of doing great things. And no one had ever told me that before. He lit something in me."

And started him on a path he was certain he'd always find.

"It's funny," Gage said. "I always said I was going to be a millionaire by the time I was 35. I said that even as a teen, which was crazy. But I believed that because I hated being poor. And I found the means to become a millionaire at 35."