“If Donald Trump, P. Diddy, Tony Robbins, KRS-One, Deepak Chopra, Russell Simmons and T.D. Jakes sat in a room together to co-author a book, THIS would have been the result.”

The HUSTLER'S 10 Commandments

A Collection of Corporate Best Practices, Ancient Wisdom and Guerilla Tactics for Today's Independent Minded Entrepreneur
Hustle University is a self-help institution of higher learning for today’s Hardcore Entrepreneur.

The mission of Hustle University is to promote entrepreneurship, education and leadership through personal development and the teaching of proven success strategies.

www.HustleUniversity.Org
THE HUSTLER’S 10 COMMANDMENTS

A Collection of Corporate Best Practices, Ancient Wisdom and Guerilla Tactics for Today’s Independent Minded Entrepreneur

By Hotep

HUSTLE U INC.
New York   Atlanta   Los Angeles
The Hustler's 10 Commandments

www.hustlers10commandments.com

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE: This work is a labor of love. It is the result of my attending the School of Hard Knocks where I received a B.A. in Failed Ideas, a Masters Degree in Bad Investments, and a PhD in Poor Time Management. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's experiences or are used with permission, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely on purpose.
To my parents, Felicia A. Scotland AND Ramon A. Benzo (RIP), Thank you for naming me after great people and making sure I grow into the crown that you placed soaring above my head. It is only by standing on your shoulders that I am able to reach so high!

To my Wife, You are the apple of my eye; the Sun in my sky. Everybody knows I love my Babykakes!

To my heroes, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, and Muhammad Ali.

I also dedicate this book to everyone whose life has inspired me, and to everyone that this book will touch. Manifest your Destiny!

Aight!

Peace!
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THE MEANING OF THE NAME:

Born in Queens, NYC in the early 1970’s, I represent the generation of people born at the exact moment the culture of Hip-Hop emerged from the womb of urban America.

The oldest of 3 boys, I always considered Hip-Hop to be my adopted BIG BROTHER. We grew up together. He taught me much of what I know and understand today. He taught me how to breakdance, showed me how to rock my gear (be fashionable), instructed me on the fine art of graffiti, helped me win the hearts of many women, challenged me to think critically, taught me lessons in Black History and showed me different parts of the country. But, most importantly, my big brother Hip-Hop gave me a positive self-image, a sense of self-worth and belonging.

Hip-Hop carried me under his wing until I graduated high school. It was during my freshman year at college that I first stepped from under his shadow, and started to define my own path. I started to set my own trends in hair, fashion, dance and music instead of copying the ones Hip-Hop created. It was like one of those moments in Kung-Fu movies when the student had learned so well, he was able to match or defeat his Master. My brother Hip-Hop had helped raise me to a point where I understood that I AFFECT AND INFLUENCE THE CULTURE AS MUCH AS IT DOES ME.

This leads me to explain the reason for the title, “The Hustler’s 10 Commandments”.

A current trend in today’s Hip-Hop is the overuse (and mis-use) of the term, hustler. EVERYBODY claims to
be a hustler! The word HUSTLE has 2 meanings; a “standard” definition and a street or slang definition.

The **Standard definition**: Hustle- verb; to act aggressively especially in business dealings.

The **Street/ Slang definition**: Hustle- verb; 1. to make money covertly, often illegally. 2. To sell drugs. 3. To pursue financial gains by any means necessary. Hustle- noun; a side job. Work one does outside of their 9-5 job.

Hip-Hop identifies mainly with the street definition. This fact was fine with me until multi-million dollar companies **bought the image of Hip-Hop**. Once this was done, the corporations twisted the art form and culture in despicable ways. Illegal hustles were turned into today’s careers of choice, and immoral hustler’s (criminals) were magically transformed into today’s leaders and heroes for our youth. This is a BIG PROBLEM!

In order to balance the scales (being the Libra that I am), I chose to champion for the **standard definition of hustle**.

**My mission:** *to create a hard-hitting manual, filled with empowering lessons, in order to change lives and save the world (and universe) from the evil mind control of greedy corporations, who intend to deceive and enslave the masses by employing weapons of illusion, confusion and destruction.* *(whew!)*
The title, **The Hustler’s 10 Commandments** allowed me to capitalize off 3 of today’s biggest markets: Hip-Hop, Entrepreneurs, and Churchgoers. This was a strategic move to maximize my reach. Therefore, more books get sold, more people’s lives get touched and more money gets made.

Cuz let’s not forget………………I’M A HUSTLER TOO!

- Hotep, (aka The One Man Brand)

*Hotep rocks the classic, old-school sheepskin and “Mr. Hollywood” sunglasses @ his movie premiere.*
FOREWORD:

Writing this book was like having my own “Jerry Maguire” moment. It’s like a manifesto that was whispered (and sometimes shouted) to me by the Creator through my family, peers, mentors and true-life experience.

I liken the moments of inspiration for writing this book to the story of Moses, who is credited with receiving the original 10 Commandments directly as God spoke to him.

“God told me to do it!”

- Hotep
THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

YOUR NETWORK IS YOUR NET WORTH.
CHAPTER 1: YOUR NETWORK IS YOUR NET WORTH

Net worth is commonly known as the difference between what you own and what you owe. You can figure your net worth by adding all your debts (credit cards, mortgages, car loans, and/or anything else you owe) and subtracting that sum from your total assets (home value, stocks, cash, furniture, electronics and anything else you own of value).

Net worth is not an actual pile of physical dollars, but more a summation of the potential dollar amount that your assets would bear if you liquidated (sold) them. It is with this same summation of potential that we can include our network (friends, crew, gang, homies, posse) as assets too.

“Birds of a feather, flock together.”

Remember when you were little, and your mother told you to be careful who you choose as friends? Well, that advice doesn’t change with age. Your friends will either help bring you up, or take you down. They can be assets or liabilities.

It was once suggested to me that I make a list of people in my life that I can count on, and those I can count out. Doing so, (and spending the majority of my time with those that I could count on) drastically improved my business and social life. The same can and will happen for you.

“If you hang around 4 broke people, you’re bound to be the 5th”.

This saying would still hold true if you replaced the word broke with rich, positive, smart or any other
adjective you choose. Such is the power of your network.

My cousin calls his network his “Circle of Influence”. I think this is a very appropriate term because it recognizes the amazing influence those we surround ourselves with have on us. Your business will flourish if you hang around business savvy people. Your life will start to seem so much more beautiful if your friends are positive and optimistic. You will never be homeless, without food, clothes or money if your circle is affluent. That’s because your Network is your Net Worth!

**LIFE LESSON:**

_I have always been one who believed in networking, but it wasn't until very recently that I discovered the truth behind the Hustler's Commandment; your network is your net worth._

After having been away from the literary and media industries for a little over fifteen years, I slowly began transitioning myself back into the business. I started seeking opportunities to promote my children's book which I had self-published. With the aid of the Internet, I began tapping into sources and building a network that would assist me in fulfilling my quest.

I discovered there were many people out there who had an interest in what I was doing and sincerely wanted to help. I received invitations to different events and accepted most. During my travels, I continued to meet like-minded individuals, and my network continued to grow.
As a firm believer in the power of giving, I made it my business to do whatever I could to help someone achieve his or her goals and visions. This included not only disseminating information, but also seizing opportunities to make connections between people that could benefit from each other's talents and experiences. The more that I helped others, the more "fuel" I received to keep the fire of my vision and purpose burning.

The recognition of the value, or net worth of my network came during the African American Literary and Media Conference, which was held February 2006 in Reno, Nevada. This was the AALAM Group's first conference, and it was our vision to create an atmosphere where novices and professionals would be able to receive the tools and inspiration needed to navigate their way through the literary and media industries. My partner Denise and I were faced with many challenges and seemingly insurmountable obstacles. There were critical moments where giving up was the option of choice, but we decided to make the sacrifice and do whatever it would take to make the conference happen.

It was a decision that transformed our lives forever. During that weekend, our network was drawn together from all points within the United States. There are no words to describe the power and synergy that was experienced. People's lives were changed. Relationships were solidified. Projects were birthed. Strength to continue was found in our network.

That weekend helped me discover the importance of being surrounded by positive like-minded individuals who understand the power of giving as well as receiving. No one person can achieve
greatness and realize the power of possibility remaining inside of self. Yes, it is true that your sense of self worth is important, but ultimately it is your network that is your net worth!
- Nancy Gilliam

TASKS:

1) Make a list of the people you can COUNT ON and those you can COUNT OUT.
2) Build your own” circle of influence” from the people you can count on.
3) Spend less time with the people you can count out.
4) Identify someone that is successful in your field. See if you can intern for them or have them mentor you.
5) Attend conferences, networking socials and online groups where people of similar interest or goals are.

It was at AALAM that Hotep got the idea to write The Hustler’s 10 Commandments book. He also met Essence best-selling author Omar Tyree (above) and Tyson Hall (right); who both became part of Hotep’s network and consequently, contributing authors to this book.
THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

IMAGE IS EVERYTHING.
CHAPTER 2: IMAGE IS EVERYTHING

They say we should never judge a book by its cover, but it’s the *cover* that makes us want to open the book in the first place.

What is truth? Truth is NOT a matter of fact. History has shown us all, that *truth* is only an idea that is commonly accepted. Yet laws, policy and judgments are often erroneously made based off of these ideas everyday.

**At one time, each of these ideas was once “true”:**

1) The Earth is flat.
2) Christopher Columbus discovered America.
3) Africa has made no significant contribution to the world.
4) Cocaine is good for you and should be used daily.

Get the picture? Truth is only what we *perceive* it to be; this is why *image* is key.

Whether right or wrong, the true power of image is the fact that people make **DECISIONS** based on their perception of things. Consumers buy products because of their *perception* of it. People chose mates because of their *perception* of the other person. Citizens choose leaders based on their *perception* of that candidate. Policemen and judges make decisions about a person’s guilt (and ultimately their freedom) according to their *perception* of the individual. Where is truth in any of these examples? The fact of the matter is: **very little of what we do is based on actual truth.**

God is the only truth. As mere mortals, we can only hope that our perception of things is actually *true*. In the meantime, we must respect the great power of
perception and decide how we can use imagery to our benefit. If you know that people are making life-changing DECISIONS about you (and your business) based on image, what can be done to make sure that their perception of you is positive?

Apply the power of perception to your daily practices and you can transform your identity and success ratio immediately. Image is EVERYTHING.

**LIFE LESSON:**

*Image is everything! For a decade now I have been a natural wearing, strong looking, and unapproachable black woman. My natural made me look like a piece of brick. That was good for me in my personal life, meaning, I had control over things. If I didn't want to be bothered by certain folks, my demeanor would let them know. This was also a bad thing because whether I knew it or not, I seemed to look limited to revolutionary type roles, events, and things. How was I to get the world to realize I was far more than the length of my afro? How was I to let the business/entertainment world know, I wasn't going to commit arson on their property? Or that I wouldn't go on national television and advocate “killing whitey”?*

*In winter 2005, I actually decided to run an experiment. Now, I have a short processed look and my hair is similar to Nia Long’s in “The Best Man”. I slightly changed my attire to “simply sophisticated” and I wear eye make-up. I took my new look amongst my co-workers in the entertainment field and they lost their minds. People are digging this new look. Wow! I hadn’t changed on the inside at all. I am still stern, intelligent, and no non-sense, but it seemed to*
not be a factor being I didn’t look like Teflon in a dress. I am getting more compliments and people aren’t intimidated by me.

Overall, the change was healthy and is deeming itself profitable. Since image is everything, I’m not saying “fake it, til you make it”; I’m saying, “If it ain’t working, CHANGE IT!
- Queen (Shanikra Hankins)

**TASKS:**

1) Make sure your website or product exterior look exceptionally good.
2) Dress the part. *The way you DRESS determines the way you will be ADDRESSED.*
3) Speak clearly and with confidence.
4) Create promotional material to support your business (biz cards, flyers, t-shirts)
5) Keep your vehicle looking nice and well maintained. Of course, a luxury vehicle will make you appear to have money. But please don’t over extend your finances for a car.
6) *Peep Game!* Pay attention to Flyers, CDs, Books or DVD covers that catch your eye. Take the time to identify WHY you noticed them and implement those aspects into your own designs.
Practicing what he preaches, Hotep has an ensemble of high-impact marketing materials (like his infamous bookmarks) that continue to outshine the competition and inspire business owners.

* Note that he is wearing a suit in this image, which creates a perception of intelligence, wealth and affluence.
THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

THE EARLY BIRD GETS THE WORM.
CHAPTER 3: THE EARLY BIRD GETS THE WORM

This chapter is personally relevant to me. I have always struggled with being on time. I’ve been late for everything from dates, to events, to meetings and airplane flights. A friend once joked and said that I will be late to my own funeral. So, dear readers, please know that I write these words for my own benefit as much as I do for yours.

The concept of time must be respected and held almost sacreldy. Why? Because time is one of the very few things in life that never repeats itself. Once it’s gone, it’s gone…forever! So, until someone invents a way for humans to travel back in time…Respect it!

In order to maximize the opportunities that are opened before us, we must arrive on time to receive them. No. Scratch that…. not “on time”…….we need to be EARLY!

A school principal once told me, “To be on time, is to be late”. The truth in this statement wasn’t actually apparent to me until I began writing this book.

Please follow this scenario:

You are right on time for your meeting with a record label CEO, book publisher, film distributor….whatever. You walk into her office, make your presentation, ask your questions, smile, shake hands and leave the meeting feeling confident that it went well…..and it did!

However, because you were simply on time, you missed the opportunity to check your appearance in the restroom. If you had, you would have noticed that your zipper was open. Because you were simply on
time, you also missed hearing the CEO comment on a meeting she had last week. If you had been there to hear her comments, you would have known not to give her so many compliments (she really hates that). You also missed her secretary’s phone conversation. If you were early enough to hear it, you would have known that a new position at the office had opened up. A position you would have loved to apply for.

Unfortunately for you, the guy that had a meeting with the CEO after yours was an hour EARLY. He heard all of the conversations and was able to check his appearance. He was relaxed, ready to inquire about the job opening and would not comment on the CEO’s good looks.

Who do YOU think made the most of their opportunity?

The EARLY BIRD got the worm!

LIFE LESSON:

I remember my freshman year of college at the University of Pittsburgh in August 1987. It was registration day and I was headed to one of the campus buildings to register for my classes that semester. I wasn’t early that morning, and there was a long line in front of me to enter the building. But I noticed immediately that everyone was waiting to go inside one door when there four other doors available to enter the building. So my bold-ass walked up past everyone in line and tried one of the other doors, and it opened. I walked right in past the line; and guess what happened after that……….. half of the other line followed me into the door.
So, although I was not early that day, I had the courage to be first, and being first is parallel to being early. They are similar in that you have no company there with you, and so you may feel awkward, inexperienced and afraid of what may happen. It takes courage and confidence to be first, and eagerness and promptness to be early. Well, generally, I'm an early riser, early starter, early arriver as well, which all lends itself to me being one who is brave, bold, and ready enough to start things on my own. In fact, my whole life has been that way. I was always starting things and getting there early to be first.

Anyway, that's exactly what I did in my career as a young writer. In 1991, among Terry McMillan, Bebe Moore Campbell, Walter Mosley, and E. Lynn Harris, I became the first and youngest author to write about contemporary urban streets since Donald Goines and Iceberg Slim. So I was early, I was first, I'll continue to reinvent the game and I'm still eating those juicy worms with more on the way (smile.)

- Omar Tyree

TASKS:

1) Don’t put off for tomorrow what you can do today.
2) Set your clock 30 minutes ahead of the actual time.
3) Act on your ideas before someone else does.
4) Arrive at meetings at least 20 minutes early.
5) Arrive at events an 30 minutes early.
6) Call to confirm appointments 1 hour prior to meeting time.
7) Turn in assignments before their deadline.
8) Buy the web domain for your idea immediately.
THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

IT’S LONELY AT THE TOP.
CHAPTER 4: IT’S LONELY AT THE TOP

While using the bathroom at a sports bar, I came across a posted article about Allen Iverson. It was in this unlikely place and from this bad boy athlete that I learned a great lesson. In the article was a quote from Iverson that went something like….

“There are a million people that love me, and a Billion people that hate me. I think about those that love me, and keep it moving.”

This statement is the perfect acceptance speech for one that understands the next commandment.

It’s lonely at the top.

If you look around yourself and notice you have a lot fewer peers than you used to, it may be a sign that you’re getting closer to being successful in your field. Don’t let your raggedy, good-for-nothing friends make you feel bad because you don’t call and hang around them any more. That’s the old crabs in a barrel routine; they would rather pull you down, than see you get out!

Understand this:

The masses of our world’s population are followers, not leaders; consumers, not producers; victims, not victors. They watch too much TV, listen to too much radio and believe everything they see and hear. This phenomenon is no accident. In a capitalist democracy it is an absolute necessity!

Think about your Junior High School years:
As youth, we had the tendency to follow the crowd. We often suffered from the effects of peer pressure. Most of us sought to “fit in”. For the intelligent, well-behaved child, this often meant acting ignorant; and doing things that led to trouble, bad health and lower achievement.

Well, the real world of adults isn’t much different. But now, the “crowd” that many of us once sought to emulate is broke, troubled by legal issues, riddled with diseases and see little hope for a better future. **Who wants to be a part of that crowd?**

As you become increasingly successful, wealthy and wise; you will find that you have to distance yourself from your homies of the past. Don’t let them run that “You forgot where you came from” speech.

You remember where you come from, but you also know where you are going. So get ready, cuz it’s lonely at the top!

**LIFE LESSON:**

*There is a price to pay for being successful, and most people don't want to pay it. That's why there's Lotto and a whole bunch of infomercials on TV late at night that sell you unrealistic ways to achieve “easy” success.*

*I manage several musical artists. Every time we reach a certain level of success (such as putting an album out, booking a major show or filming a DVD) other artists approach us begging to be managed by our management team. They see the effects, and want them too. So I direct them right to the cause that made the effect happen.*
I invite them to join the team, but on a lower level than they expect. For example: I tell them that we only have room for a hype man when I know they want to be the main rapper. Or I tell them that we need a road manager when I know they would like to be a main manager. Am I just being mean and vindictive? No, I'm requesting that they go through the same process that everyone on the team went through to get where we're at. How does one know that they can handle the pressures of being on the top unless they've been through trials and tribulations?

When you climb to the top, you're forming muscles, courage and wherewithal that will aid you in staying at the top. That's why it's so lonely up there; because most people aren't strong enough to climb the mountain of success. It IS lonely at the top, and I'd rather be alone with my hard working self, than with a group of lazy tag-a-longs. The top of the pyramid is pointed for a reason.

- Big Tah

**LIFE LESSON:**

Often times, you hear people say that it is lonely at the top, but what you don't hear people elaborate on is that it is just as lonely getting to the top. I am not at the peak of my career yet; however, I still experience loneliness in my quest to reach this point. As an Entertainment Attorney, I have encountered everything from men who reject me due to my earning potential to people being intimidated by my career to people asking me to compromise myself in order to get ahead. I have heard successful women speak of this before, but there is nothing like experiencing it
for yourself. Despite these obstacles and barriers, I continue on the journey even when it means doing so alone.

I have had to leave certain things and people behind in order to accomplish my goals. This has often left me alone to conquer unfamiliar territory, but that is a sacrifice that I willingly make to maximize my potential. Even some of my loved ones do not fully understand the path that I am on. At the end of day, I realize that trailblazers venture into unfamiliar places to make their mark even when it requires the dreadful loneliness that most people fear. It is lonely at the top; and also during the journey to the top as well, but sometimes it is the journey that makes the destination worth it all!

- Keisha R. Perry, Esq.

TASKS:

1) Make your haters, your MOTIVATORS!
2) Seek QUALITY in relationships, not quantity.
3) Find peace and happiness in solitude.
4) Find a support group of like-minded individuals.
5) In times of loneliness, seek companionship in your work.
6) Love yourself enough to be happy BY yourself.
THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

SUCCESS- WHERE OPPORTUNITY MEETS PREPARATION.
“Tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today”. – Malcolm X

Everybody wants to be successful. The question is: Are you ready for opportunity when it finally knocks? Will you answer the door with your briefcase, laptop, cell phone and palm pilot ready to roll? Or will you be caught in your pajamas, yawning with cold in your eyes?

“To be prepared is EVERYTHING.” (as told to me by my father).

Let’s look at the entertainment/media industries. Many people in these industries are in pursuit of receiving that ever elusive, life changing “deal”. (Record deal, label deal, distribution deal, publishing deal, modeling deal…etc.) Most artists spend countless hours perfecting their craft, but few take the necessary steps to fully prepare themselves for the very opportunity that they seek. They may be talented, but most people in the entertainment/media industries are undoubtedly NOT READY FOR THE BUSINESS OF “THE DEAL”.

Don’t put the horse before the carriage.

Whatever the goal, there are always requirements that must be met first. People have a tendency of focusing on the goal, without meeting the necessary requirements. Before a “deal” can be struck, there are many things that have to be in order. The more things a person has in order, the sooner a deal can occur. Without these things, there will be NO favorable deal.
Here are a few things that businesses (even artists) need in order to execute a speedy and fair deal: copyright, trademark, business account, legal counsel, releases, clearances, resume, presskit, professional photo, bio, work samples, reliable computer/ internet access, phone and transportation.

Are you ready for success?

All too often, the opportunity passes people by, OR they get offered a “deal” that is certainly not in their favor. Either way, many fail to be successful, because they are simply not prepared.

LIFE LESSON:

Recently I have been associated with several California companies that strive to create Urban based distribution deals for audio & video projects. With this in mind I have been soliciting projects from independent companies and producers for direct to DVD distribution. I came upon a project that had ALL of the features needed to become a major seller. BIG name Hip Hop artists, good filming techniques, strong soundtrack and a built in consumer following for sales.

I approached the company, had them send me a screener and forwarded their information to my clients in California. I also asked the company if they had ALL of the paperwork together to make this deal happen. Clearances on the individuals shot on camera, clearances on the music and ownership (copyright) of the material. Of course the company told me that they had everything I needed especially since I had the money to make this deal happen.
This company was offered a six-figure advance, a mid six-figure marketing budget and a guarantee for assistance in foreign markets. The contracts were sent and I started waiting for the company to send the required clearances so the check could be cut.

The company did not send in the materials or the contract for over 4 months. Upon further inquiry I finally found out that the person who shot the film never got anyone to sign off on the clearances, had never sent in a copyright form on the movie and had not published or cleared any of the music. ALL OF THIS AFTER THE DEAL HAD BEEN CUT.

Needless to say this project has died a slow death for it can never go to a mass audience. My relationship with the company has deteriorated based on the initial lies that they told and the distributor does not want to work with this company again.

Without the basic preparation this company missed their 15 minutes of fame and thousands of dollars in royalties.

- Allen Johnston

“People don’t plan to fail, they FAIL TO PLAN!”

TASKS:

1) ALWAYS carry a pen.
2) Carry a pen and paper to ALL meetings, workshops and conferences.
3) Keep business cards and press kits handy.
4) Create a folder on your desktop (and laptop) for all your important promotional/marketing materials. (including bio, discography, history, pictures, ads, reviews, letters…..etc).

5) Make sure all legal requirements are met. (copyright, trademark, contracts, releases, permissions…..etc).

Hotep was successful in getting his books into a major chain of bookstores (without the help of a major publisher or distributor) only because he was prepared with the necessary requirements. Look at the books they felt were comparable!
GET THE REST OF THE HUSTLER’S 10 COMMANDMENTS!!!

…and the other books from the classic Hustler’s Empowerment Trilogy; all found in The Hustler’s Bible!
FOR THE HARDCORE HUSTLER...

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