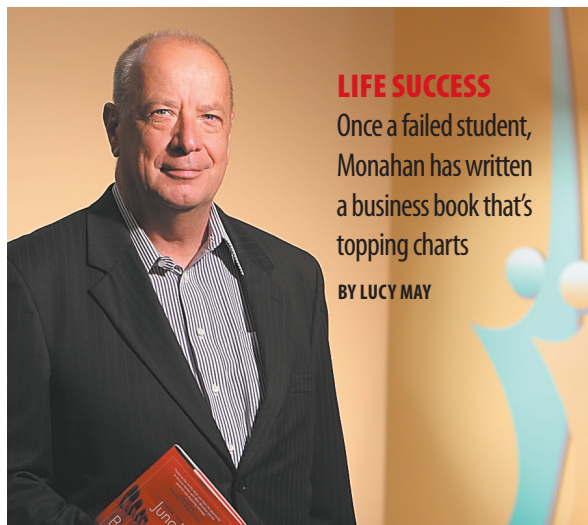


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BUSINESS COURIER

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To a one-of-a-kind résumé, CEO can now add 'author'

Vietnam vet Mike Monahan's book hits Inc. best-seller list

BY LUCY MAY
STAFF REPORTER

Mike Monahan grew up thinking he was stupid and worthless, haunted by the fact that he failed third grade.

But, as CEO of West Chester-based Life Success Seminars, he's become a man who helps others discover their own worth and lead more successful lives.

It's been a heck of a ride for Monahan, who grew up poor in Price Hill, always had trouble in school and barely graduated from high school. And he's written about it in his book, "From the Jungle to the Boardroom," which was released in April.

"When the book was published, it was my greatest fear," said Monahan, 63. "I didn't know how I would be judged."

But the book sold 11,000 copies by the end of its first week on the market and was No. 1 on the Inc. Business Book Bestseller list in May.

In the book, published by Cincinnati-based Beacon Publishing, Monahan tells about his tour of duty as an Army scout-dog handler during the Vietnam War and how he learned to cope with the sometimes paralyzing fear and loneliness of that experience as a young man. After the war, he worked unhappily for 20 years as a union pipefitter before his wife, Nancy, discovered Life Success Seminars,

'The results of your life are based on the decisions you make.'

Mike Monahan
Life Success Seminars

an organization that helps participants work through problems in their work and family relationships to have happier lives. He participated in a seminar, too, and was hooked. He first volunteered for the organization and eventually became its lead facilitator and CEO. It's a job he's held for 17 years.

FEAR AND LONELINESS

His book compares the feeling he had being on patrol during wartime to the fear and loneliness that people face every day in their jobs and relationships. And, in his plain-spoken style, Monahan stresses the same lessons that Life Success Seminars delivers: People who want to succeed in business and life must face their fears and learn how to prevent those fears from driving their actions.

Monahan himself always felt he wasn't smart enough because school was such a struggle for him. He failed third grade, but he probably truly failed just about every year because school wasn't a good fit, he said.

He learned through Life Success that his gift is the ability to take complex things and make them simple, something that is increasingly important as the world becomes ever more complicated.

Realizing that was an important step in giving Monahan the confidence to write his book, he said.

"The book's about decision-making," Monahan said. "The results of your life are based on the decisions you make. And those decisions are often based on unresolved past decisions."

The book is different from other business books, however, because Monahan's own life experiences are so different from those of other business book authors, said Susan

Branscome, president of Q10 Triad Capital Advisors, who has attended Life Success Seminars.

"It's not like a Harvard Business kind of a read," said Branscome, who chairs the Life Success Seminars foundation board.

Indeed, how many other business authors write about literally being bitten in the rear end by his scout dog?

'NOTHING TO LOSE'

Business consultant and author Matthew Kelly, who is president of Beacon Publishing, said he decided to publish Monahan's book because he thought the message would resonate with readers.

"He's a very talented guy, he has a message and he has a platform," said Kelly, who attended a Life Success seminar himself several years ago. "I'm a fan of Life Success, and I think it's good for Life Success to be portable in that way."

Kelly said he's confident the book will continue to sell well.

"Ninety percent of books published sell less than 5,000 copies," he said, and this book already has sold more than twice that number.

There are 11,000 business books published each year, according to 800-CEO-Read, a Milwaukee company that promotes business books and specializes in bulk orders of them.

Monahan hopes his keeps selling. He's written two other books that haven't been published yet. And his goal is to write 25 books and sell a total of 12 million copies.

"I've got nothing to lose," he said. "I'm on a mission in life, which is to prove I'm OK."