



SECRET MILLIONAIRE

SUNDAYS 8|7c

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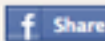


Meet the Millionaires

Find out more about the Millionaires! Why did they get involved in the show? What did they hope to learn? How did they think it would change their lives?



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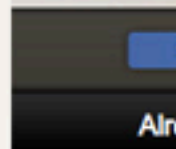
Steve Kaplan



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Steve Kaplan

How did you become a Millionaire?

I was an average student in school but always wanted to do things on my own so at 23 I created a marketing/advertising agency and discovered that I had a true passion for business and leading people. I started with no money but worked my tail off to grow my company into a leader in the industry and made my first million at age 29. A couple years later I sold my agency to a large company. I remained with the new company in a leadership role and expanded my business across 20 countries before selling it again as part of the larger company. I currently have the best job in the world and work with individuals and small businesses helping them become successful.

Is there anything that would surprise viewers to learn about you?

The most surprising thing, really, is that I'm a millionaire at all. I was only an average student in school, not very studious, and I didn't even read my first book until I was 23 (faked it a lot in school) but have gone on to write two *NY Times* best-selling books, one of which was named "Business Book of the Year." I got kicked out of college after my sophomore year (had to transfer) because of my participation in a funny (or so I thought at the time) prank, yet my life's work and business now are dedicated to helping individuals and small businesses become successful.

I believe that there's no fun in loving things that can't love you back. I spend my money on experiences, and enjoying time with family and friends. In fact my nieces and nephews had no idea I was a millionaire until the show.

Why did you want to be a part of the show?

When I first heard about the show I had just finished touring the country talking about success to tens of thousands of college students in large arenas and in one-on-one settings. I personally benefitted so much from the very candid one-on-one student interactions where I learned about the aspirations, dreams and concerns of this generation of young people. When the opportunity to be part of *Secret Millionaire* came to me I jumped in with both feet without hesitation because I learned that interacting with people in hands on, one-on-one or small group settings is a great way to get involved. I have given a lot of money to charities over the years and honestly haven't volunteered my time or connected with any of the people or causes I was supporting. I am hoping that through *Secret Millionaire* I will experience human connection with people in need of my help.

Was there anything you were hoping to learn about yourself?

I have made it a personal goal to look for an ongoing relationship with at least one of the organizations I will be meeting. Most likely the experience I am about to embark on will be full of heartache, tragedy and perhaps even frustration. I hope that I can dig deep inside myself and find the fortitude to stay positive and not add to the negativity of the situation. I will also try to REALLY listen to what those around me are saying so that I can fully understand their needs and hopefully determine how to best help them beyond the money donation both now and on an ongoing basis. It will be a huge challenge, but I'm definitely up for it.

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We also talked to Steve about his experience after filming the show:

What surprised you most about your experience as a "Secret Millionaire"?

I've traveled around the world and have seen third world poverty many times. I am familiar with hunger and random violence. As I made my way through South Side Chicago I didn't expect to be impacted on such a deep and personal level by what was happening around me. It wasn't the boarded-up buildings, barred windows and vacant businesses that shocked me, the overall danger, police and ambulance sirens blasting every 6 minutes or even the extreme sadness from the senseless loss children's lives. The thing that did me in was the fact that those in the

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boarded-up buildings, barred windows and vacant businesses that shocked me, the overall danger, police and ambulance sirens blasting every 6 minutes or even the extreme sadness from the senseless loss children's lives. The thing that did me in was the fact that those in the community- kids and adults alike-accepted this as a way of life and felt that attempts to change were futile. This shouldn't be tolerated in America. Then along came Kids Off The Block and Ms. Diane and she restored my faith that there are some people on the South Side of Chicago who are standing up and doing something to change the situation. I never expected to feel so vested in this community so quickly but I'm so glad that it happened.

How did you feel about the experience living "undercover"?

I love my life and am so fortunate to have the family, friends and the support that I do, however; I enjoyed "unplugging" for the week and focusing on the organizations and people I was meeting. I almost messed up when talking to Judson. He is so passionate about his charity, and since my work helps small businesses and individuals find their passion and become successful, I found myself trying to sneak in a few tips. Chicago is my home so I was worried about running into someone I knew and sure enough one day while driving to various hotels for pick ups with Bin Donated I saw six different people that I knew including one of the hotel managers where I have given several speeches. Luckily a head down and a look away did the trick. I believe that the only way to get a real feel for the organization is to volunteer undercover. This way I was able to see everything and everybody as they really are, because they were not reacting to who I was, which allowed me to better determine how I might be able to best help them.

How did you feel living on such a limited amount of money for a week?

Maybe I shouldn't confess to this but I love cereal for dinner, noodles and soup in a cup, a couple of scrambled eggs, or a peanut butter sandwich and I'm good to go. The difficulty for me wasn't the food. It was the reality that having no money means no entertainment. I love the movies but had no money to go, I love eating out even at a fast food place but I had no bucks for that either. I really experienced how the formula of no money + no employment = plenty of idle time and in South Side Chicago or anywhere else for that matter is a recipe for disaster.

Has your life changed since this experience? In what ways?

I met so many awesome people I really couldn't believe it. This was completely unexpected. Since this show I have already been back to Kids Off the Block to work with Ms Diane and some of the kids on building the basketball court and have also met several times with Judson at Bin Donated to give a bit of advice. It might sound like I am continuing these relationships to benefit them but in actuality it's a selfish act because every time I leave them I feel like a million bucks.

Do you have any suggestions or advice for someone who wants to become involved in helping their community?

The three organizations where I was volunteering couldn't have been more different from one another. But there was a common thread -- DOING THE LITTLE THINGS. Whether it was H.O.M.E. fixing locks, changing a bulb or fixing a ceiling fan in the house of an elderly woman who couldn't afford for anyone else to do it, Bin Donated collecting half-used shampoo bottles from a hotel and giving it to a homeless person so they could shower; or Ms Diane from Boys Off The Block just listening to the problems of kids in her neighborhood, these are the little things that make a huge difference, RIGHT NOW TODAY! These are also the things that anybody can do because they require little or no money whatsoever-just sharing a little time. So dig in and do something, even if it's something little.

Any other final comments you'd like to add?

I am fortunate to have had countless adventures and many wonderful experiences but I have to say that up until now, except for the birth of my two kids my time on *Secret Millionaire* has been the most satisfying and impactful thing I have done. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for inspiring me with this opportunity