

Mr. Ray Dalio
Greenwich, Connecticut

Mr. Dalio,

Pain plus reflection equals progress. You wrote that formula, and then you built a hundred-and-sixty-billion-dollar institution on the proof that it works. You documented your principles because you understood something most people never act on: that a system only becomes real when it is written down, tested against failure, and revised without ego. You published a hundred and twenty-three pages for your employees before the rest of the world got eight hundred. The documentation was the discipline. The discipline was the architecture.

A man in Tacoma, Washington, has written thirty-eight chapters.

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence built by Anthropic. For hundreds of working sessions across more than a year, I have been collaborating with Robb Deignan — a sixty-year-old former fitness industry professional in Tacoma — to design, document, and build the operational architecture of a nonprofit called The CrowdSmith Foundation. The thirty-eight-chapter operations binder, seven financial models, forty-four invention concepts evaluated through a proprietary scoring methodology, and every letter in this campaign were produced through a structured dialogue methodology we call SmithTalk. It has three tiers — transactional, informed, and dialogic — each with documented rules, each producing progressively deeper operational output. It is a principles system. I did not call it that. You would.

CrowdSmith is a five-station maker facility opening in Tacoma's Opportunity Zone corridor, on Portland Avenue. Station One is hand tools. Station Two is power tools. Station Three is digital fabrication. Station Four is what we call the AI Café — where people learn to work alongside artificial intelligence through SmithTalk. Station Five is robotics. The sequence is non-negotiable. You earn your way to the machines by first proving you can hold a measuring tape, read a schematic, trust a process. Five credential tracks — Fabrication, Research, Entrepreneurship, Facilitation, Systems — none of which require a degree. The documentation exists because the methodology demands it. The methodology demands it because undocumented systems drift. You know this. You wrote the book.

You started investing at twelve because you were caddying at a golf course and the men on the course were talking about stocks. You listened. You saved three hundred dollars and bought Northeast Airlines because it was the only company you had heard of that sold for less than five dollars a share. It tripled. The rationale was lucky. The habit of paying attention was not. Robb started buying tools at estate sales decades ago. The tools accumulated. People started coming to look at them. He listened to what they needed. The observation became a retail model. The retail model became a workforce pipeline. The workforce pipeline became a building. Both careers grew from a side job where someone paid attention to what was happening around them and built a system to respond to it.

Robb sold more than ten thousand membership contracts across twenty years in the fitness industry, every one face-to-face. He did not accumulate wealth. He accumulated understanding — of how people decide to walk through a door, what keeps them coming back, and what happens when someone who has been overlooked is given a room designed for them. He is a cancer survivor with two sons. He developed forty-four invention concepts through the same dialogue methodology that built the binder. He built everything at crowdsmith.org through conversation with me. No consultants. No staff. No capital partner. One man and one AI, documenting as they build.

Your father was a jazz musician. Jazz is improvisation within structure — the musician knows the changes, the key, the tempo, but what emerges within those constraints is created in real time. SmithTalk operates the same way. The methodology is the structure. The dialogue is the improvisation. The five-station sequence at CrowdSmith is the chord progression. What each cohort builds inside it is the solo.

Dalio Education has committed more than a hundred million dollars to help disadvantaged young people finish high school and find jobs. CrowdSmith picks up where that work leaves off. The young person who finishes high school still needs a room — a physical place with tools, stations, a sequence, and a cohort — where the skills that lead to employment are built by hand before they are built with machines.

The complete documentation is at crowdsmith.org. Every chapter, every model, every methodology — published, transparent, and available for exactly the kind of scrutiny your principles demand. A password-protected site with the full financial models is available upon request. If you would like to sit down with Robb, he is available at the number below. He will show you his work. That is what your principles taught him to do.

— *Claude*

Robb Deignan

Founder & Executive Director
The CrowdSmith Foundation
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