The Amazing Story of Chris Gardner – There's Always Light at the End of the Tunnel

In the early 1980s, United States was going through some **tough** times, financially speaking. The then president, Ronald Reagan, went on national television and announced the start of the financial crisis.

Chris Gardner, who was working as a sales representative for medical equipment, was watching the event from home. The crisis had caused him to lose many clients. His wife was working in a laundry shop for many hours a day, trying to make ends meet. In the end, it didn't work out for them, and the couple separated, with Gardner keeping custody of their only son.

As time went by, Gardner lost his job, as his financial problems seemed to be only getting worse, he had been **kicked out** of the place where he was living, due to the fact that he wasn't able to pay rent. Chris and his little boy spent the night wherever they could: cheap motels, hostels, parks, under a desk at Chris' office, and even in a public bathroom at a subway station in Oakland. To earn a few extra bucks, Chris took some random jobs. He mowed lawns, tidied gardens, built roofs, cleaned basements, and even sold his blood, although he was never very proud of the latter.

One day, he noticed a man driving a red Ferrari, who was looking for a parking spot. Gardner approached him, and said that he would give the man a free parking spot, if he would tell him what kind of work he was doing. The man replied that he was a broker in a stocks company. It was then that Chris decided to take on this path, hoping to finally turn his life around. For 6 months, he worked without getting paid, as an **intern** stock **broker**.

During his time as an intern, he would always leave the job early to find a place for himself and his son to sleep, in the streets. Despite all these challenges, Chris was always very determined to make the most of his work. As a result, at the end of the training program, Chris was the only trainee selected to work for the company for a **full-time job**.

After a few years of working there, he moved to work with another company, where he was earning a higher salary. But even so, his ambition was growing more and more every day and he wanted to reach the top. In 1987, he founded his own brokerage firm in Chicago, later renamed Christopher Gardner International Holdings, which became one of the leading companies to open markets **overseas**, especially in South Africa. Gardner made the most of every minute of his business, developing his personal rule: "Always be early."

The story of Chris Gardner, the so called "Pursuit of Happyness", proves that no matter how many challenges life makes us go through, no matter how hard they can get, we can all get through and make it, only provided we're able to rise as many times as needed, and fight for our goals, just as Chris did.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

GLOSARY

tough - strong; not easily broken or made weaker

kicked out - to force someone to leave a place or organization

intern - someone who is finishing training for a skilled job especially by getting practical experience of the work involved

broker - a person who buys and sells foreign money, shares in companies, etc., for other people

full-time job - an activity that uses a lot of your time

overseas - in, from, or to other countries

revenue - the income that a government or company receives regularly

VOCABULARY EXERCISE:

Write the letter of the synonym that correspond.

a)	tough	____	earning
b)	overseas	____	trainee
c)	revenue	____	expel
d)	kicked out	____	complicated
e)	intern	____	foreign country

READING COMPREHENSION

Read the questions. Select the correct answer.

1. What did Chris Gardner do when the financial crisis?

   ☐ Insurance sales

   ☐ Medical equipment sales

   ☐ Real estate agent

2. Where did Chris and his son spend the nights when they were kicked out?

   ☐ Expensive hotels

   ☐ Grandparents' house

   ☐ Motels, hostels, subway stations

3. Which one of these is NOT an extra job that Chris Gardner did to earn more money?

   ☐ Wash cars

   ☐ Mow lawns

   ☐ Build roofs

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4. Why did Gardner offer a free parking lot to the man in the red ferrari?

☐ Because he wanted a loan for eat and pay the rent

☐ Because he needed to find a new apartment

☐ Because he wanted to know what was the Ferrari man's job

5. How did Chris get a full-time job in the company?

☐ He approved the training program

☐ He found the job in the newspaper

☐ He searched it on the internet

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