

## Mr. Motivator

Author and motivational guru Dr. Camilo Cruz teaches the Latino community leadership skills and how to achieve the American dream.



**Why did you choose *La Vaca (Once Upon a Cow)* as the title of your latest self-help book?**

The book is a metaphor for how to overcome mediocrity and get rid of habits or attitudes that often hold us back in life. The cow is unwittingly the central character in the story. Metaphors have always been popular with self-help books. Thirty years ago it was *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*; three years ago it was *Who Moved My Cheese?*—both very successful and inspiring. But self-help literature in Spanish hasn't had as many examples of metaphors that taught a lesson. In my book, the cow represents all of the excuses, justifications, and pretexts that keep us from enjoying life to the fullest. I wanted to show readers what awaits us when we eliminate those limiting beliefs. And I think the appeal of this book lies, primarily, in that it avoids sermons and finger pointing.

**You're an avid public speaker and constantly tour nationally, spreading your message for happiness and optimism. How do you approach your public presentations?**

People often ask me whether I consider myself a writer, a trainer, a scientist, or an entrepreneur. My answer? I'd like to think of myself as a cheerleader. When I'm on stage in front of thousands of people who paid to see a presentation that will empower them with new insight for living a happier, more successful life, the last thing I want to do is focus on what's wrong or missing in their lives. My approach has always been, let's look at the possibilities; let's concentrate on what's working in your life; let's focus on your strengths and not your weaknesses. This work takes on a deeper significance coming from a Latino author and speaker. Most immigrants come to this country pursuing a dream. They have drive and motivation. They need support through tough times, through the loneliness and nostalgia that sometimes accompanies the immigrant experience. I'm not about being "realistic." I'm about being optimistic and challenging the reader to dream big.

**Which has been your best-selling book so far? Why do you think it touched such a nerve in the U.S. Hispanic community?**

I'd have to say it's been *Guía para triunfar en los Estados Unidos (In Search of the American Dream)*. It's not only a best seller but also a long seller. I think the appeal of this book is that while the demographics, professional experience, and

background of the Latino community have changed, dreams and aspirations remain the same. We all want to succeed and live fulfilling lives. Whether we're third-generation Latinos or newly arrived, none of us is content with just surviving and paying the bills; we want to live our American dream. This book is a step-by-step guide on how the United States works and how to use the available resources to pursue those dreams. The failures and disappointments we face as Latinos aren't, for the most part, due to discrimination or the language barrier, but rather to a lack of a clear plan of action for accomplishing our dreams.

**Why were you and best-selling author Brian Tracy a good fit?**

I am very excited about our upcoming book *Piense como millonario (Think Like a Millionaire)*. We became good friends and since he wanted to have a positive impact on Hispanic readers, we agreed to collaborate on a couple of books that would address some of the fundamental concerns of Latinos; this is the first one. It's a privilege to work with one of the most prolific U.S. authors in the field of personal and professional development. Financial stability is a very important part of the American dream, but Latinos have certain deep-rooted beliefs about money that sometimes prevent them from achieving financial independence. I know this upcoming book is going to touch a nerve.

**Tell us about your work with public libraries and about LIDER (Latino Institute for Development, Education & Responsibility)**

LIDER is a nonprofit organization that focuses on empowering Latinos, placing a particular emphasis on education and literacy. For 15 years, I've been visiting bookstores and libraries across the country, giving presentations and participating in events with organizations that serve our community. Many librarians have expressed their concern about the lack of Spanish-language titles in their collections. Some communities have 70% or higher Hispanic population, yet less than 6% of their collections are in Spanish. So two years ago, we developed an outreach program to bring Spanish-language books and audiobooks to public libraries and to improve the services librarians provide to Latinos. LIDER seeks public and private funding in an attempt to make the government and corporate America realize that they must take a more proactive stand on educating and empowering Latinos.

**Editor's Note:** Cruz's *La Vaca (Once Upon a Cow)* is available from Taller del Éxito and is reviewed on p. 46.

