

"In a way my experience and the circumstances when I was young forced me to make up my own mind. I had no role model to look up to and it made me think for myself. At the same time, I felt like I didn't have anything or anyone to fall back on, which gave me the extra motivation to work hard and to achieve."

Today, Richard, who has joined the ranks of the BRW Top 200 richest Australians, is definitely enjoying the rewards of his years of hard work. Far from the old truck and tents where he used to live with his other siblings more than 40 years ago, Richard is now at home in Monaco and London where he spends most of his time with his wife and three kids.

In between his difficult childhood and on his way to Monaco Richard managed to study economics at the University of New South Wales. With a generous scholarship from the Reserve Bank of Australia, Richard graduated with first class honours that would prove a turning point in his life.

Armed with his outstanding academic credentials, he joined Bankers Trust Australia's derivatives trading desk where he would end up being one of the biggest single money earners.

Richard's exceptional performance at Bankers Trust Australia proved to be his ticket to yet another stage of his lucrative career in the financial markets

. In 1993 he joined a Bermuda-based international hedge fund where he honed his trading skills and put his own developed trading systems to ultimate use.

From Bermuda Richard looked to other international markets and opportunities that would not limit him on the trading floor. He started trading currencies, treasury and would later on invest his personal money on start up companies.

At last count Richard must have backed over 50 start-up companies, including some technology firms on the lead up to the tech boom in the early 2000. Some of the companies he backed went bust when the tech bubble eventually burst.

However, his early wins and profitable investment put him in good stead.

Despite his investments in various start up companies and other ventures, Richard said he is not a tough businessman, at least not in the sense the word tough is being flaunted in the business or corporate world.

"It is a tough environment out there because there are far less opportunities or valuable investment vehicles to find. But that doesn't mean you have to be tough or be unscrupulous in doing business," Richard said.

He said he's happy that despite his investment in various companies (at last count it shows that he must have invested in at least 50 start up and other fledgling companies in the past 10 years) he hasn't made any enemies. This he said is quite an enviable track record in the business world.

Though these may all sound too good to be true, Richard admitted that the road to his success has not always been smooth. He had his share of rough patches and bumps along the way. In his book "Taming the Lion", he shared some of his trading and investment strategies.

