

Hello everyone. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute.

Happy New Year! 2020 is behind us and we're into a new year. I hope you're off to a fast start and everything is going really well for you. I want to start off the new year talking about why we need to stand up for free enterprise. Elections are behind us, and there's all kinds of turmoil and bitterness and rancor about things that happened. But in terms of us, as business leaders, I think we really need to stand up for free enterprise. Some of this blog comes from material from the Chief Executive Network Annual Awards, in the fourth quarter of 2020. Free enterprise is, is not a perfect system, but it's like what Churchill said about democracy. "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others." Free enterprise is the worst form of commerce, is the worst form of organizing a society.

But it's, except for all the others, right? Three facts that the Chief Executive Network talked about in their Annual Awards, and these are really remarkable things that can only be attributed to the spread of free enterprise around the world. The first thing is, since, I think it was 1990, the percentage of people in the world living in extreme poverty went from 37% more than one-third of the human beings on earth, to about 11%. All right. Now, what does that mean in terms of human beings? That's 1.7 billion people who now are not living in extreme poverty. They've been lifted out of extreme poverty. That is amazing. It's incredible. The second thing, in 1990, according to World Health, 12.5 million children died at the age of five or earlier. Okay. Now that figure has been cut by 81%.

What does that mean in terms of human beings? That means 10 million children, 10 million children have had a shot at life now that they wouldn't have 20 or 30 years ago. That's unbelievable. The third thing is that 90% worldwide now, 90% of children, both boys and girls, think about that for a minute, 90% of children around the world now get to go to school. They have a chance to be educated and they have a chance to advance themselves. All of those things can be attributed to a wider adaptation around the world of free market principles. Sometimes, we feel like we have to apologize for being successful. We have to apologize for having successful businesses and accumulating personal wealth and helping other people accumulate personal wealth. We really should be standing up for free enterprise. We have a unique responsibility as business leaders.

Let me read from the Chief Executive Network. Too many people have become convinced that capitalism is broken. It's irredeemable and it needs to be replaced. They never say with what. Who knows what they have in mind? But we as leaders, know that the opposite is true. We know that free markets are a force for good. We know that they have the capacity to provide more social mobility, innovation, choice, and prosperity than any other force in human history. We have an obligation, a unique obligation as stewards of this system, to ensure that it's fair and open to people of all races and creeds, that it provides mobility for all, that we're educating and empowering others to achieve their highest ideals. That's what we do as entrepreneurs and business leaders. That's the opportunity that we have. In 2021, this is my new year challenge for you. Let us all as leaders aspire to be worthy of the trust, faith and confidence that others place in us.

I'd like to hear what your resolutions are for the new year. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thank you.