

\$1 million

Now that we have your attention, what's the infatuation with that number?

By Edward Iwata
USA TODAY

Call it millionaire mania, the get-rich-quick syndrome gone wild.

What's with our obsession with bagging that magic \$1 million? Ever since money became our mantra, dreamers and schemers have fixated on a million bucks as their most-prized jackpot. If you land that elusive fortune, or even come close, you've truly made it.

"In the 1950s and 1960s, having a good job and owning a home was the American Dream," says Loral Lange-meier, author of best seller *The Millionaire Maker* and head of financial consulting firm Live Out Loud in San Rafael, Calif. "Now, being a millionaire is the new status symbol. It means you've arrived."

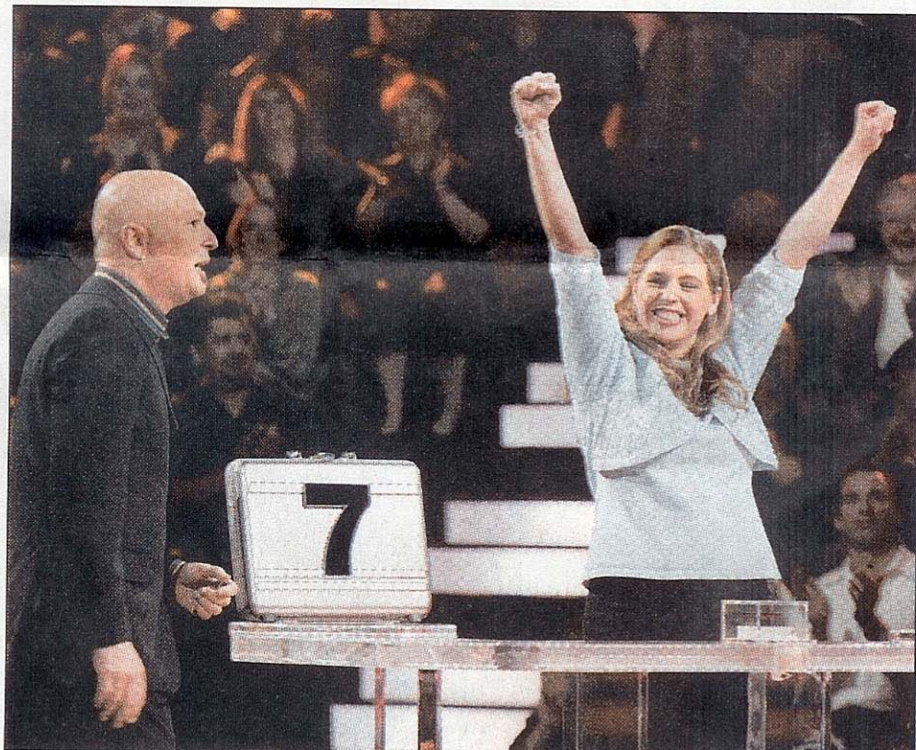
Millionaire madness fills our popular culture, literature and business lore. Just look around:

► **TV hits and best sellers.** NBC's *Deal or No Deal* and *America's Got Talent*, plus other shows with \$1 million prizes, are among the biggest hits in recent years, as a nation of couch potatoes live out the fantasy from their living rooms.

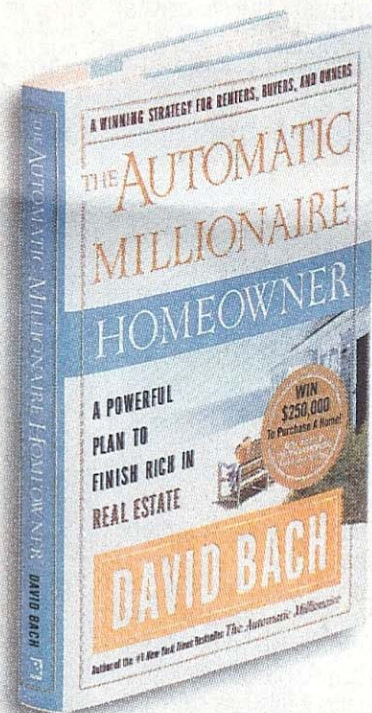
How-to investment books tell readers how to attain the moneyed life. Long-running best sellers include: *The Automatic Millionaire* by David Bach, *Secrets of the Millionaire Mind* by T. Harv Eker and *The Millionaire Next Door* by Thomas Stanley and William Danko.

► **Get-rich-quick seminars.** Starry-eyed fans fill convention halls and sports arenas to hear success secrets from business and motivational speakers. This year, 119 investment shows will draw 16,000 exhibitors and hundreds of thousands of people, says associate publisher Michael Hughes at *Tradeshow Week* magazine and custom research.

Among the most popular: the Real Estate & Wealth Expos by The Learning Annex educational firm, which spotlight



By Trae Patton, NBC



TV and books: Popular shows such as *Deal or No Deal*, above, with host Howie Mandel who oversees contestants like Becky Venable, and best-selling books such as *The Automatic Millionaire*, left, by David Bach ride the trend.

"We all aspire to be prosperous, to go from rags to riches, to attain the American Dream."

— Paul Schervish,
director of Boston College's
Center on Wealth and Philanthropy



See what it will take for you to become a millionaire at money.usatoday.com

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