

Foreword

For me, entrepreneurship is a religion, a way of life, a passion. I think I have always been an entrepreneur at heart, even before I knew what it really meant or had heard the word used in business. In my corporate life, many of my bosses probably thought I was just a pain, the squeaky wheel who was always trying to break, bend, or change the rules. In retrospect, I now realize those are the very same qualities that have helped me succeed as an entrepreneur: the scrappiness, resourcefulness, healthy dose of skepticism, ability to question authority without backing down, persistence, sense of humor, and humility. It takes some of each, I think, to see the world differently, discover new ways to solve old dilemmas, or redefine problems and solutions altogether.

What makes these entrepreneurs tick? Why do they keep picking themselves up when they get knocked down? What causes them to try again? In *Entrepreneurship Strategy: Changing Patterns in New Venture Creation, Growth, and Reinvention*, you will get to see a range of entrepreneurs in action. Each has a unique style, his or her own journey but there are many traits that are shared. Some entrepreneurs started their companies when another door closed; others had a burning idea that needed a home; all set out to change the world in some important way.

I took one entrepreneurial management class in business school, and we reviewed case studies of entrepreneurs in all shapes and sizes. There was no textbook for the class, only their personal journeys and stories of their successes and failures from which to draw lessons. Some entrepreneurs were self-trained; others had degrees; all were passionate about what they were doing. Whether you are an entrepreneur yourself, have one in your family, or just wondered what all the hype was about, it is reassuring to see that there is some science behind the art of entrepreneurship. Although it may seem very “seat of the pants” at times, there are stages and common themes most entrepreneurs address as they are taking their vision from concept to reality. Drs. Gundry and Kickul’s book shows many entrepreneurial paths, starting from very different places. There is no single way to be an entrepreneur; lots of roads can get you there.

Each entrepreneur had to validate his or her idea with the target audience, whether through formal market research or not. All had a defining moment when they knew their business was “real” or had to course-correct to survive. Once the market is validated, competitors start to pay attention so entrepreneurs have to stay

relevant and ahead of the pack to have a competitive offer. An entrepreneur never sleeps long enough. The wheels are always turning, but that is what makes it so fun and exciting; entrepreneurs never get bored.

Entrepreneurship is part art, part science, always intoxicating. Once you get bitten, it is hard to go back to a desk job. Corporate America has its perks, but entrepreneurs tend to upset the apple cart in most corporations—unless they started the company as did Richard Branson, Donald Trump, Oprah Winfrey, the list goes on. What makes people successful, inspiring, and magnetic entrepreneurs also makes them tough to manage and direct as employees. At some point in their careers, entrepreneurs put their money where their mouth is and do it their way. Whether they are motivated by fear, guilt, greed, or passion, they are indeed motivated to succeed, and the real ones don't stop until they do.

From the very first chapter of this book, you will find an underlying model to help budding entrepreneurs add to their skills by using the Innovator's Toolkit exercises. Understanding the book's Strategic Reflection Points and completing the Strategy in Action checklist help to increase the probability of the new venture becoming a success. These things take time, however, and Drs. Gundry and Kickul's book gives you the framework, tools, pitfalls, and success stories to help navigate and demystify the process. Entrepreneurship is a journey that lasts a lifetime for many of us who were bitten by the bug. I have never met an overnight sensation, but I know plenty of entrepreneurs who perfect their craft over and over again. It permeates every aspect of their lives in most cases. The motivation must come from within to be authentic. In my experience, if you don't have it on the inside, you cannot make it on the outside.

Every person spotlighted in this book had days, weeks, months, or in some cases years when no one else saw the potential in the opportunity they could envision. Sometimes, all it takes is reconnecting the dots in a different way to show others the path. Having a road map to get those creative juices flowing can be just the thought-starter to get the engine fired up again. Drs. Gundry and Kickul's book may just be that kick in the pants needed for your entrepreneurial wheels to turn faster or in a different direction. You'll be inspired by the entrepreneurs showcased, and if you pay attention, you can learn from their mistakes so that you can make other higher quality ones along your entrepreneurial journey.

So join the conversation, grab a seat at the table, and let your mind wander with all the possibilities among us to leave the world better than we found it with our unique mark. I truly believe entrepreneurship could solve many of the world's biggest problems. People who are excited to get up in the morning and think about new products or services or innovative techniques to deliver them to new audiences will have more energy, healthier habits, sharper minds, and more optimistic outlooks, I think. They will create opportunities for others and constantly challenge the status quo so that inertia will not kick in. So my recommendation: Take two books, read one, pass along the other to someone you care about, and call me in the morning!

—Paige Arnof-Fenn

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